EFIR Workshop (Webinar)

Take part in the extension of Joinup's catalogue of interoperability assets

24 April 2013

Highlight report
Introduction
Take part in the extension of Joinup's catalogue of interoperability assets

Following up on the success of the ADMS-enabled federation on Joinup, a catalogue of semantic assets described using ADMS, with already 21 federated repositories, the ISA Programme of the European Commission plans to extend the current catalogue to other types of interoperability assets and solutions (legal, organisational and technical).

On April 24 2013, the European Commission hosted a webinar to discuss the extension of the current federated catalogue of semantic assets on Joinup to other types of interoperability assets and solutions (legal, organisational and technical).

The webinar was a unique opportunity for e-Government and interoperability experts, standardisation bodies, and ICT service to share their needs and ideas on the upcoming European Federated Interoperability Repository (EFIR) on Joinup.

This highlight report summarises the key points discussed during the webinar.
In order to provide cross-border digital public services (e-Government), information systems in Europe need to be interoperable. The EIF defines 4 interoperability layers: technical, semantic, organisation, legal.

The ISA Programme undertakes a number of initiatives to foster interoperability of information exchanges by public administrations. The vision of the ISA Programme is to promote the sharing and reuse of highly reusable elements (reusable building blocks) of ICT solutions (i.e. framework, service or generic tool) developed in the context of electronic information exchange between public administrations. ISA calls these highly reusable elements interoperability assets.

Currently, there is no agreement on a definition for interoperability assets. This makes it difficult to explain what such assets are and aren't, hence making it complicated to identify them. There is no single access point, at EU level, which provides detailed, up to date information on all types of interoperability assets of the Member States, Standardisation Bodies and related organisations.

Joinup is the collaborative environment developed by the ISA programme for the sharing and reuse of interoperability assets. In 2012, a catalogue of interoperability assets has been created on Joinup but it only covers semantic assets.

Today, this project aims at expanding the current catalogue to all types of interoperability assets.

The objective is to:

- Commonly describe all types of interoperability assets (using ADMS);
- Enhance their visibility; and
- Provide public administrations a simple way to find them.

This will facilitate their reuse.

If public administrations re-use such interoperability assets, the ICT solutions will be composed by some common parts. Progressively, commonalities between information systems will increase and, benefiting from positive externalities, this will improve interoperability and therefore, facilitate efficient and effective cross-border electronic collaboration between public administrations in Europe.
2 Workshop in Figures
28 participants

21 in the morning session
27 in the afternoon session

...representing the following organisations

UK - Listpoint
UK - The Home Office
GR - eGif
BE - Fedict
EE - RIHA
ES - CTT
DG CONNECT
DIGIT
SPOCS
Europeana
MDR
eGif
JRC

European Institutions 57%
Standardization bodies 13%
Member States 22%
Other 7%
3 Lessons learnt
Lessons learnt

UK - LISPOINT
David Mitton

David Mitton is Director at Lispoint. Lispoint is a platform that supports creating, sharing, and publishing code lists (a global reference data management platform that enables the co-creation, provenance and mapping together of code lists for efficient interoperability).

BE - FEDICT
Bart Hanssens

Bart Hanssens is Interoperability Expert at Fedict (Federal Public Service for ICT Belgium), and he is currently working on several projects including Drupal WCMS and IPv6. He is the webmaster of the Belgian Interoperability Framework (www.belgif.be) and open data site (data.gov.be).

EE - RIHA
Priti Parmakson

Priti Parmakson is working for RIHA, the catalogue of the Estonian public sector information systems which contains systems, components, services, data models, semantic assets, etc. The catalogue facilitates information system planning and operational activities.

“Our core business is to provide the means to users to select the right standard. Including context information about assets would help recognise where else an asset is used so users can select the right standard.”

“Finding assets as well as maintaining portals up-to-date are difficult challenges. There is a need to efficiently organise how to deploy resources.”

“Federating cross-border services would help quickly find out what cross-border data connections and cross-border service usages exist and would also attract more users on Joinup.”

“Currently, there is no place in Estonia where information systems owner can find information about licensing”
Robin Smith

Robin has a background in social, environmental, e-government and spatial data infrastructures research and is currently leading work on ISA Action (1.17), a Reusable INSPIRE Reference platform. One of the main tasks of the Action is to develop a platform that will help to gather and share ‘INSPIRE components’, aiding its implementation and re-use in other sectors.

“The user is looking for solutions. In CTT, a solution is a group of descriptive information pages, downloadable documents and files, news, related links etc. The concept of solution may refer to Horizontal services, ICT Developments Semantic, Recommendations, policies, methodologies linked to e-Government.”

“Creating links between assets / components could support INSPIRE implementation.”

“Users may want to know which assets have been used or reused, as well as the context of that use or reuse”

ES - Centro de Transferencia de Tecnología
Elena Muñoz Salinero

Elena Muñoz Salinero is the head of the area responsible for the Technology Transfer Centre (CTT) of the Spanish Government. The objective of CTT is to boost the reuse of solutions by all public administrations and to boost the provision and use of e-government services. It provides information about applications, common services, semantic assets, policies, methodologies and experiences in the area of e-government.

“Creating links between assets / components could support INSPIRE implementation.”
6 ways to best help users find interoperability assets.

1. Include context information
2. Link assets together
3. Provide mapping services
4. Highlight the “star” asset
5. Enrich assets via user comments
6. Provide e-learning tool
4 Stakeholder requests

Facilitators

- Szabolcs Székacs
- Alice Vasilescu
- Saky Kourtidis
Method used for gathering requirements

**PROPOSE**

The facilitator introduced a request

**DISCUSS**

The group discussed based on the preparatory work

**PRIORITIZE**

When possible the group voted the priority of the request

**FORMALISE**

This document formalises what has been discussed about each request.
## Request

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Request 1: The users should be able to discover related assets

**Description:** The federation must support the interlinking of interoperability assets. The users should be able to discover interoperability assets that are linked to the asset they are exploring.

**Source:** EFIR Survey | 4 MSs voted on the use case

**Priority:** Critical

**Main contributors:**
- John Borras
- Heather Flanagan
- Muriel Foulonneau
- Sébastien Gallezot
- Michel Martin
- David Mitton
- Elena Munoz
- Thodoris Papadopoulos
- Robin S. Smith
- Willem van Gemert

1. What types of links should be captured?

- **The distinction between “context” and “related asset” should be clear**

  There is a need to clearly differentiate the concept of interlinking the assets from the concept of context information about assets. Should the concept of “related asset” be included as context information?

- **Defining and categorising the nature of links is a nice to have but would add complexity.**

  Even if it would be nice to have information about the links between assets, this would add more complexity to the management of the links and assets. However, Joinup could have the capability to interpret the links based on some rules, e.g. Defining whether the links are horizontal or vertical:
  - Horizontal links: ‘is an input for an asset’, ‘is an output for an asset’, ‘is supporting another asset’, ‘is supported by another asset’;

2. How should these links be captured?

- **Multiple parties should be able to create links**

  The asset publishers and / or owners should be able to link their own assets when uploading them on Joinup. However, multiple parties should be able to create links between assets, as a single asset can be used for multiple purposes.

- **The links should be captured on Joinup but do not need to be taken back in the original repository.**
Stakeholder requests

Request 2: The users should be able to discover and sort interoperability assets and / or solutions that are defined as success stories.

- **The concept of success stories is subjective**
  
  There can be as many success stories as there are different types of problems. Using the term ‘success stories’ is not relevant. Download and usage are relevant but are not necessarily indicators of quality.

- **Indicators (KPIs) are important to guide the users and should be carefully selected.**

  Good KPIs will enable an asset to choose an asset seeing his specific need. The following examples of indicators have been proposed:
  
  - **Actual reuse**: Context information, Number of implementations, Who uses it (used by)
  - **Potential of reusability**: Nb of downloads, Nb of links
  - **Other**: Last updated, Rating

  Different opinions on the actual usefulness of KPIs and the group did not reach a formal consensus on the KPIs. This will be further elaborated in the functional specifications.

- **The federation should enable to increase the quality of assets by implementing smart drivers**

  - Promote best practices and highlight the “star” assets. Each federated repository could, for example, be able to define few of their asset as star assets. These assets would be de facto standards, highly reused and reusable. This will further elaborated in the functional specifications.
  - Implement mechanisms for raising awareness to encourages people to communicate to people about their own work.
  - Implement competition mechanisms for asset and repository owners, which could help increase the quality of assets.

**Description:** The users should be able to discover assets / solutions that are highly reusable.

**Source:** EFIR Survey | 5 MSs voted on the use case

**Priority:** Nice to have

**Main contributors:**
- John Borras
- Heather Flanagan
- Muriel Foulonneau
- Sébastien Gallezot
- Michel Martin
- David Mitton
- Elena Munoz
- Thodoris Papadopoulos
- Priti Parmakson
- Robin S. Smith
- Willem van Gemert
Request 3: The users should be able to discover common and shared services.

**Description:** Public administrations in Europe should easily know which administration provides what services around Europe. For example, CTT in Spain contains examples of common services such as Verification and Consultation of data, Validation of electronic signature or Secure electronic communication. An ex. of shared service is the CIRCABC hosting service of the EC.

**Source:** EFIR Survey | 5 MSs voted on the use case

**Priority:** Critical

**Main contributors:**
- Sébastien Gallezot
- Michel Martin
- Elena Munoz
- Thodoris Papadopoulos
- Prit Parmakson

- **Define the scope of services**

  It is important to define the scope of services that will be federated on Joinup in order to not add too much complexity to the federation.

  - The services should be (cross-border) electronic services: electronic cross-border services (e.g. web services - end-points) are quite relevant and ADMS already supports “service description” asset type.

  - The services should be highly reusable.

- **Federating services will help attract users on Joinup.**

  Most users are interested to find “final products”. Federating services, even a small amount of them, would help attract more users on Joinup.
Request 4: The users should be able to search for interoperability agreements.

**Description:** An interoperability agreement sets a number of general rules that define the exchange of information between different public administrations e.g. an addressing plan to exchange information between Member States. Spain provided examples of interoperability agreements applicable to Spanish public administrations.

**Source:** EFIR Survey | Spain

**Priority:** Nice to have

This request is very specific to Spain. Many countries would not necessarily have these interoperability agreements.

Request 5: The users should be able to search for assets from standardisation organisations.

**Description:** In order to reduce multiple work, the interoperability assets of the international standardisation organisations should be available in the same repository (single point of access).

**Source:** EFIR Survey | Finland

**Priority:** Critical

The current filter functionality on Joinup enabling the users to search by publisher / publisher type is already very good.
Request 6: The federation should enable the users / publishers to add context information to interoperability assets.

**Description:** According to Listpoint, a Context is a proxy or profile for the collection of assets that are used by an information system. It is to understand where an asset is particularly used.

**Source:** Joinup | Lispoint

**Priority:** Critical

**Main contributors:**
- Makx Dekkers
- Sébastien Gallezot
- Michel Martin
- David Mitton
- Clémentine Valayer

1. **What types of context information should be captured?**

- The federation should enable the user to get information on the reusability.

The context information should include the “reusability” aspect. Reusability should be an aspect to be tackled in order to classify the different assets stored on Joinup. The following information about context have been proposed:

- Country
- Business domains
- Systems in which is being used

- The federation should enable the user to get information on the relationship between the asset and the architecture layer it is linked.

There is a need to ensure the users can find back the architecture layer at which the asset can be and/or is being used. This will give an indication of the reusability as it can help know at which level and under which criteria this asset can be reused.

- The federation should enable the user to get information about the relationship with other assets (Request 1)

2. **How this information should be captured?**

- Tagging should be used to store ‘context information’ which cannot be stored by other means.

- There is a need to think about how to efficiently maintain the context information.
### Request 7: Development of a widget to be integrated in platforms

**Description:** It consists of the development of an embedded widget (e.g. API) on national repositories which would allow users to search for related assets without leaving the repository of origin.

**Source:** The ISA programme

**Priority:** Nice to have

**Main contributors:**
- Heather Flanagan
- Elena Muñoz
- Thodoris Papadopoulos
- Szabolcs Szekacs

Some repositories do not offer a general search service on their platform. National/international repositories considered the usefulness of such widget differently: for some, it was considered a useful widget, while others did not consider this functionality necessary.
Download

EFIR Survey results
https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/node/65587

Federation Brochure
https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/node/63775

ADMS Brochure
https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/node/42446

Join our communities

ADMS
http://goo.gl/sLHIU

CESAR
http://goo.gl/3VCZU

Contact us

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Szabolcs.SZEKACS@ec.europa.eu

Team
https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/contact

Propose a request

You can propose a new request or comment existing ones in the issue tracker on Joinup
https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/asset/adms/issue/all
Thank you!