Helping all stakeholders to define and adopt best practice related to the application of standards and specifications for digital content used in schools.

Charter for ASPECT Associate Partners

This is a preliminary version (v1) of a Charter for ASPECT Associate Partners.

What is ASPECT?

The ASPECT project is a Best Practice Network (BPN) supported by the European Commission's eContent*plus* Programme that involves 22 partners from 15 countries, including 9 Ministries of Education (MoE), four commercial content developers and leading technology providers.

For the first time, experts from all international standardisation bodies and consortia active in e-learning (CEN/ISSS, IEEE, ISO, IMS, ADL) are working together in order to improve the adoption of learning technology standards and specifications.

Why is ASPECT needed?

For many stakeholders concerned with the use of digital resources in schools, educational content standards and specifications remain largely impenetrable. Part of the difficulty is the nature of the topic itself and the technical complexity of the issues under consideration. However, there is a growing awareness that part of the problem also stems from the failure of standards' experts and bodies to really connect with the educational community and to fully appreciate the needs of end-users.

Raising awareness concerning the need for standards is not enough, particularly as there is a growing scepticism among educational practitioners about the need for standards in a world where open educational resources and tools are becoming ever more popular and where standards organisations can appear to be more top-down and reactive rather than enabling.

What will ASPECT do?

The aim of ASPECT is to help redress a perceived 'disconnect' between standards' organisations and the educational community. It will do this by moving beyond simply raising awareness of issues related to standards and specifications for educational content related to the school sector. In particular it will:

- **support emerging standards and specifications** that map to and are influenced by best practice related to the use of ICT in schools;
- focus on **practical implementations** of a range of content standards and specifications;

- analyse how a range of standards and specifications **have been combined** in order to be applied to ASPECT content and propose a strategy for how these implementation approaches can be taken to scale and adopted by a wider community of stakeholders.
- **validate the work in the ASPECT Best Practice Network with schools** in four countries in order to determine to what extent the implementation of standards and specifications in the project leads to greater usability of ASPECT content.

Who can participate in ASPECT?

ASPECT will invite participation from both organisations and individuals, including:

- policy makers and technical staff in national Ministries of Education and regional/municipal educational authorities
- members of the standards' community
- computer and ICT advisers in schools
- organisations building educational content repositories
- commercial educational publishers
- developers of both commercial content and open educational resources
- tools' and learning platform developers and vendors
- educational broadcasters
- libraries, museums, science centres and other organisations providing digital resources to schools

Participating in ASPECT

ASPECT aims to be an open, transparent and proactive network that seeks to involve participants from all interested stakeholders in the ASPECT online community.

Organisations and individuals can also participate in ASPECT Best Practice Network events by becoming an **ASPECT Associate Partner**. Membership of ASPECT is open to any organisation or individual that is able to contribute to its primary mission of helping stakeholders to define and adopt best practice related to the application of standards and specifications for digital content used in schools.

There is no fee involved in order to join ASPECT or to participate in its online community but organisations and individuals are required to meet all their own costs involved in attending ASPECT events.

In order to register as an Associate Partner and be able to attend ASPECT events, organisations and individuals are asked to complete a short application form on the ASPECT web site (http://aspect.eun.org/node/23). In particular, Associate Partners are asked to indicate why they are interested in joining the network and any particular skills or expertise they can offer to the network and other ASPECT members.

Following registration, Associate Partners will automatically be invited to participate in ASPECT events. In the course of the project, ASPECT will organise:

- Three major public workshops where the results of the ASPECT Best Practice Network will be presented, discussed and debated. These workshops are designed to acquaint stakeholders with different standards and specifications, provide demonstrations, and highlight best practice to facilitate implementation of the standards.

- Three international technical events such as codebashes and plugfests to bring together different learning content stakeholders. These code bashes and plugfests will be hands-on interoperability test sessions. As a result of the plugfests, a survey of interoperability issues for various systems will be maintained and be made available to all ASPECT Associate Partners.

- Up to five national or regional workshops held in national languages, preferably to be run at, or in tandem with, major European learning technology events or more regional/national events.

Obligations of ASPECT Associate Partners

ASPECT is particularly interested in working with organisations and individuals that can take an *active* part in both ASPECT events and the ASPECT online community. It is particularly hoped that as many Associate Partners as possible will be able to participate in the practical implementation of standards and specifications being explored in the project (using their own content) and, based on this experience, contribute to the development of best practice related to this activity.

Where Associate Partners decide to provide learning content as part of their involvement in the project, ASPECT requires that providers:

- make explicit the license of the content in human-readable form and, preferably, also in machine readable format

- apply a unique identifier to their content

- indicate the learning resource type of their content according to a provided LOM-based Application Profile

- use thesaurus keywords provided by ASPECT in order to support multilinguality and advanced search within the ASPECT federation of content repositories.