



Information Package for FP6 IST Projects in call 1 addressing Strategic Objective area 2.3.1.9 'Networked businesses and governments'

Standardization and research carried out under European Framework Programmes are closely connected. In many cases research aiming to resolve technical and scientific problems can be used to develop a new standard or to improve an existing one. It can even be used to anticipate future standards.

Moreover, research that is initiated for commercial or academic reasons and not primarily aiming at developing standards or standards related output, may still contain elements supporting ongoing or new standardisation processes or may require interfacing with standards bodies to support or improve the dissemination of its results.

The COPRAS project addresses this close connection between research and standardisation. Under the Framework Programmes, research projects are asked to keep standards bodies informed about potential contributions they can make to the standards work. COPRAS gives them the tool to fulfil this obligation.

Why choose to standardise?

Standardisation processes are carried out for a number of different reasons, such as the establishment of compatibility and interoperability, the removal of trade barriers through harmonisation or the safety and health of citizens. The three groups of stakeholders generally benefiting from standards are industry, consumers and governments.

However, although sometimes neglected, standardization is also beneficial to research projects desiring to upgrade their results and wishing to better exploit their output. For example, developing new standards can help to increase the quality of a product or even build a competitive advantage; it can create the ability to test according to internationally agreed principles or it may in some cases enable the exploitation of intellectual property.

In addition there are a number of other reasons for research projects to enter into standardisation processes, such as higher international recognition, networking opportunities, or the ability to cooperate with a variety of specialists, thus benefiting from their collective expertise. Moreover, these reasons may be specifically relevant when standardisation work proves to be expensive and time consuming. In such cases, cooperation with outside experts may provide the leverage needed when project budgets are insufficient.

A 'Cooperation Platform for Research and Standards'

Major standards bodies have initiated the Cooperation Platform for Research and Standards (COPRAS) to facilitate cooperation between the research community and standards bodies and provide research projects with information on standardisation processes –.

COPRAS is an FP6 Specific Support Action project and will serve as a platform for FP6 IST research projects seeking to upgrade their results through interfacing with standards bodies. The project was launched 1st February 2004 by the European Standards Organizations (ESOs) CEN, CENELEC, ETSI together with The Open Group and the World Wide Web Consortium, and will run for 3 years.

COPRAS addresses Thematic Priority Area number 2: ‘Information Society technologies’ (IST) and is linked to the eEurope initiative. One of the objectives of the IST Programme for 2003-2004 is to ensure European leadership in the generic and applied technologies at the heart of the knowledge economy. In this respect the Programme also states that “*experience has shown that the development of common visions and consensus building is a key element of European successes in IST*”.

The COPRAS project will bring together the research and standardization aspects of the eEurope activity and optimise the interface between FP6 IST projects and standardization. In doing so, it will speed up industry and market adoption of research results, and generate feedback on their acceptance and usage.

Consortium partners

The five consortium partners participating in the COPRAS project are all members of the ICT Standards Board (ICTSB), the coordinating forum for ICT standardization in Europe. Through the ICTSB they can offer the research community an entry point to ongoing or planned standardisation activities as well as access to (technical) groups focusing on standardisation of the many different aspects of IST. In addition, the three standardisation organisations CEN, CENELEC and ETSI have liaisons and arrangements in place with ISO, IEC and ITU for cooperation and standardisation on a global level.

The Members of the ICT Standards Board are listed in the table below:

European Standards Organisations
• European Committee for Standardisation (CEN)
• European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (CENELEC)
• European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI)
Industry Groups and Consortia
• The Open Group
• World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)
• ATM Forum
• European Broadcasting Union (EBU)
• Digital Video Broadcasting (DVB) Project
• European Committee for Banking Standards (ECBS)
• ECMA International
• European Communications and consumer electronics Technology Industry Association (EICTA)
• European Road transport Telematics Implementation Coordination Organisation (ERTICO)
• Object Management Group (OMG)
• OASIS (Organisation for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards)
• TeleManagement Forum
• The Global Initiative for Wireless E-Commerce (Radicchio)
• Internet Society

In order to address the requirement for ICT standardisation keeping up with the ever increasing speed of technological development, through COPRAS, the European Standards Organizations have adapted their processes and deliverables in ways which optimise the interface with Research and Technology Development (RTD) and specifically facilitate the participation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

Consequently, they can provide a rapid, open consensus building process, involving direct participation of interested parties and resulting in consensus publications which are upwardly compatible to full European Standards where necessary, and have a proven track-record of acceptability as the basis for International Standards.

Project goals

It has long been recognised that the interface between standards and research is crucial to the success of both activities. Moreover, experience shows that standards emerging from co-operative research have a higher rate of success in international consensus building processes. Therefore, the way to optimise this interface has been considered at length under successive Framework Programmes, so far with varying degrees of success.

COPRAS' objective is to act as a platform for FP6 IST projects that wish to upgrade their deliverables or otherwise touch upon standardisation issues during the course of their research. Also, the project will generate generic information on the interfacing between research and standards bodies, guiding those proposing as well as those evaluating projects in future subsequent IST calls.

As far as ICT is concerned, one of the essential aspects of this interfacing process is to ensure that standardization and research proceed in parallel enabling cross-fertilization. This will ensure that the standards community can rapidly receive contributions from the research community and that research projects are familiar with the latest developments in standardization.

In this respect, traditional formal standards bodies are often outpaced by a large number of industry standards consortia currently operating in the ICT arena, causing standardization activities to be spread out over hundreds of organizations, industry forums and consortia, not encouraging interoperability in any of the key areas. However, by providing a catalytic focal point for standardization activities, COPRAS enables research projects to overcome a potential barrier to standard-based solutions by allowing them to avoid the workload of trying to find which out of hundreds of standardization and specification bodies is most relevant, and consequently gives them a high control over the output of these processes.

COPRAS therefore provides research projects with a cost-effective way of meeting their contractual obligation of setting up an interface with the standards world and gives them a means to validate their work with a wider audience.

The project

Not all IST projects may generate standards contributions, or may even be capable of participating in the platform (for example because their results may not be available in time to be addressed by COPRAS). For the purpose of determining this together with the research projects, COPRAS will survey FP6 IST projects for potential standards related issues and standards related output.

COPRAS invites FP6 IST research projects that have standards related output – or otherwise address standards related issues – to prepare together tailor-made Standardisation Action Plans for projects requiring this. These Plans will smooth the path towards standardization in an efficient way, and at a relatively early point in time.

We shall apply a number of systematic consecutive steps to each of the FP6 IST calls. During the first step, the project will set out to define the 'COPRAS community' through contacting projects and project coordinators and gathering information. For Call 1 it will primarily focus on projects in the following Strategic Objective areas:

2.3.1.3	Broadband for all
2.3.1.4	Mobile and wireless systems beyond 3G
2.3.1.5	Towards a global dependability and security framework
2.3.1.6	Multimodal interfaces
2.3.1.7	Semantic based knowledge systems
2.3.1.8	Networked audio-visual systems and home platforms
2.3.1.9	Networked businesses and governments
2.3.1.10	eSafety of road and air transport
2.3.1.11	eHealth
2.3.1.12	Technology enhanced learning and access to cultural heritage

In all of these areas, the COPRAS consortium partners are active and participate in ongoing standardisation processes.

eGovernment platforms applications and multi-modal services represent a key issue in the *'Networked businesses and governments area'* as far as standardization in this field is concerned. This includes topics such as electronic democracy systems, interaction with citizens and businesses, governmental process re-engineering and knowledge management. Further, eBusiness standardization is becoming a key activity in Europe through CEN/ISSS, including its Workshop on eProcurement. Standardization of the different components in the value chain requires an integrated approach and work is under way or proposed on meta-data, cataloguing, product classification, business messaging and electronic invoicing.

To ensure that projects with standards-related output in these areas are actually addressed and invited to participate in the platform, COPRAS will contact all FP6 IST Projects in Call 1 between April 2004 and June 2004. The results of this process will be published in a report in the beginning of July 2004.

Between July 2004 and September 2004, the results of the information gathering process for call 1 will be analysed. During this second step, research projects with relevant standards related output will be selected and – following this selection process – will be invited to participate in a kick-off meeting that will focus on the next step in the process and the actual development of tailor-made Standardization Action Plans for each of the selected projects. These Plans will contain milestones, target dates for deliverables and all other necessary arrangements to ensure a coherent and effective execution of the Plan. In this way, projects' participation in relevant existing standards groups can be ensured and – where considered necessary – new standardization activities can be promoted or initiated.

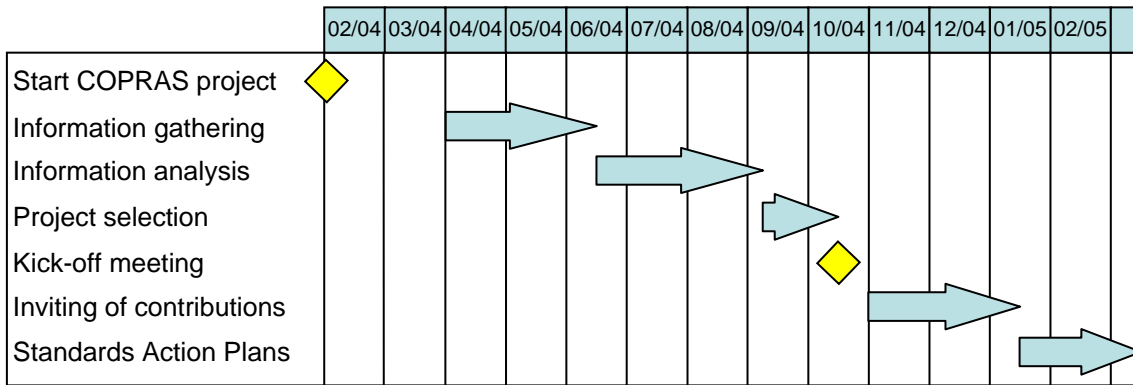
For IST projects in call 1, these Plans will be developed in cooperation with the selected projects between November 2004 and March 2005. For this purpose, COPRAS will invite the projects to come forward with contributions to (ongoing) standardization activities and will facilitate the introduction of this output into the relevant standardisation working groups.

Contributions from research projects are expected to be made on a voluntary basis and – notwithstanding the possibilities contributors retain to exploit their rights – will be in the public domain. They may for example include technical specifications, guideline documents or 'best practice' statements. Moreover, contributions may contain complete drafts, may address parts of standards already in the process of being drafted, or may even focus on new areas of work.

In addition to research projects' contributions to standardisation, the Action Plans will also indicate necessary contributions from the standardisation community to research projects. This will ensure that projects requiring advice with respect to the most relevant standardization activities are adequately informed on the "state of the art" in those areas most relevant to them. Moreover, when appropriate, Standardization Action Plans will include the provision of support to projects facilitating the drafting of contributions to standardization work.

Based on results in earlier, similar projects, COPRAS aims to include 8-10% of the targeted projects in FP6 IST calls as selected projects into its cooperation platform, the 'COPRAS Programme'. With respect to research projects in call 1, its primary goal therefore is to generate and execute between 14 and 18 tailored Standardisation Action Plans, in close cooperation with selected projects.

An overview of the work involved in the first steps of the COPRAS project with respect to FP6 IST projects in Call 1 is displayed in the diagram below:

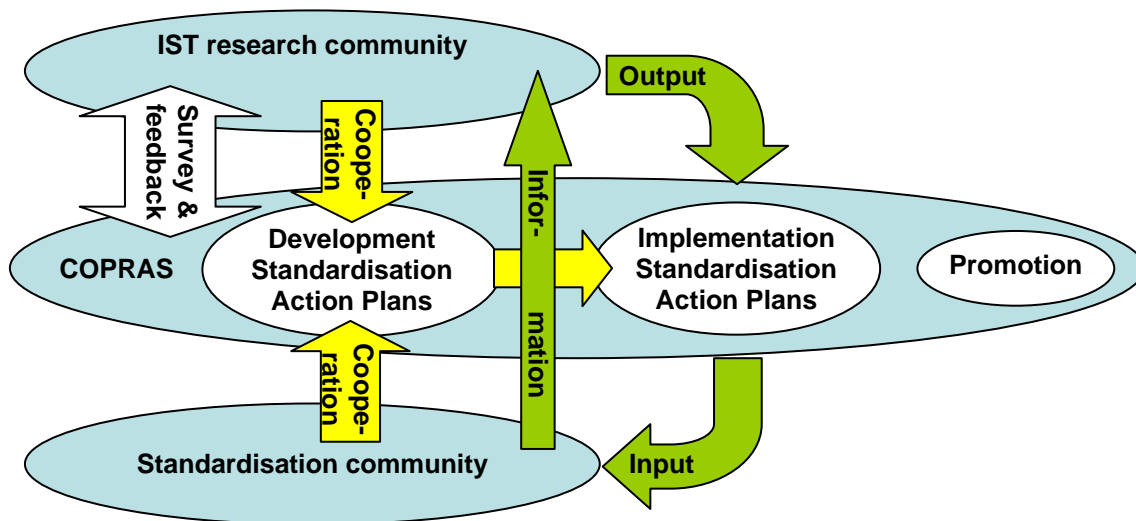


The first two steps will identify the COPRAS community (i.e. the selected projects) and the COPRAS programme (the tailored Standardisation Action Plans). The remaining steps of the project will focus on the implementation of the Plans.

To take implementation forward, COPRAS will structure and maintain cooperation and communication between standardisation groups and research projects in such a way that relevant contributions from both sides are timely and effective..

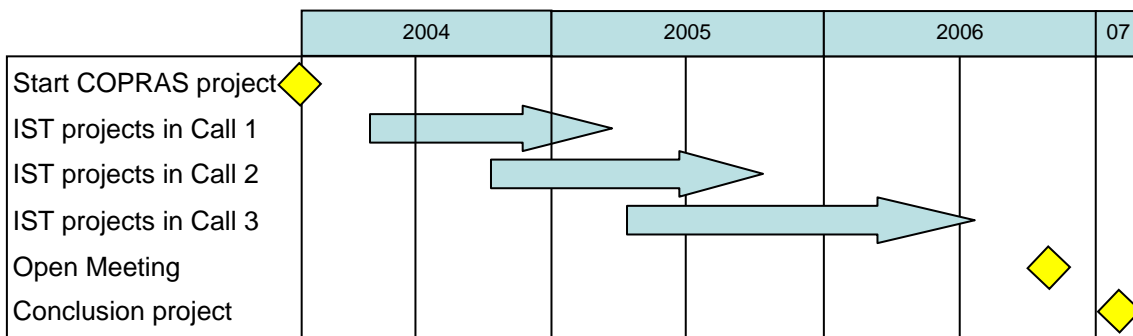
For this purpose the project will implement and maintain adequate (electronic) tools and mechanisms. Where necessary it will initiate meetings and organise presentations from research projects in standards bodies. It will arrange and maintain exchange of information between the various participating research projects, and it will make available overall information on the progress and deliverables of the COPRAS platform.

A simplified graphic display of the processes in COPRAS is shown in the diagram below:



Following the same steps as described above for call 1, research projects in subsequent FP6 IST calls will be addressed between October 2004 and June 2006.

An overview showing the planning for all three calls is contained in the diagram below:



Promotional activities

COPRAS covers FP6 IST projects across most of the Strategic Objectives areas for its analysis. Moreover, the project's objectives reach beyond FP6; it will define ways to provide a permanent improvement and optimisation of the interface between research and standardisation. Therefore communication, information and promotion activities are of specific importance to ensure COPRAS' goals can be successfully achieved, and that research projects can actually add value to their results through cooperating via the platform.

In order to support the scope of its activities and objectives, COPRAS will deploy a variety of tools throughout the project's lifetime. These include a dedicated web site (www.copras.org), brochures focusing on (interim) results that specific research projects and standards bodies have achieved, generic information on standardisation bodies, work and processes, and presentations at relevant seminars and conferences.

The prime goal of these promotional activities will be to further improve contacts and communication between the IST research community and standardisation bodies. In addition, they will support the dissemination of the project's results beyond the research and standardisation domains, thus enhancing the visibility of both the COPRAS project and the individual selected research projects in the 'outside' world. Towards the end of the project's lifetime, overall results and relevant deliverables of the COPRAS platform will be presented at an Open Meeting in Brussels that will address both the standardisation and the IST research community.


Summary & targeted results

Many research projects may find it difficult to find the right point in time or the right way to consolidate their research efforts: while there is the need to build momentum for interfacing with standards bodies throughout the project's life time, standardisation processes take time and drafting standards is generally being done on a voluntary basis. Resources for these activities may not always be foreseen in project budgets and – specifically for SMEs – standardization processes may therefore be considered a significant burden.

COPRAS will help research projects to define the right momentum for starting these processes and will facilitate the interface between research and standardisation in such a way that the time gap between the availability of research projects' final deliverables and the availability of standards resulting from them will be shortened significantly.

This will make standards available earlier to industry and the general public. COPRAS will therefore support furthering European leadership in the generic and applied technologies at the heart of the knowledge economy. Moreover, it will help research projects upgrade their results in the most cost effective way and will help standards bodies reduce overlap and better organise the flow of relevant material.

Through COPRAS, the standards bodies have taken the initiative to address the requirement that is upon research projects to interface with the standards community, and to optimise processes involved with this requirement. This initiative, however, should not prevent research projects from pre-empting the sequential steps COPRAS intends to follow and from contacting the project either directly, or through other standards bodies that they feel could be relevant to their specific activities. For this purpose, additional information on the COPRAS project can be obtained from the COPRAS web site or from the project management as indicated below.

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