Independent experts assessment

Application Reference: 225452-CP-1-2005-1-DE-MINERVA-MPP

Title : **Federating Observatories and Networking for Education**

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Experts comment

Expert 1

Comments (at least 4):
This is a very interesting project and one that could have high impact.
The rational for the project is sound and this is a very important issue the project plans to deal with.
The consortium has a good European coverage and experienced players in the subject the project is dealing with.
The project plans for monitoring and evaluation are briefly described but seem to be sound.

Recommendations (at least 4):
Although the consortium is relatively big and composed of experienced players it might be important to add partners from the new member states (There is only one partner now) to take part in the evaluation and host the regional seminars.
From the description it is not quite clear with what each partner will contribute. This should be clarified in a full proposal.
The quality assurance the output i.e. F-One website will be assessed according to needs further elaboration.
What will happen to this service when the project is over? This is of important issue to consider and should be elaborated on in the full proposal.

Expert 2

This project recognises that while many different organisations and projects seek to measure and assess ICT in education activities across Europe, they are diverse and not themselves networked. Hence use of their data is not being optimised. This project would develop a useful way to link such services (observatories) and explore with interested groups how best the linked data might be interrogated. Special attention will be given to developing practice in East European countries where expanding programmes are now under way.

Outputs will include a matrix of policy decision areas across which data might be grouped, a data base of sources, a website, news service, and programme of regional and international seminars. The data base will emerge from existing research : in a fast moving field this may mean it is rapidly out of date. The reasons for not refreshing this data need to be explained. Also any new attempt comprehensively to map the eEducation picture across Europe would duplicate other recent efforts (most of which have become obsolete before they are complete)

The project aims at a broad range of target groups including policy makers at all levels, key staff in education ICT agencies, in linked industries, as well as education researchers. The key problem will be to get them to use the new facility since they do not properly use the existing data sources.

Part of the project's seminar/conference programme will thus aim to explain the new facility and to establish how to make it 'policy-useful'. Unless this is achieved, this 'networking the networks' activity will not last beyond the two-year duration of the project.

The work programme is clearly identified and achievable. A separate event will give focus to East European aspects, organised by the Hungarian partner. Overall the partners are well-matched and with sufficient network players at the European level to give impetus to the project.

Monitoring has been well-considered. The roles of partners are fairly clear, and the timescale and work programme are convincing. Milestones will be set and quarterly reports completed. Evaluation plans are less convincing and need to be developed. A target should be set of achieving continuity of the activity from non-EU sources, thus demonstrating the project's value to its customers. This may not be easy to achieve, but it is worth a try.
Recommendations

The project should justify its proposal to use existing research to compile the database of pan-European data sources and/or take steps to update it
The project should avoid duplicating earlier attempts to establish a pan-European synoptic picture of eLearning, distracting from the main aims of the project
The project should adopt, as an additional target, achieving support for continuation of the work from non-EU sources, after the project ends
Evaluation and dissemination plans need to be more substantial.

Criteria : Programme code : MINERVA - Activity Code : MPP - Application Year : 2005 - Project Number in { 225636,223284,225452,225458,225630,225669,225411 }