

To: Heads of higher education institutions in
Wales

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Further Information:

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INVITATION TO PARTNER IN A PILOT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER SCHEME FOR HIGHER LEVEL CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO BE FUNDED THROUGH THE LEONARDO DA VINCI COMMUNITY VOCATIONAL TRAINING ACTION PROGRAMME

Introduction

1. This circular invites institutions to bid to become the lead partner in a pilot of the introduction of the European Credit Transfer Scheme for Higher Level Continuing Professional Development to be funded through the LEONARDO DA VINCI Community Vocational Training Action Programme Second Phase: 2000-2006.

Background

2. The European Credit Transfer Scheme has facilitated the exchange of students between institutions across Europe for many years. Following the Bologna Declaration ECTS has also become the potential core of a trans-national credit accumulation and transfer system. This project will enable HEIs in Wales to develop a first hand knowledge of developing an ECTS system, which will enable greater portability and access for students throughout Europe. The project will also raise the profile of Welsh HEIs throughout Europe, establish close transnational links and possibly provide the basis for further joint research and a project work
3. The Welsh Assembly Government and HEFCW invite a consortium group of two or more Higher Education Institutions in Wales to jointly bid to become the lead partner in an innovative project to pilot the introduction of the European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) for Higher Level Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provision in Wales. The European Partners are Italy: Regional Government of Tuscany, Education and Cultural Policy Department and Spain: Basque Government - Department of Education, Universities and Research

4. An initial programme submission made by HEFCW to the European Union-funded Leonardo programme was successful. The proposal is therefore in a position, if sector support is forthcoming, to proceed to full submission for 13 February 2004.
5. Should the Leonardo bid be successful, the project will commence from September 2004 for two years. At this stage we are looking for a Welsh HEI consortium. The financial contribution from the consortium of HEIs will be 10,000 Euros over two years (approximately £7,000). This investment would lever access to total funding of 200,000 euros over two years.

Programme objectives

6. The proposed project is focused on the Leonardo programme objectives:
 - To improve the skills and competencies of people;
 - To improve the quality and access to continuing vocational training;
 - To promote and reinforce the contribution of vocational training to the process of innovation;
 - To value learning; and
 - To promote social dialogue in vocational training.

Summary

7. This innovative and groundbreaking project will pilot the introduction of ECTS for higher-level courses (Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) level descriptors 4 to 8). It will involve the design of a process for ascribing credit values to identified programmes of learning, examples could be Tourism, Management Skills and Information Technology. A system to assist the recognition of ECTS by universities and professional bodies in vocational education will be explored. The Project will test the implications for higher-level vocational learners of developments in ECTS.
8. It is intended that a Welsh HEI will host the project and the Project Officer will work closely with the Welsh Higher Education Credit Consortium (WHECC) and the University Association for Lifelong Learning (UALL Cymru).
9. The project will:
 - a. Increase familiarity with ECTS as the proposed European credit accumulation and transfer scheme;
 - b. Develop an understanding of the higher-level vocational and professional training opportunities available in the Basque Country, Tuscany and Wales;
 - c. Identify similar CPD programmes in the two countries and the Tuscan region and identify a short list of non-credit-rated courses;
 - d. Negotiate with providers, professional/vocational bodies, employers and students to identify pilot programmes as case studies; and
 - e. Evaluate the case studies and disseminate the outcomes.

A copy of the Leonardo project submission is attached.

Funding

10. The total cost of the project over the two years is 360,000 Euros. The total cost of the contribution by the partners is 90,000 Euros divided equally between the Wales, Tuscany and Basque Governments, with the balance of 270,000 Euros to come from Leonardo. The Welsh funding of 30,000 Euros (over two years) will consist of:

Welsh Assembly Government:	10,000 Euros
CQFW:	10,000 Euros
a consortium of HEIs in Wales:	10,000 Euros

11. The details of the distribution of the projected 360,000-euro budget will be finalised in the proposal to be submitted in February 2004. It is anticipated at this stage that the Welsh HEIs would have a 200,000 euros budget over the two-year period.

Selection criteria

12. Bid proposals will be assessed by a small officer group representing CQFW and HEFCW. Bids will be assessed using the following criteria:

- A consortium approach providing pan Wales coverage;
- Experience of European credit systems ;
- The proposal has the explicit support of senior management
- The consortium needs to demonstrate successful record of project leadership and if possible experience of managing trans-national projects;
- Appropriate accommodation will be available to the Project and the Officer; and
- The institutional infrastructure will be available to the Project and the Officer.

Deadline for submission

13. HEIs are invited to submit proposals for involvement in the project as lead partner by Friday, 16 January 2004. The outcome of the bid will be notified on Wednesday, 21 January 2004.

14. The full Leonardo proposal document will be written by HEFCW, in conjunction with Welsh consortium and the transnational partners to be submitted by Friday, 13 February 2004.

15. If you have any queries regarding the above arrangements please contact Mike Downes, HE Credit Manager, HEFCW. Telephone: 029 20682215 or e-mail: michael.downes@hefcw.ac.uk

Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales

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To register an interest please complete the following information and faxback to by Friday 16 January 2004 on (029) 20763163; or send direct to:
Michael Downes CQFW, Ilex Close, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5DZ

Name:	Title:
Position:	
Higher Education Institution Lead Partner:	
E-mail:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Tel No:	Fax No:
Name of Partner Institution:	
Contact:	
Name of Partner Institution:	
Contact:	
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Project details

Name proposed Continuing and Professional Development Learning programmes to be explored:

Experience of Transnational projects:

Experience of European Credit Systems:

Experience of joint project work :

I am authorised on behalf of the above HEIs to declare that the submitted proposal with pay 10,000 euros over two years and will act as managing agent should the project become successful.

Authorised Signatory:

Name:

Position:

Stamp: