

COPRAS 3rd activity report - executive summary

Early February 2004, the Cooperation Platform for Research and Standards (COPRAS), an FP6 Specific Support Action Project set up by the three European Standards Organizations, CEN, CENELEC & ETSI, together with the Open Group and the World Wide Web Consortium, started its activities aiming to improve the interface between IST research and standardization. The project's two main objectives in this respect were:

- To provide projects in FP6 IST Calls 1 & 2 with individual support, helping them to arrange their communication and cooperation with standards organizations, and;
- To develop a set of Standardization Guidelines that will help projects in subsequent Calls and Framework Programmes contacting the right standards organizations and building the interface to standardization into their project proposals and work programs.

During the last reporting period, ending 31 January 2007, the project on one hand concluded, and analysed the impact and effectiveness of the activities it initiated during earlier reporting periods, and on the other hand upgraded and extended one of its key deliverable, the COPRAS Standardization Guidelines. Tasks and deliverables during the last reporting period therefore focused on:

- Gathering of feedback from those projects in FP6 Calls 4 & 5 that had received, and used the initial version of the COPRAS Standardization Guidelines, produced in the summer of 2005;
- Extension of the Standardization Guidelines into an interactive version that could establish a basis – also beyond COPRAS' own lifespan – for a generic ICT research/standards platform;
- Supporting the execution of Standardization Action Plans that COPRAS developed for selected projects in Calls 1 & 2, and the production of 'case study brochures' documenting the standardization results achieved by these projects;
- Organizing an Open Meeting, gathering the relevant stakeholders to the research/standards interfacing process to discuss the COPRAS' results and recommendations for FP7.

When evaluating the quantitative outcome of several of the activities carried out during the last reporting period, the first aspect emerging is the fact that COPRAS managed to outperform most of the targets it set itself. As the table below shows, instead of the targeted 8-10%, COPRAS finally produced Standardization Action Plans for 14% of the projects in Calls 1 & 2, and even for several projects in Call 5. Also, instead of the anticipated 25-30% feedback from projects in Calls 4 & 5, it managed to get responses from almost 40% of projects in these calls, on their appreciation and usage of the COPRAS Standardization Guidelines.

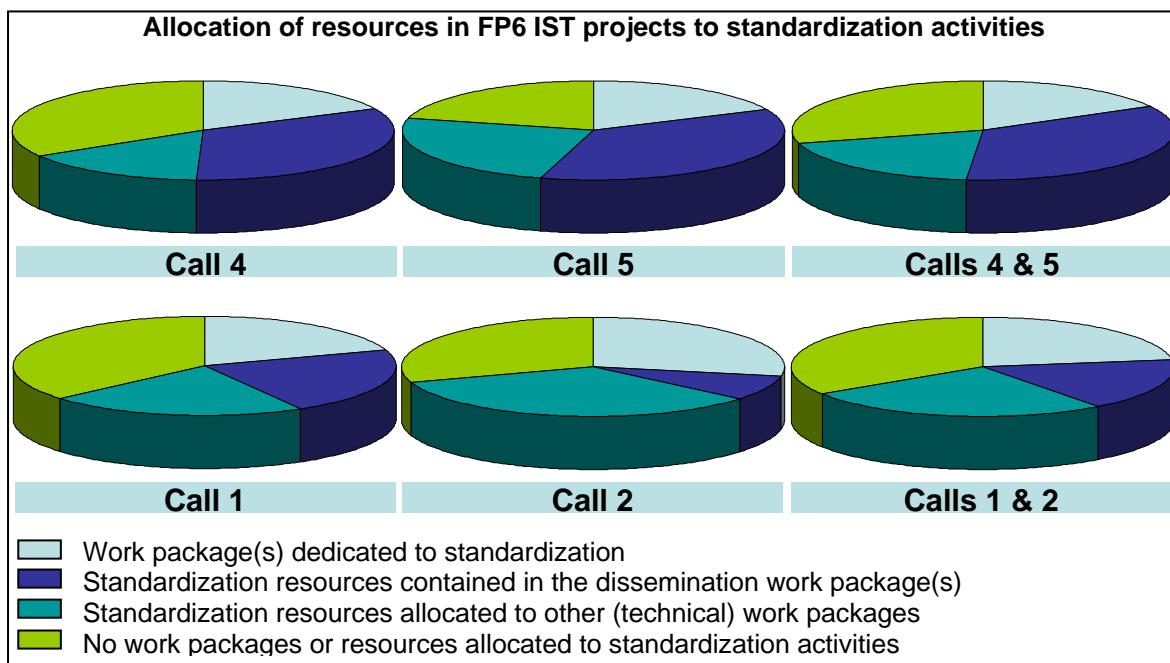
Call	Number of Projects in Call	Work Package 2				Work Package 3		Work Package 4	
		Addressed		Responding		Selected & invited		SAP development	
		Target	Result	Target	Result	Target	Result	Target	Result
1	176	176	164	> 70	92	>14<18	40	>14<18	16
2	111	111	107	> 44	55	>9<11	41	>9<11	26
1 & 2	287	287	271	> 114	147	>23<29	81	>23<29	42
		4	234	234	230	> 59	102		
		5	164	230	150	> 41	53		
		4 & 5	398	398	380	> 100	155		

Moreover, instead of the anticipated number of 6 tangible standardization results, so far projects that worked through Standardization Action Plans managed to generate impact in standardization processes in at least 10 different cases, and instead of the 10 anticipated case study brochures, 11 were actually completed, documenting standardization results achieved by projects in Calls 1 & 2.

In addition to good quantitative results, COPRAS' deliverables also managed to generate concrete impact. First of all, this concerns the impact that the projects COPRAS worked with managed to generate with respect to the standardization processes they participated in. The following table provides a brief overview of the 10 most obvious results:

Project	Standardization Impact
Embedded Systems Cluster	Creation of a new working group within the Java Community Process (JCP) that adopted the HIJA project results as the basis for a new safety-critical standard for the Java programming language.
SIMILAR	Promotion of UsiXML as a new standard in W3C .
GRID Cluster	Establishment of a new Technical Committee in ETSI , working towards a first set of specifications for new GRID standards.
e-Learning Cluster	Dramatic increase of the number of 'Units of Learning' produced using the IMS Learning Design standard specification.
TALK	Creation of a constituency in W3C around the advanced research technologies developed within the project.
POLYMNIA	Submissions to the W3C Semantic Web Deployment Working Group .
TEAHA	Submission of several UPnP contributions to the Home Gateway Initiative (HGI) .
Call 5 CWE Cluster	Formalising the process for establishing a common architecture across as a new industry reference for use in building collaborative working tools and applications.
EUAIN	Creation of a CEN/ISSS Workshop on Accessible Document Processing.
MediaNet	Contribution of a reference architecture to IETF ; contributions to the DSL Forum as well as to ETSI TISPAN on Video over IP.

Further, the feedback towards projects in Calls 4 & 5, not only showed that the vast majority of IST projects foresee the need to interface with standards organizations at a certain point during their lifespan, but also pointed out that the Standardization Guidelines did already have an impact. This is for example demonstrated in the graph below, showing the allocation of resources to standards activities among projects in the Calls that were addressed by COPRAS. As the charts show, while the number of projects that did not allocate any resources remains relatively stable in Calls 1, 2 and 4, it suddenly decreased in Call 5, which encompasses the first group of projects that had the opportunity to use the Standardization Guidelines before submitting their project proposals.



The analysis of the response further showed that the vast majority of projects that received or downloaded the Standardization Guidelines actually used (or planned to use) these during the course of their work, but that improvements in a number of areas would be necessary.

The feedback received from projects in Calls 4 & 5, as well as feedback received from other constituencies was taken on board in the Standardization Guidelines upgrading process, as well as in the process of transforming these guidelines into an interactive, FAQ-based platform, where representatives from different groups of stakeholders to the research/standards interfacing process can easily find their way through the issues that are most relevant to them. The platform, that is available at <http://www.w3.org/2004/copras/docu/faq/Overview.html>, was put on line only a week

before Christmas, but already received several hundreds of hits, running up to the Open Meeting in January. Expectation is that it will rapidly take over the role of the document versions of the Standardization Guidelines, versions that received between 400-500 hits on a monthly basis.

The COPRAS platform was formally launched at the COPRAS Open Meeting. This conference, for which more than 200 participants registered, featured speakers and delegates from all constituencies and was held 17 January 2007 in Brussels. The conference, that in addition to the launch of the platform, addressed a variety of themes relating to research/standards interfacing in FP7, generated as its main conclusions:

- Standards establish a bridge between research results and the implementation of innovative products. Standardization is therefore an essential component for boosting innovation;
- The current pace of technological development forces standardization and research to proceed in parallel; starting standards activity early provides better chances for being successful;
- There are still many barriers for projects participating in standardization such as membership fees or confidentiality rules; also more tools are needed to find the right standards organization and to determine the differences between various bodies;
- Competition between standards organizations forces the latter to put more effort into marketing, specifically towards the SME community;
- Interfacing with standardization remains an important aspect in FP7. Additional measures are needed and continuation of COPRAS' efforts to bring European research and standardization closer together is a necessity to reinforce Europe's position as a leading provider of technologies for the global information society.

Despite the good results that COPRAS managed to achieve, it is clear that it was only able to address a limited number of issues. Moreover, the Standardization Guidelines do not represent a panacea, and will require considerable upgrading and maintenance over the next years. Additional (horizontal) support actions in FP7 should build upon the COPRAS achievements in FP6, as many barriers to optimizing research standards interfacing, such as confidentiality, IPR or membership of a standards organization, mapping research activities with standards work, or finding the standards and standards organizations most relevant to a project and contacting them, remain to be addressed.

Also, additional activity from the side of the research and standards communities, as well as from the side of the European Commission will be required to establish structural improvements so that ICT research projects' overall contribution to innovation processes in Europe as well as on a global level can be improved. An active policy is needed and specific arrangements need to be made to encourage relevant projects to pass their output through European standards organizations. However, three aspects should specifically be addressed:

- A more permanent and unified platform, system and/or methodology for research projects and standards organizations to facilitate the start of their cooperation is required;
- Better internal coordination between project consortium partners as well as within individual consortium partners enabling projects to work towards output that can be submitted to standards organizations when the opportunity arises is necessary;
- Additional mechanisms within research programmes that will enable projects to continue their standards work also beyond their project's lifespan are necessary.

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