

S-TEAM News No.11

Science-Teacher Education Advanced Methods

A phase change in European Science Education

December 17th 2008

WE'RE GOING TO BRUSSELS!

Finally, we know the result - we have been invited to Brussels for negotiations! The S-TEAM proposal had the top score of all the applications. So although this is not the final go-ahead, we are at the stage of detail changes rather than anything major. Congratulations to everybody for contributing to a successful process, especially when it came to the MoUs and EPSS registration. And apologies for treading on toes as we rushed towards the deadline!

The next stage

More news in January when we get the final, formal invitation, meanwhile more versions of a slightly amended proposal to prepare. This will address the minor points in the evaluation re.budget distribution and the precise nature and length of training activities etc. I will contact partners direct if and when we need more information.

The future of INQUEST

The new proposal (INQUEST) will go ahead on the basis that we are keen to demonstrate that we can do it again and extend the successful work of S-TEAM, keeping closely to the Call and therefore focusing on dissemination and related activities rather than production.



Our intention is not to regard the two proposals as different versions of the same thing but to provide a new proposal which complements S-TEAM and has strong justification for additional funding:

1. We have some new and significant partners in INQUEST and we should therefore be able to extend our geographical coverage and numbers of teachers & students reached.
2. We have made the deliverables more precise and have stepped up the focus on effective engagement with teachers and dissemination across Europe and beyond.
3. We have redistributed the PMs in a better way across the partnership and have created a better balance between the partners
4. We have been reflexive about the process of forming the consortium and have taken steps to becoming a learning organization.¹

¹ It's OK, I have reservations about the term 'learning organization' but also have some research to apply...

5. At the negotiating stage we will probably make some changes to S-TEAM in the direction of 2 and 3. We may be able to suggest including additional partners in order to use the new contacts made during the INQUEST submission. It is unlikely that we will get more money at that stage.

New WP structure

As you will have seen from the previous version the WPs have been reorganised into a more sequential structure. Per Inge suggests that due to the acceptance of S-TEAM, it would create unnecessary duplication if we allocated time to creating materials which in theory we should all have produced in S-TEAM. This mainly affects WP4.

WP1 will deal with management as before, but slimmed down to reflect more emphasis on the national working group (NWG) activities

WP2 will focus on elaborating a shared purpose for the whole project, which includes defining terms such as “inquiry” and gaining a common understanding of what we are trying to achieve. This is a more difficult task than it appears and we know from research that it has been a problem in other projects and organisations. It is not about a mission statement but there will be a document summing up what we think we are doing and how we are going to do it.

WP3 will be describing and analysing the pedagogical fields of the partner countries. This means taking account of the institutions and conditions which set the conditions for pedagogy in the national level. All partners will be involved in National working groups (NWGs) and these groups will produce reports identifying ways in which INQUEST can make an impact at that specific national level.

WP4 will now be involved with enrolling schools to work with the project, in order to get the products of S-TEAM into the hands of teachers. It will work on creating partnerships with schools, teacher education providers and science centres or other informal educators.

WP5 will be concerned with teacher engagement, i.e. taking the products of WP4 and getting them into the school or classroom, and also collecting and acting on teacher feedback

WP6 will focus on designing a new network structure that will facilitate teachers in talking to each other, talking to researchers and others, and in changing their practice, without introducing a new web portal.

WP7 is about indicators as before.

WP8 is about media and dissemination, including especially an element of European dissemination with the intention of strengthening the European pedagogical field.

Budget

We expect the project to last for 42 months and the total requested budget will be in the region of €4.5-5m.

Next Steps

We are aware that this is a tight timescale and a difficult process but it is a necessary one. We will repeat the procedure for generating Memoranda of Understanding (the famous MoUs) in relation to the new call, as the previous MoUs only apply to S-TEAM, and in any case are only valid for 6 months after the closing date (24/07/08).

Hilde is sending these today and she should receive these and have the process completed by 22nd December at the latest. Andreas and Per Inge are dealing with the budget and have been in touch with some requirements for figures etc.

The deadline is 13 January 2009 and we will keep a day or two in reserve, so any last minute comments etc should be sent by 6th January at the latest - ideally before the 22nd.

Finally, we thank you for your patience and support - it has been a long wait but it has been worth it. Please also pass on our

thanks to all those in research offices and elsewhere who did the difficult bits!

regards and have a good break (once you have sent everything off!)

Peter

PS

There is a sub-text to all this which some of you may already have thought about. A project of this nature requires a lot of meetings, travel and generally extra work, which probably has consequences at home. We were pleased to hear that several partners have had happy domestic events during the time that the project has been coming together (Congratulations to Ayelet, Gultekin and Laura!). We will try to be a family-friendly project, I'm not sure exactly how yet, but suggestions are welcome and we will be pleased to provide early-years science education creches at meetings!

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