



To all interested in the SVC

Provisional Information about the SVC Consolidation Programme

Ladies and Gentlemen

Just before leaving for the holidays the SVC coordinators (Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences) would like to give you some provisional information on the state of discussion concerning the framework and the criteria for the SVC Consolidation Programme (SVC-CP), as decided by the SVC Steering Committee (SVC-SC) on July 11th, 2003:

1. Provision of maintenance and user community support for qualified SVC Impulse Programme (SVC-IP) projects (approx. CHF 50'000 to 70'000 per project per year, max. until 2007; approx. CHF 40'000 for UAS-Projects)

Based on the project proposals received at the beginning of the SVC-IP, the developed products will be complete and ready for use by students and tutors by year-end 2003. Online learning products - like any other software products - must undergo continuous content and technical upgrades at regular intervals. In practice, the original production team or parts thereof could provide adapted new product versions. However, it is also conceivable that the content owner in collaboration with the project leader or an independent team of production specialists can undertake the same task. This approach seems more straightforward as the original production teams are likely to disband. Furthermore, it is expected that the time intervals between new product versions will gradually increase. With respect to the anticipated community support, educational specialists familiar with new media will perform the expected maintenance task most professionally.

Conclusion: The selection of SVC-IP Phase I & II projects that will qualify for maintenance and user community support shall be performed by the SVC-SC upon demand by the project leaders concerned. The application must be sent to the SVC Coordination Office three months prior to the project termination. Projects that are already finished or will end this year may apply until February 5th, 2004. The criteria being very much the same as outlined in the call for contributions, e.g.

1. Networks of common content owners that define, implement and use online course material
2. (Commitment that the course will be used by the partners. Shared responsibility of the partners);

3. Substantial reduction of face-to-face meetings to promote virtual mobility. A part of blended learning is still possible;
4. Positive field test result. Good feedback of the students.
5. Service a growing student community (organization, service, National Content Server NCS platform) and ensure that successful participants are awarded ECTS points.
6. Adequate matching funds (approx. CHF 50'000 to 70'000 per project per year) provided by the institution.

The SVC-SC will assign and contribute its financial support to a common maintenance pool at the institution. A SVC Local Coordinator (SVC-LC) shall provide a maintenance activity report including financial statements to the SVC-SC on an annual basis. This report will be reviewed annually to control if the conditions for funding are still fulfilled. The SVC-LC will also be responsible for the design and implementation of a suitable local maintenance organization and will act as the focal/brokerage point between all the institutional and SVC parties involved.

2. Establishment of a Competence/Service/Production Center (CSPC) at each tertiary education institution (provisional funding: see Appendix to the Swiss Virtual Campus – Consolidation Programme to Upgrade Teaching and Learning (2004–2007) on the website of the SUC, http://www.cus.ch/De/D_Projekte/D_Projekte_Campus/Projekte_VCS.html (for UAS 3/4 of the indicated amount).

Developed online courseware products must be of a high level of quality in order to be sustainable on a competitive and global level. The SVC-SC is convinced that this can only be achieved with increasingly competent and professionalized production teams at an institutional level. The SVC-SC also expects that these teams will remain in operation after termination of the SVC-CP. A mediating professional sponsored by SVC-CP Phase III project money (approx. CHF 100'000/year) will coordinate the content acquisition, course design and online courseware development processes between the network of content owners and the professional production team.

Not all of the UAS have the necessary experiences, size or resources to build up their own CSPC. They will all have to hand in a concept/strategy that makes clear how they want to make sure that the services that have to be offered by the CSPC of the leading house may be performed. Collaborations with already existing CSPC of UNIs are possible.

Conclusion: As this task will take place at the institutional level, it is proposed to assign the SVC-CP funds to a common professional service/product development pool at institutional level. A service/production report including financial statements shall be provided by the SVC-LC to the SVC-SC on an annual basis. The SVC-LC will also be responsible for

coordinating the local service/production team and acting as the focal point between all the institutional parties involved.

3. Initiate Series 3 and 4 calls for proposals/projects (approx CHF 300'000 each, approx 200'000 for UAS-Projects) for further online courseware development

Based on the mostly positive success of the SVC-IP Phase I & II projects, and given the experience gained, the implementation of a Phase III call for proposals/projects can be clearly justified and is a necessary part of the SVC-CP. For organizational, logistics and workload reasons, the Phase III call will be split into two separate calls for contributions (3rd and 4th series of projects). The selection criteria will consist of

1) Important selection criteria:

- A network must consist of at least three partners from tertiary education. International partners and institutions in the practice field may count as well.
- A clear commitment by the participating institutions must confirm that the developed courseware will become an integral part of the curriculum offered and honored with ECTS points.
- The project must be relevant and produce a potential impact. The produced e-learning course must be complementary to existing courses (SVC-IP, Phase I&II projects).
- The project must be based on clear and well-defined objectives and show a convincing exploitation and/or dissemination plan.
- The new e-learning course must show clear added value for students and lecturers, with convincing pedagogical objectives.
- The course architecture must be based on learning objects/modules that can be re-used.

2) Further selection criteria:

- Number of users addressed (critical mass for efficiency),
- Competence of consortium (participants well suited and committed),
- Project management (a proper project plan, e.g. phases, check points, deadlines, etc., including an evaluation concept),
- An adequate overall financial plan,
- Inter-institutional cooperation backed by letters of understanding or contracts signed,
- Use of existing e-learning platforms,
- Multi-language support,
- Innovative media design,
- Enhancing new ways of knowledge acquisition and transfer,
- Potential for course adaptation to the life-long-learning segment.

3) Special criteria for UAS projects:

- Cost Sharing Model: at least 30% contributed by the institution,

- Strategy/Concept of the direction board of the UAS concerning the implementation of a CSPC at their UAS,
- ECTS points and number of target students reached per year will be weighted
- Preference for blended learning implementations,
- Preference for continuing education implementations,
- Projects involved into the curriculum-reorganization of bachelor/master studies get an additional weight.

Given the inter-university cooperation required, as well as the common implementation criteria requested, the selection, financing and management at the national level of Phase III (3rd and 4th Series) of online course development projects will be the responsibility of the SVC-SC. This includes the call for project sketches, the invitation of project proposal and the project selection as well as the monitoring/coaching of the individual projects during the development life cycle. The selection process may also include the presentation and discussion of candidate projects to interested institutional parties such as members of the rectorates and faculty deans prior to the final decision taken by the SVC-SC. Projects from UAS will also be reviewed by the SVC-SC, but will be selected by the Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET) expert group.

Time Schedule

Time schedule for Phase III, 3rd Series of Projects is as follows: Call for project sketches: October 20, 2003; Deadline for project sketches: November 30, 2003; Invitation for submission of projects: February 5, 2004; Nomination of successful projects: April/May 2004; Nominated projects ready to start: July 1, 2004. The time schedule for the Phase III, 4th Series of Projects will be announced after the launching of the Phase III, 3rd Series of Projects. An information meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2003 in Bern.

General remark: Matching funds are based on a 50%/50% confederation/institution cost sharing model (for UAS at least 30% contribution by the institution). Federal financial resources for SVC projects will most likely end after 2007.

Please note: This information is provisional. It depends on later decisions of the Swiss University Conference (SUC), the Federal Office for Education and Science (FOES), the Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET) and the federal parliament.

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