



Centre for IT & Law

Reviewer's Report

**LEFIS - Legal Framework for the Information Society
Thematic Network Project
Programme SOCRATES Sub Programme ERASMUS
GA No: 225990 - CP - 1 - 2005 - ES - ERASMUS - TN**

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Overview

The LEFIS project has the following stated **objectives**:

- the development of undergraduate Masters level modules in both ICT law and general law for law students, computer science students and engineers, in line with the objectives of the Bologna Declaration and the Tuning initiative;
- the development of teaching modules with juridical or technological content in electronic format;
- the development of a consolidated European infrastructure with global reach designed to prepare socio-legal, economic and statistical studies; and organisational and regulatory proposals; in relation to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs);
- the performance of studies and development of organizational and regulatory policies and proposals for the governance of ICTs.

The LEFIS project's **target groups** are:

- University academic staff;
- Academic associations;
- Students and Student associations;
- Policymakers within the participant countries, at varying levels;
- Professional associations;
- Teachers;
- Private and Public sector third parties.

The main LEFIS project **activities** envisaged during the funding period were:

- the development of a non-profit association comprised (initially) of interested LEFIS members;
- the development of a business plan for exploitation of products developed jointly by the LEFIS members;
- the development of a common web site (or portal) for the dissemination of common teaching products, and information about research and development activities;
- the organisation of annual Workshops and Conferences on the most important topics on regulation of the ICTs in each participating country;
- the establishment of nationally delivered European Masters and teaching modules for graduates and undergraduates in law, social sciences and for computing/engineering students with a common core based on the methodology of the Tuning project;
- the publication of comparative analysis in the form of reports and books;
- participation in the activities of the European Archipelago of Humanistic Thematic Networks.

The main LEFIS project **outputs** envisaged during the funding period were:

- registration of 'LEFIS' as a european trade mark;
- creation of a non-profit association integrating international and national groups of public and private institutions to develop practical implementation strategies for the activities of the Thematic network;
- creation of a business plan with the aim of producing at least one product per year, jointly developed by the LEFIS members;

- creation of updated educational programs on principles of ICT law and related subjects throughout Europe based on the methodology of the Tuning project;
- holding of/attendance at a variety of Conferences and Workshops, in conjunction with various Professional Associations;
- publication of results, including guidelines addressing training and guidelines for the integration of policies directed at experts tasked with making legal policies for the regulation of the ICTs;
- publication of reports and analysis of surveys across participating countries.

This review of the work of the LEFIS project is written having regard to the following documentation:

- The LEFIS application documentation (Parts 1 & 2);
http://www.lefis.org/management/applications/lefis/LEFIS_Application_2005_part_1.pdf
http://www.lefis.org/management/applications/lefis/LEFIS_Application_2005_part_2.pdf
- The selection letter from the Commission (03/08/05), including the comments of the independent experts who assessed the Project proposal;
<http://www.lefis.org/management/applications/lefis/aplicelefis.pdf>
- The LEFIS 2006 Progress Report.
http://www.lefis.org/management/progress_and_final_reports/lefis/lefis_progress%20report_2006.pdf

and by general review of the material available on the LEFIS website. No institutional visits or project representative interviews were conducted as part of this review.

Project Activities Assessment Table based on Project Report submitted on 27/06/06

References to products in the 'Reviewer comments' column of this table relate to the products outlined in Section 3 of the LEFIS Progress Report dated 27/06/06

Stage	Outputs Envisaged	Activities leading to outputs	Completed	Reviewer Comments
<p>Stage 1 LEFIS-TN KICKOFF 01.10.05 / 31.10.05</p>	<p>General plan of activities and meetings for the two years (including places and dates) Appointment of persons in charge of the Work Groups (WG) and initial planning of WG activities Management rules and certification policy for the certification authority within the LEFIS PKI and for the LEFIS communications tools</p>	<p>Establishment of the LEFIS Administrative office Meeting of the NSG-Network Steering Group - Brussels Constitution of work groups and appointment of in-charge-persons: - WG1: graduate studies - WG2: postgraduate studies - WG3: continuous education - WG4: public-private relations - WG5: quality Support planning for the NSG and WGs activities by the coordinator Drafting of use rules for the LEFIS communications secure infrastructure: PKI, web portal, online discussion groups (fori), IP phone, chat, email, blog Diffusion activities of the first year in countries of partners</p>	<p>Yes Yes (change of venue) Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes</p>	<p>Product (1) - Satisfactory Product (1) - Satisfactory Product (2) - Satisfactory Product (2) - Satisfactory Products (3-6) - Satisfactory Product (7) - Satisfactory</p>
<p>Stage 2 COMPETENCES 01.11.05 / 31.01.06</p>	<p>Draft document on general and specific competences of the studies promoted by LEFIS Report on the adequacy of LEFIS-defined competences to TUNING Agreement and final report on the general and specific competences of the studies promoted by LEFIS</p>	<p>Development of the planned NSG and WGs activities as for - definition of competences to be acquired by LEFIS students - discussion on further teaching and learning issues (contents, teaching offer, materials...) Assessment of initial results by a TUNING advisor First-year General Assembly, focused on competences.- Firenze Definition of the general and specific competences to be acquired by students at all levels (graduate, postgraduate and continuous education), classified by three major areas: - Law and policy area - Business and management - Informatics and telecom</p>	<p>Yes Yes Yes (change of venue) Yes</p>	<p>Products (8 & 10) - Satisfactory Product (12) - Satisfactory Product (9, 11) - Satisfactory</p>

<p>Stage 3 PROPOSAL OF THE LEFIS TEACHING MODEL 01.02.06 / 30.04.06</p>	<p>Proposal of contents, ECTS and work load of the modules elaborated by the Thematic Network Draft proposal of the LEFIS Teaching Model Proposal of e-learning modules</p>	<p>WG's Workshops - Development of the planned tasks of WG1, WG2, WG3, WG4 and WG5. Proposal of normalization and quality requirements for LEFIS learning materials</p>	<p>Yes Yes</p>	<p>Product (13-16) - Satisfactory Product (17 & 18) - Satisfactory</p>
<p>Stage 4 FEASIBILITY OF THE LEFIS TEACHING MODEL 01.05.06 / 30.06.06</p>	<p>Report on the feasibility of the LEFIS Teaching Model</p>	<p>Assessment of the current teaching offerings in the light of the LEFIS model (Stages 2-3) Proposals on involvement of non academic members in the LEFIS model (e.g. "practica") Selection of participants for model implementation Extended Network Steering Committee Meeting in La Laguna Participation in activities organized by another organization</p>	<p>Yes Yes Yes Additional Additional</p>	<p>Product (19) - Satisfactory Product (20) - Satisfactory Satisfactory Satisfactory Products (21-28) - Satisfactory</p>

Remaining Project Activities

<p>Stage 5 LEARNING MATERIALS 01.07.06 / 30.09.06</p>	<p>Online publication of learning material (and in printed form if possible) eLearning model-modules</p>	<p>Elaboration of nine sets of learning materials covering all levels (graduate, postgraduate and continuous education) in accordance to the LEFIS rules (Stage 2-3) Design of three eLearning model-modules</p>		<p>Now Stage 6</p>
<p>Stage 6 PROOF OF THE LEFIS MODEL 01.10.06 / 31.01.07</p>	<p>Design of LEFIS tests Report by the WG5 on quality issues Evaluation report (external audit)</p>	<p>Design of assessment quests and tests by the WG5 (Quality) according to the criteria defined in Stage 3 Carrying out of tests and surveys in selected centres Internal audit (WG5) of the content and results of the teaching experiences External audit of LEFIS activities (first year) Diffusion activities of the second year in countries of partners</p>		<p>Now Stage 7</p>

<p>Stage 7 LEFIS ACCREDITATION SYSTEM 01.02.07/ 31.07.07</p>	<p>Working document on the LEFIS accreditation system and the LEFIS code of practices. LEFIS business plan</p>	<p>Review of experiences and needs (reports, audits) Contrast with the TUNING results in other areas Workshop on the LEFIS accreditation system.- Beja (Portugal) Drafting of accreditation rules for the LEFIS teaching model Drafting of the LEFIS business plan</p>		<p>Now Stage 5</p>
<p>Stage 8 THEMATIC WORKSHOPS 01.03.07 / 30.06.07</p>	<p>Online publication of materials and handbooks by each workshop</p>	<p>Scientific Workshops focused on the LEFIS thematic areas: Telecom. Governance.- Florence (Italy) Legal Principles for key technical issues. Communicating the Law.- Oslo (Norway) Ethics, Rights & Control.- Bratislava (Eslovaquia)</p>		
<p>Stage 9 FINAL ASSEMBLY 01.08.07 / 30.08.07</p>	<p>Final document on the LEFIS accreditation system and the LEFIS code of practices (approval) Approval and formal constitution of the LEFIS Association Report by the TUNING advisor on the educational activities of the Thematic Network</p>	<p>Assessment of activities Review of the activities in co-operation with the TUNING advisor Conclusions of every WGs Final General Assembly.- Wroclaw (Poland)</p>		
<p>Stage 10 CONCLUDING TASKS 01.09.07 / 30.09.07</p>	<p>Final report</p>	<p>External audit Final conclusions</p>		

Assessment

The LEFIS Project appears, to date, to be progressing broadly in accordance with the timetable provided in the original project proposal. Having replaced the member from Ireland who withdrew, the Project now has a full complement of representation from the Member States originally envisaged, and access to a broad range of affiliated organisations drawn from outside the EU. The management structure of the project has been fully established, including the LEFIS Administrative Office, Network Steering Group, and 5 Working Groups; and these elements all appear to be progressing with their stated objectives. Minutes of the meetings of the Network Steering Group, General Assemblies and Working Groups are available from the LEFIS website.

While the progress of registration of 'LEFIS' as a Community Trade Mark (CTM) does not appear to be explicitly addressed in the LEFIS Progress Report of 27/06/06, a search on the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market - Trade Marks and Designs (OHIM) database at:

http://oami.europa.eu/CTMOnline/RequestManager/en_SearchBasic_NoReg

produces the following information:

Trade mark name: LEFIS LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

Trade mark No: 005625132

Trade mark basis: CTM

Filing date: 02/01/2007

Nice Classification: 16 - Printed matter; bookbinding material. 35 - Advertising; business management; merchandising. 41 - Education, training and entertainment services; publication of books. 42 - Scientific and technological services; scientific dissemination.

Trade mark: Individual

Type of mark: Figurative

Acquired distinctiveness: No

Status of trade mark: Application accepted



This means that the CTM application has proceeded through examination by OHIM and is now subject to publication/opposition requirements before final registration.

Production of required deliverables from the Project is progressing satisfactorily, and there is clear evidence of a wide range of developmental activity taking place. In terms of dissemination, the project has been successful in maintaining a high profile, has produced a number of quality publications, and has developed a valuable resource in the form of the Project website at

<http://www.lefis.org/>

and the associated blogs available at:

<http://www.estig.ipbeja.pt/~obsblogjur/>

The website has been created using Moodle. Moodle is a software package for producing internet-based courses and web sites, and is provided freely as Open Source software (under the GNU Public License) – “Moodle’s open source license and modular design means that many people can develop additional functionality, and development is undertaken by a globally diffuse network of commercial and non-commercial users” (Wikipedia). The website is well laid out and easy to navigate. Obtaining a PKI certificate for extended use of the website was relatively simple, although the user instructions were oriented towards use of proprietary Microsoft products (Internet Explorer, Outlook Express) where I use non-Microsoft open source applications (Mozilla Firefox,

Mulberry). Despite these minor considerations, in general the technical infrastructure of the Project appears practical, effective, and sustainable.

The work carried out by the Project in the areas of undergraduate, Masters and continuing development level modules in both ICT law and general law for law students, computer science students and engineers has resulted to date in the production of:

- Questionnaires about the general and specific competences, and appropriate subject matter for such modules for dissemination to a range of stakeholders;
- Responses to the questionnaires and analysis of those responses;
- From those questionnaires and the analysis of the responses, a set of core competencies for 9 sets of qualified learning materials, three for each defined teaching area (Law and Policy / Business and management / Informatics and Telecommunications) and educational level (graduate, postgraduate and continuing education);
- A LEFIS Tuning template that identifies points of reference, convergence and common understanding in those teaching areas, taking account of generic competences; subject-specific competences; the role of ECTS as an accumulation system; and the role of learning, teaching, assessment and performance in relation to quality assurance and evaluation;

http://www.lefis.org/outcomes/t_template/lefis_tuning.pdf

- A proposal for a LEFIS Education Seal that could be awarded to institutions meeting the LEFIS core principles, as determined by an evaluation team from the LEFIS Network, which would identify the main characteristics of computer and law education in accordance with the requirements of current social needs. In accordance with the Tuning principles, this would not require institutions to harmonise their degree programmes or conform to a unified, prescriptive or definitive European curricula.

http://www.lefis.org/outcomes/lefis_seal/lefissealcode.pdf

The development work in the teaching area is thus clearly progressing satisfactorily. In particular, the *LEFIS TUNING Template* (Extended version) is an interesting and useful (if somewhat under-proofread) overview of the development of teaching practices in the field of law and ICTs across the Member States, and has the potential to be a key tool in the development and assessment of current and future study programs and courses in the field across the EU. It appears from the materials on the LEFIS website that the project partners are actively seeking to implement the LEFIS and Tuning requirements in their respective teaching offerings.

The project has been very active in participating in relevant conference and workshops, both in areas of practical pedagogy and in research into legal, economic and social studies and regulative proposals on ICT, ICT Law and the governance of the information and knowledge society. In terms of other publications, the Project has published 6 revised papers from a Workshop on Legal Aspects of E-Government, which was co-organized by the Mykolas Romeris University of Lithuania, the University of Zaragoza (Spain) and the Association for the Promotion of New Information Technologies and e-Commerce (APTICE), in the UK e-journal *Journal of Information, Law & Technology (JILT)*

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/elj/jilt/2005_2-3/

and an edited collection of articles, *Gobierno, derecho y tecnología: las actividades de los poderes públicos*. Ed. Fernando Galindo. Thomson (Civitas), 2006. ISBN: 8447025800. While I am not in a position to comment on the latter publication, the articles in the *Journal of Information, Law & Technology (JILT)* are of a good standard, and are published in a well known and award winning e-journal.

Conclusion

Therefore, it is possible to report, on the basis of the material available to me as a reviewer for the project, that it appears that for this stage of the LEFIS Thematic Network Project:

- its work is in accordance with its stated objectives;
- it is engaging satisfactorily with its indicated target groups;
- it is carrying out its activities efficiently and effectively; and,
- its outputs are both of high quality, and in relation to the administrative and technical infrastructure and the creation of updated educational programs on principles of ICT law and related subjects throughout Europe, appear practical and sustainable.

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April 2007.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Charlesworth', with a stylized flourish at the end.