

JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE (JISC)

INVITATION TO TENDER

Extension and Development of LEAP2A (PIOP 3)

Introduction

1. Taking forward the Portfolio Interoperability Prototyping (PIOP) work, JISC is seeking to further extend the LEAP2A specification to cover other systems or platforms; and to further develop the specification itself. In order to do this, JISC invites tenders to conduct up to ten mini-projects to implement user-controlled LEAP2A export and import on their own systems, produce associated documentation, and discuss and agree any resulting implications for the specification.
2. The aims of the work as a whole are:
 - to pilot and further develop the LEAP2A specification
 - to ensure the development of LEAP2A continues to meet the needs of relevant systems and scenarios
 - to inform the enhancement of the documentation.
3. Total funding of **£50,000** (including VAT, travel and subsistence) is available for this strand of work, with an envisaged allocation of **£5,000** to each mini-project. Bids requesting less than this sum will also be considered.
4. All potential bidders are invited to a meeting in Birmingham on **23rd November 2009** where background and further information will be provided on this work as well as previous PIOP activities. See http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk/LEAP2_2009-11-23 for further information.
5. Bids are invited from those in a position to carry out development work on suitable existing systems. The deadline for proposals is 12 noon UK time on **Friday 18th December 2009**.
6. It is envisaged that bidders will be notified of the outcome of the evaluation process in week commencing **18th January 2010**.
7. The successful bidders will be expected to start work on or before **1st February 2010**.
8. The work is to be completed and fully reported by **30th July 2010**.

Background

9. The JISC is a joint body of the UK Higher and Further Education Funding Councils. It was established to support the further and higher education sectors in the use of information communications technology (ICT). It does this by providing a network service and by funding ICT development and services that support learning, teaching and research.
10. The JISC's e-Learning Programme is working with universities and colleges to support creative and effective use of e-learning by learners, practitioners and institutions. The Programme aims to promote the development, uptake and effective use of ICT to

support learning and teaching, so that institutions and their staff benefit from e-learning and related technologies and students enjoy a more flexible learning experience. Further information on the e-Learning Programme is available at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/programme_elearning.

11. A number of specifications have been developed to support the transfer of e-portfolio information between systems. Before the PIOP projects, the most widely known specifications specifically for the e-portfolio domain were IMS LIP, and built on top of that, IMS ePortfolio. UKLeaP, which was drafted for BSI and developed IMS LIP, has also been explored, but is now abandoned. An overlapping well-supported specification is HR-XML, which is designed for transfer of a wider range of information across HR systems more generally.
12. LEAP 2.0 work started as a result of grass roots demand from the sector, expressed in particular at a meeting of the CETIS Portfolio SIG in December 2006. The view had already built up that neither UKLeaP nor other specifications were ideal for practical use in the e-portfolio field. The demand was specifically for a simpler specification that was easier to implement, which led to JISC supporting a Portfolio Interoperability Prototyping (PIOP) project, running initially from January to July 2008. A specification was developed based on the Atom Syndication Format for representing most of the major classes of e-portfolio information actually held and used by the project partners. This was followed up by a further round of seven six-month projects which ran from November 2008 to March 2009 (<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearningcapital/piop.aspx>) which implemented and tested the specification within a number of e-portfolio and related systems. The resultant LEAP2A specification has been implemented, and made available to users, in two very widely adopted e-portfolio tools: PebblePad and Mahara, as well as others. Related documentation and further background information can be found at: http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk/Portfolio_interoperability_projects.
13. Further information regarding all past JISC-funded e-portfolio activities can be found at: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning/eportfolios.aspx>.

Activities to be carried out by the projects

14. Each of the mini-projects is expected to carry out a structured implementation and testing of the LEAP2A specification which will include the following key tasks (see Appendix A for further detail of specific tasks, outputs and timeframe):
 - Enable their system (the 'target system') to import existing LEAP2A objects from other existing e-portfolio systems
 - Export items from the target system in LEAP2A format to other e-portfolio systems
 - Contribute positively to discussions and consensus building, both online and face-to-face, on the experiences of the project and the implications for further development of the specification
 - Provide access to and relevant information on the target system as required
 - Document and share experiences with the wider community.

Outputs and Timetable

15. Each mini-project should commence on or before **Monday, 1st February 2010** and should be completed by **Friday, 30th July 2010**.

16. The main required outcome by the end of the project will be **the effective implementation of export and import of all appropriate information, by the system users, in LEAP2A format.**
17. A number of additional deliverables will be required at different times during the 6 month project timeframe, see Appendix A for a full breakdown.

Other considerations and expectations

18. Bids would be welcome from any organisation, including commercial or open-source system providers or developers, and further and higher education institutions. The key criterion of eligibility is being able to carry out development work on an existing e-portfolio or related system – one that uses information relating to that described within the LEAP2A specification – to give significant numbers of users the capability to move their information between different systems using LEAP2A. See also the Evaluation Criteria below.
19. The work must be carried out collaboratively with the other mini-projects. In particular, mini-projects must participate in collaborative communication (mostly online but also face-to-face) towards consensus agreements on the development and management of LEAP2A.
20. The collaboration will be overseen by JISC, and managed by CETIS, with Simon Grant as co-ordinator and the key contact.
21. It is likely that at least two face-to-face meetings will be arranged to help communication and collaboration between the mini-projects. Mini-projects will be expected to send one or more delegates, able to demonstrate systems or negotiate consensus, as required.

Terms and Conditions

22. JISC's standard terms and conditions of funding can be found at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/fundingopportunities/bidguide/proj_tocgrants.aspx. Bidders must view these prior to submitting a proposal. The terms and conditions must be followed by all JISC project holders where appropriate. Paragraphs 9, 25, 28-30, 33, 34 and 35 in particular are not necessarily appropriate in full, due to the limited extent and duration of the projects. Reasonable variations can be clarified through the Programme Manager.
23. As a general rule, JISC does not seek to retain IPR in the project and/or service outputs created as part of its programmes. However, funding is always made available on the condition that project outputs are made available, free at the point of use (or 'at cost' where appropriate), to the UK HE, FE and Research community in perpetuity and in accordance with JISC's Open Access and/or JISC's Open Source Software Policy wherever possible, and that these outputs may be disseminated widely in partnership with JISC.
24. JISC, however, reserves the right to acquire all Intellectual Property Rights, including, without limitation, copyright, database right, performers rights, patents and trade marks, whether registered or unregistered, in any works created by you as a result of the funding either indefinitely or for a certain fixed period of time on behalf of HEFCE. JISC also reserves the right to request that all Moral Rights are waived. This ability to

acquire the Intellectual Property Rights will only be used under exceptional circumstances and in any such case where JISC considers this necessary, the JISC will explain in writing to you the reasons for the transfer. This includes the situation where JISC is funding the creation of a national service for the community and there may be a need for HEFCE, on behalf of JISC's funding partners, to retain ownership of certain rights in order to maintain flexibility of future provision and availability of the service.

25. For all project and/or service outputs, acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant will provide JISC or its representatives with an irrevocable, non-exclusive royalty-free licence in perpetuity to exploit the outputs in any way it sees fit, including enabling the JISC to use, archive, preserve and disseminate the outputs.

JISC Management of the Project

26. This project will be overseen by **Lisa Gray**, e-Learning Programme Manager, based at the **Bristol** JISC Office.
27. Successful bidders will be expected to follow the normal JISC project management guidelines http://www.jisc.ac.uk/fundingopportunities/proj_manguide.aspx (where appropriate, as not all guidance will necessarily be applicable given the short duration of these projects) including adhering to good project management practices, regular reporting and participation in meetings as appropriate. Bidders are advised to view these prior to submitting a proposal.

Funding Available

28. Funding of **up to £5,000** per project is available including all travel and other expenses and any VAT applicable. Bidders should ensure they charge VAT for the proposed activity if required; JISC does not recover VAT. VAT should be charged at the applicable rate at the time of bidding; any increases to VAT rates will be honoured by JISC.
29. Funds will be payable half at the start of the project, and half upon completion of the work, on acceptance of the required deliverables (see Appendix A).

Costing and Pricing a Proposal

30. In view of the small level of funding all institutions and organisations submitting bids can use any clear and transparent costing methodology. For institutions and organisations outside UK Higher education this should be their usual costing and pricing practices. All costs should be clear and transparent, clarifying the number of days each individual working on the activity will provide, in order to assist the evaluators in determining the value for money of a proposal.

Structure of Proposals

31. A guide to bidding for JISC projects can be found at: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/bidguide>.
32. For these mini-projects, the bidding process is intended to be manageable, so a minimum of information is requested. The bid information should be no more than 5 sides of A4, including the cover sheet but excluding the budget.

33. Bids should include:

- a completed cover sheet (**Appendix B**);
- System, users and proposed work**
- a note on the scenarios of practice and of interoperation envisaged (see e.g. http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk/LEAP2A_practice_scenarios and http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk/LEAP2A_interoperation_scenarios)
 - a description of the target system for which interoperability will be implemented;
 - approximate numbers of learners using the target system;
 - an outline description of the information stored in the target system that will be available for export, and which will be imported if provided;
 - an outline description of the proposed work;
 - the position of the system with regard to IP and licensing for development work;

Staffing

- the name(s) of staff member(s) who will carry out the systems development work, with a short summary of their relevant expertise and experience;
- the staff member(s) responsible for allocating the time of the developers;
- the primary contact;

Risks

- a brief assessment of the risks associated with the work and how these will be managed;

Budget

- A brief detailing of costs including a statement on VAT. Staff costs should be broken down into the estimated number of days to be contributed to the project by each person/percentage of FTE; the cost per person; salary grade (if applicable). Calculation of other costs, such as travel and subsistence; hardware and software (if applicable) should also be clarified. All costs must be justified. Any institutional contribution should be clearly identified.

Evaluation Criteria

34. The proposals will be evaluated by an evaluation panel appointed by the JISC.
35. To be eligible for funding, mini-projects must in a position to carry out development work on or adapt an existing operational system, whether commercial or free / open source, for which there is substantial capability for interoperability. These may be called “e-portfolio” systems, or they may deal with information covered in LEAP2A under another name.
36. Evaluation criteria, in no particular order, to be used to evaluate the proposals, are as follows:
- The installed user base for the target system who would have access to the interoperability services (a larger number is preferable);
 - The overlap of the target system information with LEAP2A (a greater extent of overlap is preferable);
 - Feasibility and realism of approach;
 - Value for money;
 - An appropriate mix of skills for the mini-project, including rationale for collaboration in the case of consortia bids;
 - Synergy with JISC projects (e.g. collaboration from JISC projects);
 - Consideration of the risks associated with the project;
 - Clear, easy to understand costs for the project, with a clear rationale/breakdown of costs provided.

Legal Requirements

37. Potential bidders should be aware that as a public body, JISC is subject to legislation such as the Race Relations Amendment Act, 2000, Equality Act 2006 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (see <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lgm/divers/>). JISC is also subject to the Data Protection Act 2003 and the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000. JISC requires any potential bidder to be aware of and abide by these regulations.
38. Any information that a bidder considers to be commercial in confidence will need to be put into a separate annex in the tender submission. JISC may still be obliged to make this information available if challenged. All tender submissions other than information in this annex will be deemed to be disclosable under the FOI Act. No additional security settings should be activated for PDFs to allow JISC to redact information if necessary prior to any release under FOI. However, JISC would never disclose any information during the actual tendering process, to avoid any prejudice to this process.

Submitting a Proposal

39. The deadline for receipt of submissions is **12:00 noon UK time on Friday 18th December 2010**. Bids should be sent to **LEAP2A@jisc.ac.uk**. **Late proposals will NOT be accepted**. It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that the proposal has arrived by the deadline stated.
40. Bids should be no longer than 5 single-sides of A4 pages (including the cover sheet but excluding the budget and any confidential annex as described above) and should be typeset in Arial or a similar font at a minimum of 11-point size and minimum 20 mm margins all round. **Any bids without a cover sheet or that exceed the page limit will be rejected by the Executive prior to the evaluation stage. NO additional appendices should be attached to the bid unless specifically requested in this document.**
41. An electronic copy of the bid should be received in PDF format by this deadline. This is an electronic-only submission process, therefore all documentation (including the cover sheet and any annexes) must be submitted in PDF format, as a single file.
42. To summarise, a bid will be automatically rejected if:
 - i. It is received after the stated deadline;
 - ii. A cover sheet is not included;
 - iii. It exceeds the page limit outlined in the tender.

Award of Contract

43. A selection panel will be established to review the bids received. JISC's procedure for evaluating bids can be found at: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/bideval>.
44. It is anticipated that bidders will be notified of the outcome of this tender exercise during the week beginning **Monday 18th January 2010**. The successful bidders will be expected to start work on or before **1st February 2010**.
45. JISC will expect to work with the successful bidders to agree the workplan.
46. The JISC shall be under no obligation to accept the lowest, or any tender, and tenderers shall submit offers on the basis of so doing at no cost to the JISC.

Further Information

47. Further background information can be found from http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk/Portfolio_interoperability_projects.
48. Should you have any queries about this invitation to tender, for queries relating to the eligibility and funding please contact Lisa Gray (l.gray@jisc.ac.uk); for queries relating to the content or conduct of work to be done please contact Simon Grant (asimong@gmail.com).

**JISC Executive
October 2009**

Appendix A

Each of the mini-projects will be expected to carry out work as defined in the following paragraphs, in order to make a particular e-portfolio or other related system interoperable using LEAP2A. This is called the “target system” here – that is, the target of the technical interoperability work. Mini-projects are expected to:

- Create a test account on the target system which will be used for test export purposes. This test account should have enough representative information so that all the kinds of portfolio information that may plausibly be transferred between systems are present. There should be a commitment to maintaining this test account at least until the end of 2010.
- Describe the typical scenarios involving learners and other users using the target system (for example for supporting personal development planning, reflective practice, professional development, etc.).
- Construct a table documenting the relevant individual fields of information in the target system, their data definitions, and their mapping to LEAP2A. The mapping may be initially proposed by the project partner owning the system, but agreement must be negotiated with the other mini-projects, and the coordinator. In cases where the mapping is not straightforward, explanatory notes are required. This documentation must allow a reader to relate input fields on the test account together with the export mapping to LEAP2A.
- Provide a glossary of relevant terms used in the target system interface, documentation, and code, relating these where possible to terms used in the LEAP2A documentation.
- Implement a way for the target system to export learners' information in LEAP2A format. Using this export facility, the target system will be expected to export the information in the test account, and to provide the exported file to others to import, together with relevant attachments. Documentation of the approach taken is required, together with details of software libraries used.
- Implement a way of importing into the target system LEAP2A files as generated both by the target system and by other systems. Documentation of the approach taken is required, together with details of software libraries used.
- Document clearly the results of the import of files from at least three other broadly compatible systems, particularly noting where material or meaning appears to have been unavoidably lost, as some inevitably will be. This documentation should be designed to help others also trying to import similar files.

Deliverables and timetable

- The mini-project should commence on or before **Monday, 1st February 2010** and should be completed by **Friday, 30th July 2010**.
- The main required outcome by the end of the project will be **the effective implementation of export and import of all appropriate information, by the system users, in LEAP2A format.**
- A **brief project outline** will be required to be submitted by **12th February 2010** in plain text format.
- Export of LEAP2A information should be implemented by **4th May 2010** in order to give the other mini-projects a good chance to test imports from a range of other systems. If there is an unavoidable delay in implementation, then at very least full LEAP2A examples of the information to be exported must be provided, together with a commitment to implement export in that form.
- In addition, the following deliverables will be required on the specified dates, or by the end of the mini-project if no date is specified

- A test account, on the target system, by 1st March 2010
- Any relevant documentation given to learners using the system, by 1st March 2010
- A glossary, by 1st March 2010.
- A table mapping information fields. The initial table to be submitted by 1st March 2010, and the final version agreed by 2nd April 2010.
- An account of the scenarios in which learners and other practitioners typically use the target system.
- Documentation of the approach taken to export.
- Documentation of the approach taken to import.
- Documentation of the success or failure of meaningful import from other systems.
- A report or case study that includes:
 - discussion of the organisational and technical issues encountered during the course of the project
 - evaluation of and feedback on the LEAP2A specification, including an evaluation of its usability in the context of the target system, with identification of any problem areas and suggestions for improvements, including resource/time implications as a guide for other developers implementing the specification
 - recommendations to JISC on further desirable development activity
- Any additional deliverables as agreed with individual mini-projects.

Appendix B

Cover sheet for bids (all sections must be completed)

JISC ITT: **XXX**

Name of institution/organisation:
Project partners (if applicable):
Full contact details for primary contact: Name: Position: Email: Address: Tel: Fax:
Length of Project:
Project Start & End Dates:
Total Funding Requested from JISC:
Outline Project Description
Tick this box to indicate that this proposal has been approved by an appropriate member of the institution/organisation <input type="checkbox"/>