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Building the National Knowledge Sharing Infrastructure

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1 Executive Summary

This report is one of a series of best practice documents that aims at supporting those countries who are preparing to become a CLARIN member as well as for countries that recently joined CLARIN. The target audience is both the national coordinators and future national coordinators, *i.e.*, those representatives that are going to manage their country's participation in CLARIN ERIC.

In this context, the report aims at providing a best practice guide to building a *knowledge sharing infrastructure* at the national level.

The constitution of CLARIN knowledge sharing centres is an excellent point of departure with respect to establishing a knowledge sharing infrastructure. Besides describing how to apply for becoming a knowledge centre, this report gives an overview of other initiatives that will facilitate the building of a national knowledge sharing infrastructure.

2 Introduction

This report is one of a series of best practice documents that aims at helping new national consortia in the initial phase of their creation. In this context, the report's topic is to provide best practices how to build a knowledge sharing infrastructure at the national level.

The CLARIN consortium strongly recommends that each of its members provides at least one knowledge centre. The first part of this report focuses on guidelines of how to apply for becoming either a general or a local knowledge centre. Such centres offer the organization of meetings such as conferences or workshops. Also, helpdesk services are useful building bricks in knowledge sharing infrastructures as they provide interactive channels for users to get access to knowledge and expertise in specific areas.

The second part of this report gives other and more general recommendations of how knowledge of Language Resources and Technologies (LRT) can be shared and spread out at the national level.

3 Establishing a knowledge sharing infrastructure

The overall mission of CLARIN is to develop a distributed infrastructure that supports the sharing, use and sustainability of language data and tools for research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS). Besides this goal, CLARIN also aims at ensuring that knowledge and expertise are made accessible to the HSS research communities.

3.1 Knowledge Centres

General and local knowledge centres constitute a formal concept within the CLARIN community regarding the establishment of a knowledge sharing infrastructure. Knowledge centres can be located at a single institution or distributed across various institutions. Until June 2017, eight knowledge centres have been established, cf. <https://www.clarin.eu/content/knowledge-centres>¹

The criteria and conditions that must be followed in connection with being recognised as a knowledge centre are:

1. *They serve the CLARIN community at large, and offer their services at least in English.*
2. *At least part of their knowledge services are reactive (i.e. they react to requests from customers, as opposed to e.g. just offering a website with useful information).*
3. *They respond to queries and requests within 2 working days (at least acknowledgement and info about further procedure).*
4. *In their application and on their website they provide a clear description of the scope of their services (e.g. helpdesk, hosting, technical assistance, courses).*
5. *In their application and on their website they provide a clear description of the thematic areas they cover.*
6. *In their application and on their website they provide a clear statement of the audiences they serve (e.g. humanities scholars, infrastructure operators, ...)*
7. *The knowledge sharing activities they offer (proactive and reactive) should be registered in the CLARIN Knowledge Sharing Registry and kept up-to-date.*
8. *They should have sufficient critical mass consisting of at least 1 chair or 3 fte permanent staff which may be distributed over different physical locations, not necessarily in the same country*
9. *In their application for recognition they should list 5 major publications over the last 3 years in the thematic areas covered.*
10. *If the centre is virtual (i.e. spread over different institutions) the application has to specify the participating institutions and to provide a description of the way the collaboration between the centres is organized to ensure that they can act as one knowledge centre.*

The first five criteria must be met for becoming a local knowledge centre; all ten criteria must be met for being recognized as general knowledge centre.

Recommendations for a successful application to become a knowledge centre:

- For inspiration, take a look at the existing knowledge centres, cf. <https://www.clarin.eu/content/knowledge-centres>.
- Consider involving other institutions as partners in your knowledge centre.
- Read the detailed guidelines in CE-2015-0504-Knowledge-Centres-Appl-Instr.pdf.

¹ For more information, see CE-2014-0419-CLARIN-Knowledge-Centres-v6.pdf.

- When writing the application, ensure that the outline of the script is followed carefully and that all issues are covered properly.

As stated in the criteria 2 above, the knowledge centres must offer some kind of reactive knowledge services, typically communicated via helpdesks.

However, the provision of help and advice needs not to be done within the formal framework of a knowledge centre. The establishment of informal centres of expertise with various service level definitions can also form the basis of knowledge services.

Knowledge centres may also offer proactive knowledge services via the organization of on-site or web-based courses, workshops *etc.* Evidently, the organization of education and training services does not necessarily need to be embedded in a knowledge centre. In the following sections, a list of ideas, suggestions, and recommendations is given with respect to ensuring that knowledge and expertise are made available in a proactive way.

3.2 Proactive initiatives in general

3.2.1 Face-to-face meetings and interactive dissemination

Observations made recently in the Parthenos project, see <http://www.parthenos-project.eu>, revealed researchers having a preference of face-to-face meetings. In fact, the combination of face-to-face awareness workshops, webinars or video conferences (*e.g.*, Skype, Google Hangout) with moderated distance learning appeared to be the most promising way of facilitating knowledge sharing.

Workshops are easy to organize and can often obtain funding, especially when partnering with other organizations. Note that CLARIN has an open call for workshops for members of the CLARIN community: members can submit proposals for workshops on strategic priorities for CLARIN.²

Often a workshop's call for papers helps attracting high profile experts across scientific communities, which in turn raises the potential for fruitful knowledge sharing.

Recommendations:

- Organize workshops and video conferences.

To support knowledge sharing, it is recommended to use other interactive dissemination channels as well, for instance, face-to-face seminars, web-based courses and lectures, panel sessions, PhD courses, teaching (curriculum development), summer schools, and social media.

Recommendations:

- Use as many types of interactive channels as possible.

3.2.2 Show cases

Show cases can inspire users to get to know and to make proper use of the web services,

² Take, for instance, the Swedish CLARIN-DH Workshop held in October 2014 when Sweden joined the CLARIN ERIC.

Cf. <https://www.clarin.eu/news/esslli-2018-call-courses-and-workshops-extended-proposal%C2%A0submission-deadline-25-june-2017>

tools and resources available in the CLARIN infrastructure. The dissemination of show cases that demonstrate successful research in combination with the use of CLARIN's LRT helps attracting researchers to the knowledge sharing infrastructure at the national level. A list of show cases is available at the CLARIN portal, see <https://www.clarin.eu/portal>.

Recommendations:

- Design a show case.

3.2.3 Interdisciplinary working groups

Interdisciplinary working groups help establishing cooperation across user communities. An example of such a working group is the Danish special TEI interest group³ that involves four major institutions. The group collaborates on the display of text in the TEI format. The group is focussing on agreeing on a section of TEI that informs a software application to optimise the view of TEI encoded documents.

Recommendations:

- Establish collaboration across user communities.

3.2.4 Various types of relevant compilations and knowledge resources

Compilations that gather and group-together various relevant resource types can be beneficial for users of national knowledge sharing infrastructures. Resources may include technical documentation, short guides, tutorials, but also references to monographs, and other scientific publications in journals and conferences. They may also include a directory of expertise (yellow pages for experts), directory of stakeholders, and mailing lists.

Recommendations

- Make background information accessible for potential users.

3.2.5 Other awareness initiatives

- Foster dissemination via external publications such as press releases and articles in newsletters.
- Market and inform potential users about the CLARIN project by explicitly mentioning the project in connection with publishing research articles.
- Create and disseminate online tutorials.
- Provide technical helpdesks.

³ The special interest group is supported by <http://dighumlab.org>.

References

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