



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General Information Society

Information Society Technologies: Content, Multimedia Tools and Markets

eContent

A multiannual Community programme to stimulate the development and use of European digital content on the global networks and to promote the linguistic diversity in the Information Society

Work Programme

2001 – 2002

“Success on the Internet is no longer driven purely by technology, first mover advantage and buzz. Rather, it is much about quality of management and their ability to grow successfully in an increasingly competitive market.” Harvard Business School, 2nd annual Internet conference

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eContent

Work Programme for the years 2001 – 2002

0. INTRODUCTION

Scope of the programme

The eContent programme¹ aims at supporting the production, use and distribution of European digital content (e-content) on the global networks. It intends to reach its goal by supporting the growth of a healthy and competitive EU digital content industry fit to exploit the opportunities created by new technologies. eContent is part of the eEurope action plan endorsed by the Lisbon and Feira European Councils in the first half of 2000. It contributes to objective three of eEurope: “stimulate the use of Internet”. The Lisbon Council, devoted to issues stemming from the Information Society stressed the crucial role of digital content as “*creating added value by exploiting and networking European cultural diversity*”.

Focus of activity

The eContent programme is centred around the need of European businesses and citizens to access and use high-quality e-content suited to their needs. This is a sizeable task requiring European content industries to be able to compete globally, stimulating economic growth and contributing to employment creation while safeguarding a balanced social and cultural development of EU citizens. In addition, eContent sets for itself the goal of easing the process of economic and social integration of the candidate countries into Europe's Information Society. The programme is based on three lines of action where EU added value can be maximised:

- improving access to and expanding use of public sector information;
- enhancing content production in a multilingual and multicultural environment;
- increasing dynamism of the digital content market.

The programme execution will be supported by targeted actions and accompanying measures, e.g. in the areas of market intelligence, standards and skills development.

The programme is market orientated, aimed at supporting the access to as well as the use of high-quality e-content products and services. The dynamic nature of the e-content market and the rapidly evolving socio-economic framework imply that the programme concentrates on projects having a relatively short time-to-market (not exceeding 24 to 36 months in most cases), developing solutions based on available technology and aiming at experimenting with new business models and partnerships. Research projects, offline

¹ Council Decision of 22 December 2000, OJ L14 of 18.1.2001, p 32.

multimedia applications, projects with an expected time-to-market exceeding three years are not in the focus of the *eContent* programme.

All actions undertaken under this programme will comply with the principles set out in the directive 95/46/EC on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of their personal data.

Improving access to and expanding use of public sector information

Public sector information is a key resource for European citizens and European information businesses. It is an important information source for citizens that want to stay informed on developments in society and a prime material for many added-value commercial information products.

The importance of public sector information is underlined in the *eEurope* action plan² adopted by the European Council of Feira of 19-20 June 2000. In the chapter on 'European digital content for the global networks' the information held by the public sector is singled out as an especially important type of e-content. In addition, in its priority action on Government online, the *eEurope* action plan foresees the following targets:

- Essential online public data, including legal, administrative, cultural, environmental and traffic information;
- Develop a co-ordinated approach for public sector information, including at European level.

The *eContent* programme will contribute to a better use of public sector information throughout Europe by supporting projects and other activities that will address in particular the improvement of the exploitation possibilities of this information. In parallel the policy activities under the INFO2000 programme³ that led to the Green Paper on Public Sector in the Information Society⁴ will be pursued.

Enhancing content production in a multilingual and multicultural environment

Adequate support for multilingual and cross-cultural information provision and access is a key enabler for the development of a European mass market for online products and services, and for a wider deployment of European content in other regions of the world. The technological aspects of this process are well covered within the Framework Programme. R&D activities, however, often do not address the fundamental issue of turning technological advances into enhanced business capabilities and market penetration, including new export opportunities.

² See website europa.cec.eu.int

³ INFO2000 (1996-1999), a programme aimed at stimulating the development and use of multimedia content - Council Decision 96/339/EC of 20 May 1996 (OJ L 129, 30.5.1996, p. 24).

⁴ COM(1998) 585

This action line is aimed at encouraging co-operation in the European content and language industries, thus helping to improve the competitiveness of both sectors by supporting the design, production and distribution of high-quality e-content in an increasingly multilingual and multicultural environment.

While globalisation is rapidly gaining momentum in the net economy, Europe's e-content scene remains fragmented, with relatively few European actors active at international level, limited intra-European information flows, and weak ties between players belonging to different but complementary sectors in the e-content value chain, which in turn lead to missed market opportunities. Moreover, the take-up of Internet, media and language technologies within the European content sector is often slower than in competitor regions, thus hampering the development of a successful and internationally competitive industry.

Increasing dynamism of the digital content market

Fragmentation in the e-content market and the resulting uncertainties for market players tend to lead to inertia and under-investment. In order to address market failures in this area and to minimise their negative impact on economic growth and employment, the *eContent* programme will provide support in three broad areas that can help increase the dynamism of the market. The three areas are:

- access to available investment capital;
- a unified European approach to online rights trading for multimedia production;
- support for the development of a common vision on market trends and developments.

These themes – horizontal by nature – are grouped together to form the third action line of *eContent*. The areas are strategic in nature and contribute to the creation of a favourable environment for the creation, distribution and commercialisation of European e-content.

Dissemination of the programme results and promotion of the social and economic value of e-content products and services complement these actions.

The implementation strategy

The three action lines of *eContent* are strongly intertwined. Given the near-market nature of *eContent* it is essential that EU instruments and resources are used to build relationships and increase collaboration between different types of players. It is expected that, for example, linguistic methods and tools will be essential for the cross-border exploitation of public sector information, facilitating access to investment capital for Internet start-ups is fundamental for the language industries, public sector information is an opportunity to be used by Internet firms in collaboration with public sector bodies, strategic views to be elaborated in close collaboration between the public and the private sectors will help identify emerging challenges and opportunities, etc.

The Council expressly mandated the Commission to implement the programme by means of actions exhibiting a number of common features:

- instruments against the barriers that prevent, at European level, the establishment and functioning of the single market in the areas they address,
- high risk - high reward,
- cross-sectoral and trans-national, and
- scalable and capable of acting as multipliers,
- user orientated.

The projects supported by the programme are expected to be sizeable enough to ensure a lasting impact on the market place in terms of demonstration potential and measurable results. Their actual size will vary depending on the action line and the issues addressed. Given these general characteristics the implementation of both cost-shared projects and other types of indirect actions will proceed for the period covered by the present work-programme along the lines summarised below. Further details and expected outputs are given in the description of each action line.

Demonstration projects will be the subject of fixed-deadline calls, each addressing a subset of the present work-programme. *Definition-phase projects* will typically arise from an open continuous-submission scheme. *Accompanying measures* will result either from the continuous-submission scheme or from dedicated calls for tenders.

Projects will be based upon multi-party, multi-nation partnerships. They will use state-of-the-art but affordable technical solutions, and will be geared towards business and socio-economic – as opposed to purely technological – innovation. In view of the dynamic nature of the e-content market, the duration of demonstration projects will not exceed 30 months, with most projects due for completion within 24 months.

A continuous-submission scheme will apply to smaller scale definition-phase projects and will help bring new ideas to maturity, allow for orderly feasibility and planning work, and provide a framework for early experimentation and appraisal. The continuous-submission scheme, whereby project proposals may be submitted at any point in time during the period of validity of the present work-programme, will be launched together with the first fixed-deadline call. Proposals will be assessed in batches, typically on a quarterly basis. Contract negotiation and awarding operations will be undertaken on a continuous basis, following the schedule detailed in the Roadmap (section 4).

Given that the purpose of the continuous-submission scheme is to allow for a fast response to emerging requirements and innovative ideas, no restrictions will be imposed as regards target user groups, market sectors and underlying technologies.

While individual projects tend to focus on specific issues in a given domain, accompanying measures are meant to address and prove relevant for a broader cross-section of industry and society. Accompanying measures will typically address exchange of best practice, awareness and dissemination activities, industry-led web portals, project clustering and concertation, etc. They will be characterised by a flexible funding scheme ranging from 50% to 100% of the total cost depending on the type of action. As a general rule, accompanying measures will be based upon multi-party, multi-nation partnerships, although single-country or single-contractor actions are eligible as well.

It is expected that fixed-deadline submissions will be earmarked up to 80% of the available budget, with the remainder being used up by the continuous-submission scheme. The average project value is expected to be in excess of 1,5 MEURO for demonstration projects. The Commission contribution will normally be up to 50% of this amount.

The table below summarises the main characteristics of the different types of projects and other actions to be implemented in the first phase of the programme.

	Type of Action	Type of Call	Typical Duration	Typical no. of Partners	Typical EU Contribution
Cost-shared projects					
	Demonstration projects	Fixed deadline	Up to 30 months (typically 24)	3-8	Up to 2 MEURO 50% funding
	Definition-phase projects	Continuous submission	Up to 12 months	2-4	Up to 250 KEURO 50% funding
Accompanying measures					
	Best practice, guides and standards, SME measures, consensus and community building etc.	Continuous submission	Up to 36 months (typically 18-24)	1-4	Up to 1 MEURO up to 100% funding
Grants					
	Third parties' conferences, workshops, seminars, exhibitions etc.	Continuous submission	Up to 6 months	1	Up to 100 KEURO up to 30% of total cost
Studies and service contracts		Call for tenders			
	Studies, surveys, project clustering and concertation, etc.		Up to 24 months	1-2	100% funding
	Programme level awareness and dissemination		Up to 36 months	1-2	100% funding

*e*Content

Summary Budget Table: 2001 – 2004

Action Line	% of budget	MEURO
Improving access to and expanding use of public sector information	40 – 45	40 – 45
Enhancing content production in a multilingual and multicultural environment	40 – 45	40 – 45
Increasing dynamism of the digital content market	10 – 15	10 – 15
Total indicative budget	100	100

*e*Content

Summary Budget Table: 2001 – 2002

Action Line	% of budget	EURO
Improving access to and expanding use of public sector information	42	21.000.000
Enhancing content production in a multilingual and multicultural environment	42	21.000.000
Increasing dynamism of the digital content market	16	8.000.000
Evaluation measures, publications, meetings, etc.		1.000.000 ⁵
Total indicative budget	100%	51.000.000⁶

⁵ This amount is earmarked on the administrative part of the budget.

⁶ This indicative budget represents the total expected budget allocated to the *e*Content programme by the Budgetary Authority for the years 2001 and 2002. The amount allocated for the year 2001 is fixed at 20.4 MEURO, including the contribution of the EEA-EFTA countries. The amount allocated to *e*Content for the year 2002 will be fixed by the Budgetary Authority within the limits of the financial perspectives and in line with the *e*Content Council Decision (2001/48/EC). This amount is expected to be in the order of 30 MEURO.

1. ACTION LINE 1: IMPROVING ACCESS TO AND EXPANDING USE OF PUBLIC SECTOR INFORMATION

The activities in this area in the years 2001 and 2002 will be undertaken along two main lines that are complementary to each other and reinforce each other. These sublines address:

- experiments in concrete projects showcasing the use of public sector information (PSI) to produce added-value services and products (subline 1.1);
- the establishment of European digital data collections (subline 1.2).

At the same time, the activities addressing the policy dimension that have led under the INFO2000 programme to the publication of the Green Paper on Public Sector Information in the Information Society will be pursued. These activities will centre on barriers impeding access to and exploitation of PSI such as the policy framework, organisational barriers, poor “culture of information” in public sector organisations etc. The Commission – in agreement with the Council – intends to set up a group to promote digital public data. This group, bringing together different competencies from national administrations, private operators like content packagers, service providers, etc., can play an important role in this process.

The policy activities and the projects established within the eContent programme are expected to reinforce each other in order to improve access and exploitation conditions throughout Europe, and to stimulate an internal market for digital information services.

Participation of EU applicant countries in the initiatives of this Action Line will facilitate their future integration. A better management of information (for example in the field of land registers, cultural heritage, or multilingual access to public sector information) is of vital importance in these countries for creating a more effective and transparent government as well as for the functioning of the internal market after the enlargement.

Subline 1.1: Experiments in concrete projects

Background

The public sector collects and produces vast amounts of information, much of which is of interest to individuals and businesses, and which can be the raw material for value added e-content services provided by the content industries. There are, however, many barriers for the transformation of this potential into usable products and services. These barriers lead to uncertainties, which in turn lead to a lack of investment from both the public and the private sectors, degrading the level of service available to end users.

Projects that can be used as examples of good practice and that will allow the identification of practical problems in public-private partnerships, will help to redress this situation. These projects, while safeguarding wide access to information in a multiplicity of languages on the global networks, will foster public-private partnerships, serving as catalysts to further developments in this field. At the same time projects will tackle concrete barriers hampering the development of a single market in public sector information, such as lack of transparency of pricing for public information access and use

in the various Member States. Projects should ensure a high-quality level of the information offered in the services and products that are based on the public sector data.

Preliminary actions were undertaken under the INFO2000 programme, which supported a limited number of pilot and demonstration projects. Given the huge potential of this domain, experiments with public-private partnerships aimed at the exploitation of public sector information with a genuine European potential, will continue. Within this Action Line the use of language technologies and solutions will be promoted among the administrations in Member States, and the EU institutions.

Objectives

To promote the commercial exploitation of and access to public sector information at European level through projects exemplifying the potential of this kind of information, testing the ways in which public and private organisations can work together to bring out the full potential of the information, and tackling concrete barriers hampering the development of a single market in public sector information.

Actions

A limited number of sizeable projects will be selected via the second call for proposals along with a number of definition-phase projects and grants that will be selected through the continuous submission scheme (see section 4, roadmap). These projects should contribute to expanding the commercial provision of e-content products based on public sector information and/or increase trans-border access to fragmented information available in public organisations in the different Member States. At the same time, projects should give a better understanding of the problems encountered in public-private partnerships and provide novel models for this type of collaboration. The focus should not be on short term viability of a few selected projects, but on a more structural outcome, i.e. increasing access and re-use of public sector information in Europe. Research work and merely technological efforts will not be supported.

AL 1.1.1 Demonstration Projects

The main thematic areas to be addressed by the projects established in the first two years of implementation of the programme will include:

- legal/administrative/institutional data,
- arts, cultural heritage, archives, libraries,
- financial and economic data,
- entertainment information material,
- geographic data (including land and property, environmental data, meteo and oceanographic data),
- traffic and tourism information,
- location-based services at the local level (education, health, local services, etc.),
- data relating to health, safety and consumer protection, including transnational emergency services,

- scientific and technical information, standards.

Projects in the different areas and addressing different target groups (e.g. business, youth, etc.) will give a cross-sector overview of barriers and opportunities to exploit public sector information throughout Europe. The focus will be on partnerships and mechanisms for adding value and ensuring wider exploitation rather than on the specific sectors themselves, which is also the reason for a rather broad definition of the target thematic areas. Best practice examples that can also be applied to other sectors and other countries should be highlighted.

Different platforms to deliver such information, including mobile platforms, will be encouraged, along with the localisation and tailoring of the resulting services. Synergies among projects will be sought by grouping them into thematic clusters. These projects will be the subject of the second call for proposals.

AL 1.1.2 Definition-phase Projects and Accompanying Measures

The continuous-submission scheme will address definition-phase projects, accompanying measures and grants. The definition phase projects will assess the feasibility of establishing public-private partnerships to exploit public sector information in a certain domain or address barriers hampering the development of a single market in public sector information (examples are the needs felt in the market place for common standards, more particularly in collecting methods, or the need for transparent pricing for public information access and use in the various Member States).

Accompanying measures and grants will support activities and events intended to promote and publicise access to and exploitation of public sector information. At the same time, they may support more general eGovernment related events and activities, where access to public sector information is seen in the broader context of an optimal use of Information Society tools by government bodies. In the absence of adequate proposals, accompanying measures may be the subject of dedicated calls for tenders.

Main target groups include information companies, in particular SMEs, public authorities and administrations collecting or holding data, information intermediaries (e.g. libraries, archives, user associations). Projects will seek to establish public-private partnerships and may support market platforms and digital arenas geared towards increasing the use of this information for economic and social purposes. The participation of the accession countries in the projects and other related activities is particularly welcomed.

Efforts will be made to offer public sector information in different languages when the information in question is of direct relevance for an audience beyond the mere homogeneous linguistic community it originates from. Proposals should demonstrate the relevance of the type of information considered in the proposed action to become available in different languages. They will also explore how a better use of meta-data could facilitate the multilingual production of the same information content. Projects should provide solutions for linking heterogeneous multilingual databases and making the data available via meta-data services, using where appropriate terminological methods and tools.

Synergies will be sought with the other action lines of the eContent programme (in particular Action Line 2) and other Community activities, both at a policy level (e.g. eEurope/eGovernment) and at project level (e.g. IST, IDA).

Subline 1.2: Establishment of European digital data collections

Background

The absence of comprehensive data sets at European level constitutes one of the consequences of existing barriers to the exploitation of the e-content potential. The use of different formats in different countries, the lack of visibility and accessibility of existing data resources, and the lack of transparency of pricing policies and other conditions to obtain the information for re-use, make it particularly hard to establish this type of data collections. Therefore, in addition to the experimental projects (subline 1.1), the establishment of European data collections will be stimulated. Financial support will be given to work on pan-European meta-data for public sector information and/or projects collecting information covering a significant number of European Union Member States. This work will be performed in accordance with EU and national provisions regarding data protection.

Objectives

To facilitate the establishment of comprehensive pan-European distributed databases in selected sectors. The actions should involve a meaningful number of Member States to ensure that data collected be transferable and interoperable and provide potentially exploitable resources for the private sector.

Actions

AL 1.2.1 Demonstration Projects

The establishment of pan-European public sector information services will be stimulated through projects that can take different forms (or a combination of these forms):

- Establishing widely agreed meta-data in key public sector information areas, including the associated terminological aspects;
- Setting up “data sniffer” tools allowing to identify what public sector information assets exist across Europe and where/how to access them;
- Providing pilot examples of European digital data collections.

This subline thus combines the ‘infrastructural’ aspect (meta-data, data-sniffer tools) with concrete experiences of establishing European data collections. Emphasis should be on opening up access to data already available in digital form rather than digitisation of paper-based information. Research work and merely technological efforts will not be supported.

The main thematic areas will include:

- legal/administrative/institutional data,

- arts, cultural heritage, archives, libraries,
- financial and economic data,
- entertainment information material,
- geographic data (including land and property, environmental data, meteo and oceanographic data),
- traffic and tourism information,
- location-based services at the local level (education, health, local services, etc.),
- data relating to health, safety and consumer protection, including transnational emergency services,
- scientific and technical information, standards.

As with the experimental projects, the work on European digital data collections will lead to a cross-sector view, where the experience in some sectors with innovative solutions and collaborations can serve as an example for the others.

Different channels to deliver such information, including mobile platforms, will be encouraged. The areas above will be open in the first call for proposals.

AL 1.2.2 Definition-phase Projects and Accompanying Measures

A continuous-submission scheme for definition-phase projects, accompanying measures and grants will be opened within the first call for proposals. Definition-phase projects should have a feasibility character assessing the need for sizeable cross-border digital data collections in the above mentioned areas. Support will also be provided for initiatives aimed at creating the basis for broader, cross-border information markets or platforms based on public sector information, for example by establishing agreed and common formats in the thematic area covered. Accompanying measures and grants will address the same issues as mentioned under AL 1.1.2.

Main target groups include information companies, in particular SMEs, public administrations at all levels collecting or holding data, information intermediaries (e.g. libraries, archives, user associations). The participation of the accession countries in the projects and other activities is particularly welcomed.

Efforts will be made to offer public sector information in different languages when the information in question is of direct relevance for an audience beyond the mere homogeneous linguistic community it originates from. Projects should demonstrate the relevance for the type of information considered in the proposed action to become available in different languages. They will also explore how a better use of meta-data could facilitate the multilingual production of the same information content. In case a project has a predominantly multi-lingual/cultural focus it will be placed within Action Line 2.

Synergies will be sought with the other action lines of the eContent programme (in particular Action Line 2) and other Community activities both at a policy level (e.g. eEurope/eGovernment) and at project level (e.g. IST, IDA).

Demonstration projects will arise from fixed-deadline calls, while accompanying measures, definition-phase projects and grants will be the subject of the continuous-submission scheme.

The scope of the third call will depend to a large extent on the outcome of the previous calls. It can however be expected that it will address the establishment of digital data collections (e.g. infrastructural issues, as well as concrete examples of digital data collections) not adequately covered by previous calls.

2. ACTION LINE 2: ENHANCING CONTENT PRODUCTION IN A MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

No European enterprise has immediate access to a market of 370 million customers who speak the same language or share the same consumer habits, and yet companies are driven by the Internet to outgrow their national market and start exporting. Linguistic and cultural diversity is an issue of particular relevance for e-content creators and distributors, but also for other industries that generate large volumes of information and do business over the Internet. An effective multilingual and multicultural strategy can make the difference between global success or failure.

A much wider availability of e-content products and services meeting the requirements of multilingual and multicultural markets is not just important from an economic point of view, but has also important social implications. A more culturally and linguistically diverse Internet will provide broader access to the Information Society for many citizens who might otherwise be excluded. The forthcoming enlargement of the Union also underlines the importance of well targeted customisation efforts.

Subline 2.1: Fostering new partnerships and the adoption of multilingual and multicultural strategies

Background

This subline is aimed at providing better market opportunities for and fostering the competitiveness of European content and language players, with a view to enhancing Europe's multilingual and multicultural presence on the global networks, stimulating economic activity and lowering barriers to the entry of new actors.

It is widely recognised that a successful globalisation strategy has many implications on the organisation and functioning of the enterprise (from marketing and sales through legal and tax related matters to logistics). This subline concentrates on those aspects that are closely related to digital content and interfaces, and the associated user/customer services.

Objectives

The overall goal is to investigate and experiment with new strategies, partnerships and solutions for designing and producing easily localisable e-content products and services ("internationalisation"), and having them adapted to the requirements of the intended target markets and communities ("localisation"), while reducing the associated cost and time-to-market and facilitating further content management and re-purposing work.

Actions will be aimed at making local offerings meet the requirements of European and global markets (think local, act global) and alternatively at making global offerings meet the needs of local communities (think global, act local).

Trans-national and cross-sectoral actions will address three broad areas and communities:

- “commercial” content: e-content players planning to enhance their offerings (e.g. web portals, mobile services, broadband information and entertainment services) through effective internationalisation strategies and localisation processes;

- “corporate” content: businesses and public-sector actors (e.g. utilities) which intend to establish or strengthen their presence on the e-commerce scene through e.g. web marketing, retailing and customer care offerings adapted to the linguistic and cultural requirements of a broad range of user groups; and
- “public” content: public-private partnerships geared towards the wider deployment of public information across languages and cultures, including actions aimed at connecting knowledge in areas such as cultural creation and education, in cooperation with Action Line 1 and other relevant EU instruments.

Actions

Action Line 2 is intended to ensure a wider availability of quality e-content across markets and communities. It is know-how and process orientated. No distinction is drawn between different categories of content and their intended function and context.

Actions established within this subline will comprise both focused projects and broadly-based accompanying measures aimed at a wider population within the target sectors.

Support will be provided for:

- demonstration projects as well as definition-phase projects aimed at progressing from a core group and an initial idea to a broader partnership and more definite development and exploitation plans; the latter category will provide an easier path for new entrants, especially innovative SMEs and start-ups, which need to establish a viable business and revenue model and find suitable partners and investors;
- accompanying measures geared towards documenting and disseminating best practice, increasing awareness and promoting exchanges, and achieving an higher level of cross-fertilisation between industrial, professional and national activities in the field;
- formal and informal standardisation and consensus-building forums addressing technical and non-technical barriers to the deployment of e-content across languages and cultures; grants may be earmarked for conferences, exhibitions and workshops in areas closely related to the objectives of the Action Line.

AL 2.1.1 Demonstration Projects

Demonstration projects are expected to bring together multimedia and audiovisual e-content designers, creators, aggregators and distributors from both the public and private sector, providers of translation services and localisation technologies, Internet operators and IT vendors, etc. They will investigate and experiment with the most effective approaches, methods and processes for designing, producing, packaging, delivering and maintaining high-quality content-rich products and services meeting the linguistic and cultural requirements of a broad range of target markets.

The focus in the 2001-2002 time frame will be on e-content products and services designed to be used in connection with Internet enabled access points, ranging from PCs through mobiles and communicating appliances to television sets and game consoles.

Both online and hybrid solutions, based upon a combination of online and offline

platforms, will be supported. However, neither offline multimedia products (e.g. based upon DVDs) nor services based upon backbone networks other than the Internet will be addressed in 2001-2002, although they may be considered from 2003 onwards.

Projects are expected to encompass products and services where the underlying content can be seen as information, transaction, entertainment, education, self-development, etc. Design, authoring, customisation etc. methods and techniques are not meant to be limited to mere information content. They will also encompass user interfaces and resources (e.g. online documentation, customer support), search and personalisation facilities, content re-use across different media and appliances, etc.

Likewise, methods and solutions arising from the projects should not be limited to purely linguistic dimensions. Wherever appropriate, projects will also address cultural aspects (e.g. affecting the "storyboard" and the associated multimedia assets) making the resulting product or service suitable for the intended user groups, including where relevant regions characterised by marked cultural differences with respect to the EU. Last but not least, due attention will be paid to the legal provisions, technical standards and ethical principles of the target countries.

Projects will address at least three languages, assess the scalability of their results and investigate their suitability for a broader range of languages. The linguistic coverage of each project will be dictated by its nature, scope and intended outcome. Projects can address any combination of EU official languages, other nationally recognised EEA or candidate countries' languages, languages of major EU trade partners, etc., in so far as the intended coverage is convincingly argued for in the project proposal.

Three fixed-deadline calls are expected to be launched in the course of 2001-2002:

- The first call for proposals (see section 4, roadmap) will mainly target the private sector and concentrate on the provision of multilingual and multicultural web services and applications, ranging from portals for consumer markets, through portals for vertical business sectors and specific user communities, to enterprise (e-commerce) web sites.

The projects arising from this call will pay special attention to the dynamic and iterative nature of web sites, and the associated need to preserve quality and consistency across different versions of the same product or service.

- The second call will have a broader scope and cover, in addition to the above areas, the provision of Internet enabled mobile services and of services based upon streaming media technologies, including broadband video and Internet TV, the latter coupling the power of Internet with interactive digital TV services.

Projects addressing mobile information and transaction services will take account of the emergence of richer content types triggered by technological advances and market developments. They will encompass the provision of personalised, language and location sensitive content, the need to provide almost real-time information from dynamic data feeds with little or no human intervention, the need to adapt content delivery and rendering to the capabilities of multiple access points, etc.

Projects addressing broadband video and Internet TV will build upon the wider

availability of affordable high-speed connections and exploit technical developments which are set to deliver near-DVD quality over the Internet. These projects will address the challenges raised by the linguistic and cultural adaptation of video, which may have much deeper cultural implications than web text, and the associated need to cater for fast and low cost sub-titling and dubbing of digital video content.

- The scope of the third call will depend mainly on the outcome of the previous calls. It can be expected that it will address subsets of the above categories (i.e. web, mobile and broadband content) not adequately covered by previous calls, together with public-good services provided by administrations, public utilities and the like.

Emphasis will be placed on multilingual and multicultural access and cross-border distribution and exploitation of public-interest information geared towards citizens and businesses. The selection of the public sector domains covered by the call will be triggered by the choices made within Action Line 1.

AL 2.1.2 Definition-phase Projects

The continuous-submission scheme will apply to definition-phase projects and will help bring new ideas to maturity, allow for orderly feasibility and planning work, and provide a framework for early experimentation and appraisal. No restrictions will be imposed as regards target user groups, market sectors or underlying technologies, provided that the proposed project has the potential to make a definite contribution to the objectives of the subline.

AL 2.1.3 Accompanying Measures

Accompanying measures established in the 2001-2002 time frame are expected to include:

- (a) Actions meant to identify, document and disseminate existing best practice in the area of web internationalisation, e-content localisation, cross-cultural information and transaction services, etc., through case studies, print and electronic publications and presentations at major public events;
- (b) Actions specifically aimed at new entrants, especially e-content start-ups and SMEs, including executive briefings and hands-on tutorials, technology showcases and usability tests, (online) entry-level consultancy and referral services, etc., so as to improve the understanding of localisation and globalisation issues within the new media sector.
- (c) Actions intended to compile and disseminate guidelines for linguistic and cultural customisation, building on experiences from the software and audiovisual fields and broadening them to encompass multimedia content types and multicultural aspects;
- (d) Actions geared towards the establishment of industry-owned web portals providing access to a wide range of information and awareness resources on the Internet translation and localisation industries. Such portals may feature or evolve towards an electronic marketplace for the provision of e-content customisation services;
- (e) Awards for multilingual and multicultural Internet services, in collaboration with

primary industrial and professional associations, vendor independent forums, business schools and the like.

- (f) Broad market survey based upon the outcome of previous studies in the area of customisation and export potential of e-content, with the aim of reviewing the industrial scene and the associated market developments 18 months after the initial analyses.

Accompanying measures will be open under the continuous-submission scheme. In the absence of adequate proposals, they may be the subject of dedicated calls for tenders. Proposals may address one or several of the above intertwined topics.

Subline 2.2: Strengthening the linguistic infrastructure

Background

A broadly-based infrastructure comprising multilingual tools, skills and data is a prerequisite for the timely and cost effective creation and deployment of multilingual and cross-cultural e-content. It is the structural basis for any sustained internationalisation and localisation effort, especially for less widely spoken languages where market forces often provide insufficient incentives.

Objectives

Strengthening Europe's linguistic infrastructure implies establishing a collaborative framework comprising interoperable data resources encompassing e.g. multilingual glossaries, translation memories and terminology collections. These resources must be pooled together to yield widely accessible repositories which can then be exploited by content providers and distributors, and by suppliers of language services and localisation solutions. Powerful and flexible software tools are a pre-requisite for any sizeable and cost effective linguistic and cultural adaptation work, and for creating, maintaining and exploiting large scale repositories of the associated resources. Web globalisation and other e-content customisation activities depend heavily on the availability of suitably trained professionals, e.g. localisation engineers, translators or terminologists.

The subline will try and provide a coherent framework for presently disperse initiatives, help identify collaborative paths and reach critical mass, and stimulate the active involvement of other relevant parties within industry and government, with a view to creating an environment favourable to the wider deployment of multilingual and multicultural e-content.

Actions

The 2001-2002 work-programme encompasses four intertwined subareas, numbered from AL 2.2.1 to AL 2.2.4. Each of the fixed-deadline calls expected to be launched in the course of 2001-2002 will address a subset as specified below:

- The first call for proposals (see section 4, roadmap) will mainly target the private sector and concentrate on subareas AL 2.2.1 and AL 2.2.3;
- The second call will have a broader scope and feature, in addition to the above topics,

actions falling under AL 2.2.4;

- The scope of the third call will depend to some extent on the outcome of the previous calls; it can however be expected that it will cover amongst others subareas AL 2.2.2 and AL 2.2.4, the latter possibly limited to AL 2.2.4.2.

Projects and other actions pertaining to this subarea will be based upon multi-party, multi-nation partnerships. Exceptionally single-country and single-contractor actions may be eligible as well, in so far as they can help trigger transnational collaborations or address problems specific to a given language. Given the infrastructural nature of the projects, EU funding may vary between 50% and 100% of the total cost, depending on the action's added value and impact on a broad cross-section of programme stakeholders.

AL 2.2.1 Improving the effectiveness of e-content customisation

Software tools in support of e-content internationalisation and localisation processes, especially those underpinning complex authoring, workflow, update management and quality control operations in a distributed environment, with a view to reducing costs and delays while improving the quality and consistency of different linguistic and cultural versions of the same product or service.

The sheer volume of e-content in search for linguistic and cultural customisation calls for powerful software aids in support of human translation and adaptation. There is a definite need for better and more scaleable tools underpinning localisation workflows, managing continuous update cycles, providing sophisticated versioning facilities, etc. This subline aims to promote tighter collaboration between companies providing Internet translation and localisation services, including sub-titling and dubbing, and the suppliers of the underlying software platforms, with a view to stimulating a quicker and wider take-up of reliable and affordable solutions by the e-content community.

AL 2.2.2 Facilitating access to foreign language sources

Embedding robust cross-lingual information search, gathering and gisting capabilities within popular Internet search engines, as a low cost alternative to large scale e-content customisation and with the aim of lowering the barriers stemming from the presence of large volumes of content in foreign languages.

A full-scale, high-quality adaptation of the original information content into several other languages may not be justified and indeed feasible in many cases. For many practical applications, especially for inbound information used within an organisation or for personal purposes, multilingual technologies can provide imperfect but usable solutions.

AL 2.2.3 Addressing the skills gap

Industrial training actions designed to address the current and foreseeable shortage of specialist skills, in particular to fill the gap between university curricula and the technical and management skills expected from professional multimedia designers and localisers.

Although public and private training centres are progressively adapting to the requirements of the net economy, e-content companies experience serious problems in finding suitably skilled engineers and translators. This subarea is to address the skills gap

by supporting focused training actions bringing together Internet translation and localisation companies, IT vendors, training centres, business schools and other relevant players to provide multimedia, management and engineering skills through summer schools, hands-on seminars, self-training packages, etc. Where appropriate, these actions will also contribute to promoting widely recognised quality standards and certification schemes for professionals.

AL 2.2.4 Broadening the knowledge base

This subarea encompasses (i) the networking of language data centres (AL 2.2.4.1) to improve their interoperability and enhance their suitability for private and public users in the new media sector, and (ii) the development of new resources (AL 2.2.4.2) for those languages where market forces have proved insufficient and a clear case can be made for support at EU level, either on socio-political grounds or given their obvious economic and multiplier effect.

AL 2.2.4.1 Networking of language data centres

The networking of regional, national or domain specific data centres presupposes a consensual framework based upon widely accepted agreements governing the access, use and further development of generic and domain specific language resources, coupled with the provision of effective referral and brokerage services aimed at facilitating the search for relevant data sets and matching demand (by industrial and commercial users) with supply (by private and public bodies holding and maintaining data collections).

This "service" framework must be based on technical standards for data access and interchange enabling owners and users to share and reuse existing and upcoming resources across the Internet. Actions initiated under this heading are expected to build on and add value to ongoing national or commercial activities, and to address non-technical issues such as handling of IPR, fair pricing and equitable access, associated revenue models, etc. In particular, efforts will be directed towards improving the Internet accessibility of high-quality multilingual resources held by public bodies, publishers and industrial or commercial groups, and which can be used as authoritative reference material by designers, localisers, translators and terminologists engaged in multimedia projects.

AL 2.2.4.2 Fostering the development of new multilingual resources

Support for the development and transnational access/distribution of new data collections will cover as a matter of priority less widely spoken languages of the 18 EEA countries as well as the languages of the candidate countries. Actions geared towards the major EU trade partners languages may be undertaken where justified in terms of EU interest and export potential.

The actions established under this heading will address multilingual resources designed for use by e-content professionals in their daily work, and which can speedily contribute to improving quality and effectiveness of linguistic and cultural customisation work. Synergies will be sought with other private and public sponsors throughout the definition and implementation phases of the projects, with the aim of ensuring the widest possible dissemination of results and their long term viability.

3. ACTION LINE 3: INCREASING DYNAMISM OF THE DIGITAL CONTENT MARKET

Subline 3.1: Bridging the gap between digital content industries and capital markets

Background

This action takes its initial steps from the observation that in Europe there is a lower level of investment and market transparency for accessing capital than in the US. This results in a smaller percentage of the available risk capital being channelled towards e-content firms, especially when Internet start-ups and SMEs are considered. This in turn slows down growth and employment creation.

The sector is characterised by many start-ups and medium sized firms in need to expand beyond their national border. In the highly turbulent market situation where revenues models are unclear, investors are reluctant to provide capital for medium term risk bearing projects and ventures. Traditional investors are faced with the lack of physical goods on which to secure the loans. Moreover the capital provided by traditional institutions is often in the form of interest bearing loans, not ideal for Internet related investments that may need up to five years before becoming profitable.

In addition there are strong regional differences within Europe in the supply of capital. At the same time, established content companies having the means to finance new ventures from internal resources often prefer investing in safer, more traditional products with guaranteed returns.

Objectives

This Action Line will aim at providing different channels to increase access to capital sources for micro-enterprises and e-content related Internet start-ups. Building on the results of the preparatory actions⁷ projects are expected to network business incubators, regional development centres, investment associations, etc., to help SMEs present themselves to investors. Participation in existing investment fora, either public or private or public/private, will be supported with the aim of making known the best practices concerning means for accessing capital for start-ups and businesses. The opening towards C&EE countries and leading capital markets should be ensured.

Actions

Two main types of actions result from this aim:

AL 3.1.1 Awareness of available business tools

To increase awareness of and experiment with business tools helping e-content start-ups and growing SMEs to prepare compelling business plans and to help them perform a well targeted distribution of these amongst investors in order to attract funding. Typical actions could cover the organisation of experimental seminars (physical or virtual), in

⁷ Preparatory actions for the eContent programme were financed by the EU on the year 2000 budget for a total of 10 MEURO.

which start-ups produce business plans. These actions will be called for in the second call for proposals.

AL 3.1.2 Networks, partnerships and services

To create networks, partnerships or services that will facilitate interaction between e-content related entrepreneurs, start-ups, SMEs on one side and investors, incubators, business angels and similar actors on the other side. An example of an action in this field would be the experimentation of online brokerage services to bring investors and start-ups closer together. These actions are the object of the third call for proposals.

Actions proposed must focus on one or preferably both of the above aims, and should have a multilingual and cross-border attitude towards their activities and outputs. It is essential that actions build on and/or complement existing initiatives in the market (e.g. First Tuesday) and by government or EU institutions (for example the activities of the LIFT helpdesk).

The actions will aim at networking different types of partners already present on the market place that could play a positive role towards increasing the investments into e-content. Examples are: international, national or regional associations of business angels, venture capitalists or the like, existing incubator-type organisations with an interest in the exploitation of the global networks, business schools and training centres, magazines and newspapers, database services or other professional information services with an interface both to entrepreneurs and SMEs in the relevant field on the one side, and the risk capital business on the other.

AL 3.1.3 Accompanying Measures

Awareness and accompanying measures in the form of participation in existing or ad-hoc conferences and/or presentation of projects at international symposia will be requested specifically as part of this Action Line.

It is expected to increase the number of Internet start-ups in the regions networked. Projects selected will be asked to identify and provide indicators to this end.

Subline 3.2: Rights trading between digital content market players

Background

Rights trading is the basis for creating products mixing text, images and sound. The effectiveness and efficiency of the multimedia rights clearance have a strong and direct impact on the functioning of the content industries. The integration and interoperation of distributed specialised clearance services at European level have been addressed under INFO2000 through feasibility studies, standards and pilot systems development. Further support is needed to arrive at a consistent European rights clearance approach taking account of the current legal framework and its further development. The clearance function is expected to remain a fundamental element in a quickly evolving environment of changing business, legal, enforcement, financial and informational models supporting this fundamental function.

Objectives

The focus of future actions will be on extending rights clearance pilots and on specific support measures. Pilot projects will have to cover the accession countries, less advanced sectors and specific public sector applications.

Actions

AL 3.2.1 Demonstration Projects

A small number of projects, developing and testing tools and means for clearance of rights and/or rights trading, leading to the creation of multimedia clearing rights centres in Europe, taking account of the current legal framework and its further development, will be financed. A requirement for continued experimentation will be put in place, emphasising the high cross-fertilisation potential of such experiments. High quality experiments with quick dissemination potential are required to foster speedy and continuous adaptation of the European content industry.

A major project may be required for integrating building blocks, performance monitoring, benchmarking and think-tank functions, facilitating cross-sector/national experience exchange and providing a concertation forum, to act as interoperation enabler, sounding board, accelerator of learning curve, catalyst for enlargement partners and less advanced sectors, synergy enabler across market and non-market platforms, facilitator of research/operational project integration, technology/regulation cross-fertiliser (e.g. rights management information), and policy assessment actor.

Specific public sector applications addressing legal deposit systems for out-of-copyright material, digital resources derived from national digitisation plans covering cultural heritage and public sector information supporting eGovernment scenarios are relevant examples of promising areas for further development.

In addition to relevant issues for next-generation business, service, information, legal and enforcement models, additional focus seems required on emerging themes like multilingual approaches to clearance systems, new content types (e.g. virtual reality objects) and delivery modes (e.g. third generation mobiles), or collaborative content development and content reuse in e-communities.

Actions will favour cross-programme integration. Cross-fertilisation between the rights trading issues and the first two Action Lines will be encouraged. Issues linked to rights trading may be based on R&D results and synergy between research and operational dimensions that should be further developed under the both the research and non-research programmes. Basic synergy mechanisms include monitoring of R&D landscape and facilitating spin-offs for new research proposals. Wherever relevant complementarity and synergy should also be facilitated with the framework programme for culture, the Media programmes, with EU education actions, SME actions, with the Structural Funds, with the eEurope action plan and the risk capital action plan.

For rights holders expected results include greater exposure to potential demand, lower transaction costs, increased volume of business and security and a more efficient asset management. For content developers systems for trading rights are expected to provide

increased supply-side competition, lower transaction costs, and more effective project management.

Actions within this subline will be open in the second call (see section 4, roadmap).

Subline 3.3: Developing and sharing a common vision

Background

The observation of the converging content and language market is presently fragmented and regular and consistent basic data on the e-content sector are not collected and analysed. This prevents a clear vision of future developments shared by private and public parties, which can reduce uncertainties and speed up concrete initiatives and investments. Market take-up of products based on public sector information could particularly benefit from such shared vision.

Objectives

The main objective is to contribute to a better understanding of the opportunities, changes and trends in the e-content industries (including the language sector and cultural elements). This understanding will be obtained through common analyses and discussions, common monitoring of the markets concerned and the problems encountered.

More specifically the objectives will be:

- To monitor the market trends relevant for the e-content industries including the process of convergence;
- To investigate key issues of common interest to market actors from different sectors and from different Member States, such as legal aspects and socio-economic consequences of e-content development;
- To examine obstacles to market development and recommendations to the industries, administrations and users to overcome them;
- To articulate the aspirations of the e-content industries (including the language industries);
- To improve methodologies to observe the e-content industries in a clear and consistent way.

Actions

Two types of actions will be undertaken:

AL 3.3.1 Digital content observatory

The aim of the e-content observatory is to pull together knowledge resources and analyses existing in the different Member States (institutes, market players) and the Commission on the e-content industries, and to present the information in a coherent and comparable way. An essential element is the speed of delivery of the information. The observatory should not just present a static report once a year, but should provide a flexible

mechanism to get, disseminate and present updated information (even if this is partial information, e.g. just on a certain number of Member States).

In early 2001 a feasibility study will identify which (public and private) organisations in the European Union concentrate on the collection of data on the e-content industries, including the language industries. The study will also investigate the most efficient mechanism to set up such European digital content observatory. The results of the feasibility study will be used as an important input to define the exact implementation arrangements for establishing the observatory. The observatory will be implemented starting in 2002.

The observatory will identify key indicators to characterise and benchmark the e-content industries, covering all the target population of the eContent programme. It will produce semestrial reports on the developments in the e-content industries and will – on an ad-hoc basis – give input to processes related to eEurope and the eContent programme.

AL 3.3.2 Strategic studies

Building on the experience of the INFO2000 programme a number of studies will be carried out on specific and emerging strategic issues. They will complement the work done by the e-content observatory and should raise awareness among corporate organisations and public sector bodies, be a basis for discussions between market players and help direct the main orientations of the eContent programme in view of market developments. An involvement of players from industry in the studies (e.g. through an industrial steering committee) is important.

A call for tenders for a strategic study on the possibilities for the exploitation of e-content on third generation mobile platforms will be implemented in the year 2001.

Both the results of the digital content observatory and the strategic studies will form the basis for discussions between public and private organisations and between firms from different parts of the content spectrum.

Subline 3.4: Dissemination of results

Objectives

Results dissemination is an integral part of the eContent programme. A specific effort will be put in place during the first year of operation to set up mechanisms to encourage the dissemination of results. The objective is to make existing best practices as well as results of the eContent programme known to all interested parties in the digital content and language industries and the public sector, building on a number of high quality projects and study results from qualified parties. Synergy between efforts deployed by Member States and at European level should be sought for the key areas of the programme concerning access and use of public sector information, and the localisation and globalisation of e-content products and services.

Actions

AL 3.4.1 Accompanying Measures

Dissemination of results will be done both at programme and at action line level. The mechanism of accompanying measures will be sought where possible. Specific services will be subject of a call for tenders when industry-led proposals to provide certain services are not generated via the call for proposals mechanism. The continuous- submission scheme or the call for tenders mechanism are the preferred ways of implementation of this type of actions.

A high quality industry-led web site dedicated to players, issues, developments and trends related to the *eContent* target groups should be the focus for all web based promotions. The web site should reflect a quality image for *eContent* as well as a dynamic and state-of-the-art multimedia service. The web site should be implemented with a view of serving the target population of *eContent*, ranging from public administrations to Internet start-ups.

Presence at major conferences and exhibitions (e.g. MILIA, Frankfurt Book Fair, etc.) of *eContent* supported projects will be encouraged by the Commission. Printed and electronic publications will support the creation of a corporate identity for the programme and a clear image in the target populations. Major calls for proposals will be the subject of specific information campaigns through the organisation of dedicated information days for proposing organisations.

Dissemination of best practice and examples in the e-content arena may be supported also in the form of e-content awards. Such awards will have to cover the whole of the Europe and focus on the primary objectives of the *eContent* programme as described in the Council decision. In order to ensure appropriate visibility to such awards the support of Member States will be sought. The mechanism of the call for tenders will be applied to select organisations to carry out such actions.

The target groups addressed by the *eContent* programme include Internet related SMEs that exploit e-content products and services, entrepreneurs, start-ups, public authorities and professional associations on a regional, national and international level. Target groups vary according to the scope of the Action Lines of the programme and are described in more detail in the text relating to the Action Lines.

The experiences and existing networks of similar communication policies for current and previous EU programmes (e.g. the Euromap network in KA III of the IST programme, the Euro Info centres, the Innovation Relay Centres, etc.) related to *eContent* and more generally to *eEurope* will be exploited whenever appropriate.

4. ECONTENT 2001 – 2002 IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

Indicative publication date	Indicative closing date	Open AL lines	Type of Call	Evaluation results to proposers	Indicative Budget (MEURO)
15 March 2001	15 June 2001	1.2.1, 2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.2.3	Fixed deadline. Demonstration projects.	September 2001	15-16
15 March 2001	31 December 2002	1.1.2, 1.2.2, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 3.1.3, 3.4.1	Continuous submission. Definition-phase projects, accompanying measures, grants	September 2001, then quarterly	8-9
1 November 2001	1 February 2002	1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 3.1.1, 3.2.1	Fixed deadline. Demonstration projects	March 2002	23-24
15 September 2002	15 December 2002	1.2.1, 2.1.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.4, 3.1.2	Fixed deadline. Demonstration projects. (*) accounted for on the 2003 budget	February 2003	23-24 (*)
1 January 2003	31 May 2004	p.m.	Continuous submission. Definition-phase projects, accompanying measures, grants	April 2003, then quarterly	p.m.

5. RELATIONS WITH OTHER COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

eEUROPE	The eContent programme is part of the eEurope action-plan that was endorsed by the European Council in Feira. Action line 3d of the Action plan deals with 'European digital content for global networks'. The action plan foresees to "Launch a programme to stimulate the development and use of European digital content on the global networks and to promote the linguistic diversity in the information society, including action to support exploitation of public sector information and establish European digital collections of key datasets". The deadline set by the European for achieving this goal (the adoption of the eContent programme) was the end of the year 2000. The importance of digital content was stressed by the Lisbon European Council that concluded that: "Content industries create added value by exploiting and networking European cultural diversity", and that "Member States and the Commission should ensure the availability of content for high speed networks".
5TH FP for research and development	The Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme of the 5 th Framework Programme for research and technological development aims at building a global knowledge, media and computing space which is universally and seemingly accessible to all through interoperable, dependable and affordable products and services. eContent is market-oriented. It concentrates on the use of both existing and emerging - but commercially available - technologies to close the gap between research and market. The IST programme stimulates the research required for providing the infrastructure of the future while eContent is concerned with digital content production of the public sector and its deployment and exploitation, and the promotion of the linguistic diversity in the Information Society. eContent builds on the results of the IST programme and successor programmes as they emerge.
CULTURE 2000	Culture 2000 promotes cultural dialogue, creativity and the transnational distribution of culture. This programme puts emphasis on non-commercial aspects whereas the eContent centres on the business community and the access and use of public sector information and the promotion of the linguistic diversity in the Information Society.
MEDIA PLUS	MEDIA PLUS addresses the specific needs of the audiovisual segment (television, cinema, radio, etc.) of the content industry. eContent will contribute to the establishment of a comprehensive European digital content policy in complement to the measures taken for the audiovisual sector. The two programmes address different content segments, and propose actions adapted to each segment's specific needs.
VENTURE CAPITAL	The proposed actions in the field of investment capital within the proposed eContent programme are complementary to existing initiatives of the EIF or the Commission. The aim is not to create new financing sources, but to make sure that SMEs in the content industries have an easier access to and make a better use of the existing financing possibilities. The EIF funding is, for example, in principle open for financing SMEs in the digital content sector, but in practice this dynamic sector is at present not well served. Linking the national networks of venture capitalists and interested SMEs in particular start up companies on a European scale will provide added value to all interested parties.
INNOVATION AND SMEs	Innovation is a key factor in industrial competitiveness, sustainable economic and social development and job creation. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are important innovation vectors and players. eContent addresses the digital content and language industries which are, apart from a limited number of international and global players, composed of mainly SMEs and Internet related start-up companies. The eContent programme aims at stimulating these companies and their customers. In short, the innovation and SME programme and eContent are fully complementary in improving the competitiveness of SMEs for the new economy.
ENTERPRISE	Enterprise policy needs to address the entire business environment to enable enterprises, whatever their size, their legal form, sector or location, to grow and develop in a way that is compatible with

POLICY	the overall EU goal of sustainable development. In Enterprise Europe, anyone with a commercially feasible idea should be able to realise it in the best business conditions, with access to the best research and technology, and then deliver it, by the best possible means, to the appropriate market. <i>eContent</i> and its digital content and language industries will be driving one of the emerging champions, namely e-Commerce.
IDA	Interchange of data between Administrations (IDA) is a programme supporting the realisation of Community Policies through the use of the Trans-European Telematics Networks. It is based on projects of common interest in the different sectors such as health, social policy, agriculture, fishing, the internal market and the consumer protection. <i>eContent</i> is content and language oriented and mainly targets private sector companies or aims at stimulating public-private partnerships, with a view to commercially exploiting the untapped potential of public sector information.
PROMISE	The PROMISE programme has served over the last few years as a valuable tool to raise awareness on the development of the Information Society and its implications. Given market and societal developments general awareness raising is no longer a priority. The programme will therefore be redirected to serve as a tool supporting the goals of the <i>eEurope</i> action plan (through data gathering, benchmarking etc.). In its market intelligence activities the <i>eContent</i> programme as part of the <i>eEurope</i> action plan will complement the work performed within PROMISE, focusing specifically on the digital content market.
TEN-TELECOM	TEN-Telecom has promoted the launch of trans-European and global telecommunications applications and services. It was launched in June 1997 by a European Parliament and Council Decision, and will run until the end of 2001. The programme funds the validation and the initial phases in the roll-out of an operational service. The thematic focus of <i>eContent</i> , addressing market barriers limiting the exploitation of public sector information, linguistic customisation and two specific market-enablers (access to capital and Multimedia rights clearance) clearly sets it apart from TEN-Telecom. The mechanisms used are also different: <i>eContent</i> is moving away from the classical project support for straightforward market development (addressing structural issues with an importance for the market and society as a whole).