The Open Data Reuse Incubator

A Framework Programme 7, work programme 2013 initiative

Objective ICT-2013.4.3 (SME initiative on analytics) of the 2013 work programme for Information and Communication Technologies in the European Commission Framework Programme 7 is designed to help European Small and Medium Enterprises acquire the competences and resources they need to develop innovative content and data analytics services. Development of services based on the use of available data, particularly from public bodies, is specifically required for theme a) of the objective, which reads:

An Integrated Project to establish an environment and calling for efficient, small scale development of services of commercial interest based on the use of European open data by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The IP should:

- *devote most of its resources to publish and manage regularly scheduled and well-advertised calls for SMEs to submit mini-proposals to be funded for a period between six and twelve months.*

- *create a computing infrastructure where the winning mini-proposals will find accurate, up-to-date and (when useful and feasible) linked versions of the data they need for their services and, if they so wish, deploy the experimental version of their services.*

- *establish a mechanism for connecting open data demand and supply by systematically contacting European public bodies for their open data and assisting them in the efficient and sustainable publication of such data, if needed with targeted engagements.*

- *solicit open data reuse ideas from the general public and conduct a European wide open data reuse information campaign.*

- *The IP will finally create a process to connect the most successful SMEs with sources of funding and business networks.*

This document provides additional details on the mechanics of the exercise and some guidance on some design principles that should inform proposals (and later, projects) responding to this part of the call. This document is being produced for information purposes only and its content does not supersede the relevant sections of the 2013 FP7 work programme; in case of conflict, the text of the latter prevails.

What is the Open Data Reuse Incubator (ODRI)?

The objective of this call is to make sure that technical obstacles to the reuse of European open data are removed to the extent possible.

While a growing number of regional, national and international administrations (the European Commission among them) are making available growing amounts of open data, the number of applications (and the number of users of those applications) based on the reuse of those data have arguably not been growing at the same rate, despite excellent national initiatives in this direction.[1]

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[1] http://www.etalab.gouv.fr/m/article-105550957.html

It is thus possible that open data of good quality and potential interest to some end user goes unutilised due to some obstacle of administrative or technical nature. ODRI is designed to create an environment in which those obstacles are systematically removed and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) are offered various forms of support (including financial) to pursue their data reuse ideas.

In this respect, ODRI's high level objectives are quite similar to those of the recently launched UK's Open Data Institute[2] (ODI) with the difference that while ODI is focused on promoting the reuse of UK open data, ODRI does the same for data from all over the EU.

How will ODRI help logistically?

The objective of ODRI is to allow SMEs to concentrate on developing and testing their data based application. Thus ODRI will be tasked with building and maintaining data and infrastructure for SMEs to deploy their prototypes.

An SME approved for work within ODRI will find at ODRI all the data they need to develop their application plus a computing environment where they could deploy their prototype application for testing.

If the data required by the SME is known to exist but is not yet available at ODRI, it will be ODRI's task to obtain it from the publisher and perform whatever reasonable transformations (e.g. format conversions, linking to other datasets) are required for the SME to proceed with their idea.

In order to 'prime the pump' of the data available on its platform, ODRI will engage the relevant actors on both the data demand and supply directions:

- on the demand side, ODRI will carry out a EU-wide information campaign extracting from the public what kind of applications they would like to see developed based on EU open data;

- on the supply side, ODRI will engage with public administrations all over the EU inquiring about their plans and schedule for the release of datasets, sharing with said administrations information collected at the point above on what type of data the public perceives as most useful in order to develop applications. If an administration is in principle willing to publish desired datasets but considers that it doesn't have the technical know-how to do so proficiently, ODRI will offer its technical assistance in the context of a limited intervention. ODRI personnel would visit the administration and assist with the publication task. The ODRI will also assess the technical maturity of the administration and provide guidance (in the form of deployment of and hands-on training for open source data management software whenever this is possible) on how the administration could proceed to publishing future datasets by itself

How will ODRI help SMEs get in and out of the ODRI environment?

ODRI will be required to assist SMEs in being admitted to the ODRI environment and in planning their exit.

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http://www.appsforitaly.org/en/

[2] http://theodi.org/drupal7/

On the admission end, it will be ODRI's responsibility to advertise calls for proposal submissions by SMEs. This means that it will be ODRI's responsibility to use social networks, conferences and any other relevant means in order to spread its message where promising software development SMEs (even some who might not naturally have thought of themselves as open data re-users) are naturally found

On the exit end, it will be ODRI's responsibility to educate its graduate SMEs on product development strategies and connect them with previous graduates but, most importantly, additional opportunities for funding, from venture capital to regional development funds. It is thus important that ODRI build and grow a solid network of relevant contacts.

How will ODRI function in practice?

ODRI will formally exist as an Integrated Project[3], a project funded as a result of a competitive call for proposals submitted by a consortium satisfying the requirements for participation of Framework Programme 7.[4]

Such proposals will **not** about building applications based on the reuse of open data but rather about building the ODRI environment in which others (and specifically SMEs) will do so. Proposals will be evaluated based on the credibility of the consortium's plans for providing all the forms of support described above.

The consortium will spend only a fraction of the funds it receives (the budget for the call is **5 million Euros**) to set up and operate the ODRI environment.

The consortium will disburse the majority of the funds to fund mini-proposals of a duration between six and twelve months submitted by SMEs in response to broadly advertised calls[5]. Based on the amount of funding commonly offered by seed venture capital for efforts of this scope, it is expected that funding for each such mini-proposal could range between 50,000 and 150,000 Euros.

It will be the responsibility of the consortium running ODRI to

- carry out a formal evaluation of the proposals received, according to a procedure established by the Commission

- establish eligibility (i.e. SME status) of applicants, select and announce winners

- introduce an amendment to their grant agreement with the Commission to formally add the winning SMEs as formal partners of the consortium

- carry out the required project pre-financing/payments to the new SME consortium members

- collect from the new SME consortium members the documentation required for the Commission to accept their expenses as eligible costs of the project

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[3] http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6/instr_ip.htm

[4] http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/who_en.html#consortia

[5] They should be formally advertised on http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/competitive-calls_en.html and informally anywhere the right type of SME could be reached.