

**INFORMATION SOCIETY TECHNOLOGIES
(IST)
PROGRAMME**



**D4ALLnet
Design for All Network of Excellence
IST-2001-38833**

Project Synopsis

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1. Project objectives

1.1 Objectives

The overall objective of D4ALLnet is to initiate a thematic network of Centres of Excellence in DfA, as called for in the eEurope action plan 2005.

The project addresses four main objectives, which are summarised as follows:

- (i) To establish a network amongst recognised centres of excellence around Europe, in order to promote and advance DfA in the emerging Information Society;
- (ii) To implement the necessary infrastructure for virtual networking amongst the members of the network; such an infrastructure should serve the long term objectives of European DfA e-Accessibility Network (EDeAN) and facilitate cooperation on a range of topics of common interest, including:
 - Establishment of a benchmarking framework for assessing and validating DfA knowledge and experiences accumulated through co-operation and networking amongst actors competent in DfA;
 - Study emerging technological developments by means of scenarios, which serve a two-fold purpose, namely unfolding the impact of emerging technologies on citizens, including disabled people, and assessing the potential influence of DfA on such developments;
 - Contribute to the specification of the required and recommended features for interdisciplinary curricula (or programmes of study) on DfA, and to provide examples of specialization in selected application areas (e.g., engineering, computer science);
 - Contribute to policy at national and European levels with regards to standards preparation, legislation and procurement of products following principles of DfA.
- (iii) To develop a knowledge management infrastructure in the form of a DfA resource centre that will facilitate access to resources on DfA, and on-going and continuous update of the pool of information;
- (vii) To design, initiate and undertake a concentrated set of dissemination and outreach activities, in the form of workshops, seminars and information days), in order to raise awareness on DfA, and to facilitate knowledge exchange and technology transfer.

These objectives are further detailed and explained below, in an effort to provide insight to the technical work envisioned in the course of the project.

1.1.1 Networking

The first objective, namely networking at national and European levels, is important and desirable for several reasons:

- The need for creating consensus on DfA, starting from national-level co-operation, and progressively moving to the European and international levels.
- The need to start implementing research agendas and recommendations by high-level task forces, which have in the past few years pointed out requirements regarding DfA in the short, medium and long term.
- The need to bridge perspectives and conceptions on DfA and stimulate industrial interest; industry will be involved in the project through participation in the Advisory Board.
- The need to articulate a demand for DfA products and services, by making end users active network participants through the National Contact Centres of EDeAN.
- The need to support the implementation of the eEurope 2005 action plan within member states and across Europe.

1.1.2 *Virtual networking infrastructure*

The second objective, namely the creation of an appropriate infrastructure for virtual networking, is necessitated by the operational requirements of the network in the era of Information and Knowledge-based society. The formation and operation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs), will significantly contribute to advance DfA knowledge on a range of topics, including:

- *Benchmarking.* Benchmarking amounts to the development of a structured mechanism for consensus creation and assessment of available knowledge on DfA. Such a mechanism should comprise criteria or heuristics (e.g., from software ergonomics, standards, etc.) and required or recommended characteristics, which detail aspects of DfA in products and services, as well as the design processes involved.
- *Policy and Legislation.* This SIG will aim to strengthen and facilitate policy making in favour of DfA. The specific targets to be addressed include legislation (which is also being addressed in the context of the EC e-Accessibility Group) and public procurement. Regarding legislation, the proposed work will make contributions, in the form of technical reports, which can subsequently be considered by the relevant bodies. In the area of public procurement, D4ALLnet will compile guidelines with a three fold-intention: (i) to contribute to the articulation of the demand for DfA products; (ii) to contribute and facilitate industry's response to this demand, i.e., to make their products in accordance with the procurement guidelines; and (iii) to influence a revision of the European directive on public procurement towards DfA.
- *Standardisation.* This SIG will contribute to pre-standardisation activities aiming to support groups active in European standards making (e.g., CEN/ISSS DfA Workshop on "DfA and Assistive Technologies in ICT"), as well as international standardisation bodies, in developing implementation strategies for DfA.
- *Proactive assessment.* This relates to an effort towards providing an account of technological developments likely to take place in the future, with the intention to assess both the impact of these developments on certain user communities, and the validity of DfA as an instrument for proactively accounting for technological accessibility. This SIG will be concerned with future aspects of the emerging information society, and will aim to inform and validate DfA as a proactive philosophy of design. To focus the scope of the analysis, reference scenarios will be developed and used to obtain the required insight regarding the potential application of DfA.
- *DfA curricula.* In this SIG, members will seek to contribute towards the development of an interdisciplinary curriculum on DfA. To this end, the project will collaborate with other running IST-funded Thematic networks, focusing explicitly on DfA curriculum development.

1.1.3 *DfA Resource Centre*

The third objective, namely the creation of a knowledge management infrastructure for DfA, seeks to compile a knowledge base on DfA, including the consolidated outcomes of the SIGs, and any other means that can facilitate the application and implementation of DfA knowledge into effective work practices. This is to be achieved through the creation of a virtual resource centre (i.e., a Web-based virtual space) on DfA, containing a broad range of information, such as the results of cooperation in SIGs, design case studies, national or transnational projects, best practice and experience reports, design tools, benchmarking tools and results, product assessments, policy developments, advances in standardisation, etc.

1.1.4 *Outreach*

Finally, the fourth objective is to conduct dissemination and outreach activities, aiming to reach different communities of beneficiaries of the project's results, including: academic and research, industry, user organisations of disabled people, NGOs, policy makers, etc., in order to raise awareness on DfA, and to facilitate knowledge exchange and technology transfer.

1.2 Rationale

In recent years, the need to address accessibility as a problem pending a generic solution has created a substantial literature concerned with the meaning and scope of the term “accessibility” and the potential design philosophies, which could contribute towards a widely acceptable frame of reference. Specifically, terms such as accessible design, barrier-free design, universal design, DfA, inclusive design, have all come about to provide a means for understanding the various aspects of accessibility. Although consensus is still lacking, it is perhaps worthwhile pointing out the different DfA connotations frequently associated with these terms. Some individuals consider that these terms refer to a new, politically correct approach and effort to introduce “special features” for “special users” in the design of a product. To others, these terms point to a deeply meaningful and rich notion of design, which elevates what designers often call “good user-based design” to a more encompassing concept of addressing the needs of all potential users, including persons with special needs (e.g., disabled and elderly). Accordingly, DfA, or *universal design* or *inclusive design*, are all intended to reflect a new concept or philosophy for design that recognises, respects, values and attempts to accommodate the broadest possible range of human abilities, requirements and preferences in the design of all computer-based products and environments. Thus, it promotes a design perspective that eliminates the need for “special features” and fosters individualisation and end-user acceptability.

In the present document, we adopt a broad definition of the term. For this purpose, we provide a contextual definition in the context of the eEurope initiative. Specifically, one of the objectives of the eEurope action plan is the integration of older people and people with disabilities into the information society. It is claimed that this will only come about as a result of designing mainstream products and services to be accessible and usable by as broad a range of users as possible. This approach is termed “DfA” or inclusive design (the two terms are used interchangeably), and consists of three principal strategies:

- Design of IST products, services and applications, which are demonstrably suitable for most of the potential users without any modifications.
- Design of products which are easily adaptable to different users (e.g., by incorporating adaptable or customisable user interfaces).
- Design of products, which have standardized interfaces, capable of being accessed by specialised user interaction devices.

From the above, it follows that DfA, in the present context, is interpreted as either subsuming or as being a synonym of other terms such as accessible design, inclusive design, barrier-free design, universal design, etc., respecting the fact that each of them may be highlighting different aspects of the notion. Finally, it is important to point out that although DfA could cover a very wide range of products¹, the work described in the present project will focus mainly on information society products and services, as indeed does the referenced eEurope initiative.

Given the above broad connotation, the context of the proposed work is the eEurope 2005 action plan, and in particular some of the eEurope 2005 targets. The proposed work seeks to promote and facilitate the commitment of the eEurope plan towards an inclusive Information Society, by fostering the creation of tight links between academia, industry, non-market institutions, governmental agencies, etc., in the area of DfA, through networking. Such networking will bring together representatives of all member states. The ultimate objective is to facilitate knowledge transfer, information sharing and the exchange of experience in the designated area of DfA, in the context of the information society.

¹ Examples of the application of *design for all* are reported by (Mueller, 1988) for interior and workplace design, and (Mace, 1998) for housing.

2. List of Participants

Particip. Role	Particip. No.	Participant name	Participant short name	Country
C	1	Foundation for Research and Technology – Hellas, Institute of Computer Science	ICS-FORTH	Greece
P	2	Danish Centre for technical aids for rehabilitation and education	DC	Denmark
P	3	FTB - Forschungsinstitut Technologie-Behindertenhilfe	FTB	Germany
P	4	Institute for Rehabilitation Research	iRv	The Netherlands
P	5	Centre for User Oriented IT Design, Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm	CID-KTH	Sweden
P	6	National Research Council	CNR-IFAC	Italy
P	7	National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health	STAKES	Finland
M	8	University of Linz	UoL	Austria
M	9	VZW Toegankelijkheidsbureau	VZW-T	Belgium
M	10	Institut de Recherche en Informatique de Toulouse	IRIT	France
M	11	Central Remedial Clinic	CRC	Ireland
M	12	Telenor Communication AS	Telenor	Norway
M	13	The National Secretariat for the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Disabilities	SNRIPD	Portugal
M	14	The National Centre for Personal Autonomy and Technical Aids	CEAPAT	Spain
M	15	City University - Centre for Human Computer Interaction Design	CU-HCID	UK
M	16	Fraunhofer - FIT (together with FTB, forming the Design für alle – Deutschland)	FhG-FIT	Germany
M	17	Swedish Handicap Institute	SHI	Sweden

3. Community added value and contribution to EC policies

3.1 The issue addressed and Community added value

Increasingly, people have to cope with some form of impairment, which threatens full participation in our society. It is recognized that Assistive Technologies alone cannot solve these problems sufficiently and it is required that the society at large must become more friendly and accessible for all. Thus, for the European Union it is of vital importance to develop further this vision towards an Information Society for All citizens. DfA or inclusive design provides a means to such an end. Specifically, in the context of the emerging Information Society, DfA seeks to provide methods and techniques (and more generally a design philosophy), which promote and facilitate active participation of *all* citizens.

Despite recent progress, DfA is still in its infancy with regards to IST-based products and services. This is evidenced by the very few examples where universal design has been successfully practiced in the radically changing IST sector. In a recent survey of opinion amongst leading academic and industrial professionals, it came out that the two most important impediments to universal design are the lack of qualified practitioners, and the lack of cost-justified and demonstrable impact (Story, Mueller and Mace, 1998). It is precisely these gaps that D4ALLnet seeks to address at European level, by:

- (i) Establishing a network amongst recognized centres of excellence around Europe, in order to promote and advance DfA in the emerging Information Society.
- (ii) Implementing the necessary infrastructure for virtual networking amongst the members of the network so as to facilitate cooperation on a range of topics of common interest, including policy development, benchmarking, proactive assessment on DfA, standardization, contribution to curriculum development, etc.
- (iii) Developing a knowledge management infrastructure in the form of a DfA resource centre that will facilitate access to resources on DfA and on-going and continuous update of the pool of information.
- (iv) Promoting and raising awareness on DfA through specific outreach activities.

D4ALLnet seeks to make the above contributions at a European level for several reasons. First of all, the envisioned target of networking to develop a common DfA code of practice in IST-based products and services is not geographically bound to any particular region or country. Instead, it should be a global objective for a European Information Society that respects diversity in all of its dimensions (i.e., age, sex, disability). Second, such networking is more effective on a European level as the range of competences vary. Indeed, the network needs to bring together complementary skills from different organizations throughout Europe, in order to create a critical mass of knowledge on DfA in IST-based products and services and to promote the concept at European level through a range of dissemination activities. To strengthen such a European dimension, D4ALLnet engages representative organisations (either as contractors or subcontractors) from all European member states, also active as National Contact Centres in EDeAN.

The D4ALLnet consortium comprises an effective and complementary mix of expertise, skills and competencies, which guarantee the quality of the project's outcomes and the wide promotion of the results on the European scene. This will help the European industry to adopt, internalise and apply the principles of DfA as integral parts of their processes, so as to provide products and services which exhibit easier availability, lower cost, better reliability, easier reparability, and greater utility for all.

3.2 EC policies

D4ALLnet serves *e*Europe's target towards "Participation for all in the knowledge-based economy". The Lisbon European Council recognized that: "... *special attention should be given to disabled people and the fight against info-exclusion*". The implication of the Lisbon conclusions is that *e*Europe should extend the focus of its *e*Participation action to promote social inclusion. The *e*Europe's response recognizes the need for additional efforts to address the problems of those who fail to fully benefit from the information society for various reasons, such as poverty or lack of awareness and training.

Specifically, it is pointed out that measures against info-exclusion need to be given a high political priority if the eEurope objective of an 'Information Society for all' is to be achieved. The above have led to several action lines, one of which states:

- *Ensure the establishment and networking of national centres of excellence in design-for-all and create recommendations for a European curriculum for designers and engineers.*

The above constitutes the frame of reference of the D4ALLnet project, which, however, moves one stage further to define specific on-going networking and consensus creation mechanisms, which are a pre-requisite for establishing a common vocabulary on DfA.

4. Contribution to Community social objectives

One of the premises of the European Information Society is to reflect the *shared values*, which form the basis of the European social model, including *democracy* and *individual rights, equal opportunities, social welfare* and *solidarity*. In today's rapidly changing world, it is important to ensure that the information society reinforces, rather than undermines, these values. D4ALLnet, by focusing on DfA in IST-based products and services, facilitates the above, and contributes to three specific EC social objectives, namely *combat social exclusion*, promotion of *quality of life* and improvement of *employment prospects* for all citizens, including disabled and elderly people. The specific contributions can be summarised as follows.

4.1 D4ALLnet to combat social exclusion

One of the cornerstones in EU social policy is to combat social exclusion resulting from discrimination based on sex, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Advancing a DfA code of practice for IST-based products and services strengthens the social character of the European Union against the above discriminatory dimensions. Specifically, DfA safeguards against social isolation, marginalisation and stigmatisation of European citizens in the information age. By fostering improved usability for more users, DfA promotes the socio-economic integration and independent living of all citizens and contributes towards sustainable development in the long run. However, for this to be attained, awareness of the approach and collaboration amongst design professionals, manufacturers and consumers needs to be increased. The explicit effort of D4ALLnet to contribute towards the development of an interdisciplinary curriculum on DfA for formal education as well as training of professionals constitutes an important contribution in this direction. Moreover, well-trained designers and engineers on principles and practice of DfA can act as catalysts towards an environment favourable to DfA. Specifically, designers could influence their clients to appreciate the relatively small cost and large benefit associated with improved usability for all users. Manufacturers can realize higher sales to a wider market and deeper customer loyalty through production of goods that are easier for more people to use. Finally, consumers will benefit from environments and products that impose less demand on their physical, sensory and cognitive abilities.

4.2 D4ALLnet to improve quality of life

Active participation in society is more and more linked to accessing information services, while physical proximity becomes less important. The disadvantages of citizens in rural areas or regions in the periphery of the European Union, as well as of mobility-impaired individuals can thus be reduced through "direct" connection. D4ALLnet seeks to promote equal opportunities by advancing DfA as a unifying code of practice for different IST-based products and services. Accessibility is at the core of such an intention.

Specifically, for disabled and elderly people, IST-based products and services that follow the principles of DfA, have the potential to improve the quality of life by facilitating independent living in the community, and helping to open up new possibilities for access, participation and socio-economic integration. However, realising the full potential of these new opportunities raises important questions about the availability, the affordability and the accessibility of ICTs. D4ALLnet will contribute in this direction by detailing suitable measures, and promote the practice of DfA by the European industry. This will entail a shift away from the tradition of 'a posteriori' adaptations, and towards a proactive unifying design code that values, respects and addresses diversity in all of its forms.

4.3 D4ALLnet to increase employment prospects

One of the far-reaching effects of the Information Society is the progressive shift towards an increasingly knowledge-based economy. The implications for employment are numerous, but perhaps the most characteristic is that of the changing nature in jobs, which, from labour-intensive, progressively become information-intensive. Thus, access to information becomes a pre-requisite for the citizens' capability to enter, maintain and prolong the period of employment. D4ALLnet seeks to create the grounds for, and facilitate the development of, an Information Society, which combats long-term unemployment and exclusion from the labour market. Specifically, by advancing DfA practices in IST products and services will increasingly exhibit the capability to meet different requirements towards individualised use. In this regard, they will eventually permit more people to work from, or near, home, for at least some of the time, opening the way for more communities to become alive during the working day. Additionally, it allows more

services - especially education and community services - to be delivered at local level. According the High Level Expert Group on the Information Society, such changes could help to reinvigorate whole communities and lead to stronger social networks. However, it should be noted that D4ALLnet could only offer the means to an end; it cannot guarantee by itself the above positive effects, as their likelihood is strongly correlated to the interplay between RTD and policy. Nevertheless, policy is most effective as a catalyst, once the sector has accumulated a sound knowledge base. D4ALLnet is therefore important in so far as it contributes to the consolidation and codification of such a knowledge base in the area of DfA.

5. Economic development and scientific and technological prospects

5.1 Impact on European IST community

D4ALLnet aims for a global impact in the European and international scene. Such an impact amounts to fostering greater cooperation and collaboration to share knowledge and experiences in DfA, and preparing the grounds for a European network of excellence on DfA, in accordance with the EC e-Accessibility Group targets. Potential beneficiaries of the outcomes of the project include the industry, the research community, but also the citizens in the information society.

Specifically, for industry, the expected benefit amounts to accessing, through the D4ALLnet web portal and the participation in SIGs, the network's on-going activities, as well as the accumulated and consolidated body of knowledge on DfA, which includes principles, examples of good practice, benchmarking tools (e.g., criteria and heuristics for assessing products and services), information on national and European policy, procurement guidelines, etc. Access to such information is expected to have multiple effects on industry, including appreciation of the benefits of DfA, improved innovation capability, new capacity to diversify, alternative market windows, wider customer bases and customer loyalty. In addition, D4ALLnet's contributions to the specification of curricula on DfA, as well as the delivery of conference tutorials and seminars based on the specified curricula, are anticipated to offer industry a unique opportunity to strengthen its capability to adopt and appropriate the benefits of DfA through training of design and engineering professionals.

The academic community will also find beneficial the project's efforts to promote DfA curriculum at the university level. In particular, efforts will be invested by National Contact Centres to find academic members throughout Europe willing to implement these curricula and to offer specialised courses on DfA. Moreover, it is considered important to organise such courses as joint activities between different National Contact Centres, whereby competent professionals from different institutions are invited to organise and deliver designated parts of the course. This will foster, amongst other things, closer collaboration between National Contact Centres and a stronger sense of DfA community membership.

End users (citizens) also stand to benefit from the project's results. In particular, the benefits include the articulation of a demand for DfA and the added value to be gained by industry seeking to fulfil such a demand, thereby facilitating improved quality, usability and satisfaction in the use of advanced IST-based products and services.

Finally, for non-market institutions such as regional governments, public procurement organizations, and for end user communities, the benefits amount to greater ability to influence the development of technology through assessing adherence and compliance of emerging solutions to a prescribed code of universal design.

To achieve the expected impact, D4ALLnet will foster networking amongst centres of excellence in DfA. Such a virtual organization is needed to provide a reference point regarding DfA and to support the diffusion of the projects results. In the short term, the network will operate as a consortium of partners, representative of all European member-states, offering expertise to industry, academia and procurement organizations in various modalities, including seminars, information days, training courses and consultancy. These services will be based on the outcomes of the D4ALLnet project, which progressively will be refined, updated and extended, as the need arises. In the medium to long term, the network will become an integral part of the EDeAN, which has just started its operation.

5.2 Dissemination channels

D4ALLnet will make use of several dissemination channels in the course of the project to reach out the broadest possible target audience. Most importantly, however, D4ALLnet will support the National Contact Centres of EDeAN in their dissemination efforts within their own countries. Towards this effect, D4ALLnet will prepare and package the content, which will be delivered to member states through various dissemination channels and events organised by National Contact Centres of EDeAN. These include information days, seminars and press conferences. In due course, and as they become available, such materials will also be distributed to relevant actors and the public in general through the project's web portal and the DfA Resource Centre.

In addition, there will be participation in international conferences explicitly concerned with the issue of universal design and universal access e.g., International Conference “Universal Access in Human Computer Interaction (UAHCI)”;

D4ALLnet will participate in UAHCI’2003 in Crete, Greece and UAHCI’2005 in Las Vegas, USA. D4ALLnet will also participate in the AAATE conference series, the annual CSUN conference, ACM ASSETS, the ERCIM UI4ALL Workshop series, etc. The cost for participating, preparing and disseminating material and information in various forms at these events will be charged to the travelling budget and/or to the budget item “Other costs”.

6. Work plan

6.1 Scope of the work and expected results

The scope of the work of this project is to create a sustainable structure with an explicit focus on the eEurope 2005 action plan, which will seek to prepare the ground for the materialization of (some of) its targets as identified in the e-Accessibility Group, as well as those set in the context of EDeAN. These targets include the creation of a Europe-wide networking mechanism to promote DfA principles and practices and to facilitate the creation of an environment favourable to DfA in Information Society Technologies. Towards meeting the above objectives, D4ALLnet proposes a work plan, which aims to:

- Facilitate consensus on DfA through networking.
- Establish a reference infrastructure for virtual co-operation on a range of issues, including benchmarking, policy development, standardisation, legislation, proactive assessment on DfA, DfA curricula, etc.
- Set up and maintain a DfA resource centre to foster knowledge sharing and exchange in the field.
- Design, initiate and undertake a concentrated set of dissemination and outreach activities, in the form of workshops, seminars and information days), in order to raise awareness on DfA, and to facilitate knowledge exchange and technology transfer.

The expected outcomes link directly with the designated objectives and can be summarised as follows:

- Contribution to the sustainability of EDeAN, a stable European network comprising nodes (i.e., national networks) in all EC member states, aiming to promote the principles of DfA in the emerging Information Society.
- An expandable infrastructure for virtual networking and cooperation between members.
- A DfA Resource Centre, which together with the infrastructure virtual networking will form the D4ALLnet web portal, which will be made widely available as an indispensable tool to stakeholders and actors at a European level and internationally.
- A consolidated body of knowledge on a range of issues related to DfA (i.e., policy, standards, legislation, benchmarking, curricula, etc), as a digital resource available through the D4ALLnet web portal.

Altogether, the expected outcomes will form the basic ingredients for promoting and facilitating the realisation and operation of EDeAN as a sustainable network of excellence on DfA, thereby servicing longer-term objectives specified in the eEurope 2005 action plan and the longer-term objectives of the 6th FP of the EC.

6.2 Workpackages

6.2.1 Work package breakdown

The work is structured into five work packages, described in detail in section B6.5.2:

- Work package 1: Management (Responsible: ICS-FORTH)
- Work package 2: Virtual networking infrastructure (Responsible: ICS-FORTH)
- Work package 3: DfA Resource Centre (Responsible: iRv)
- Work package 4: Networking and Consolidation (Responsible: Danish Centre)
- Work package 5: Outreach (Responsible: FTB)

Figure 1 depicts the interdependencies between the workpackages.

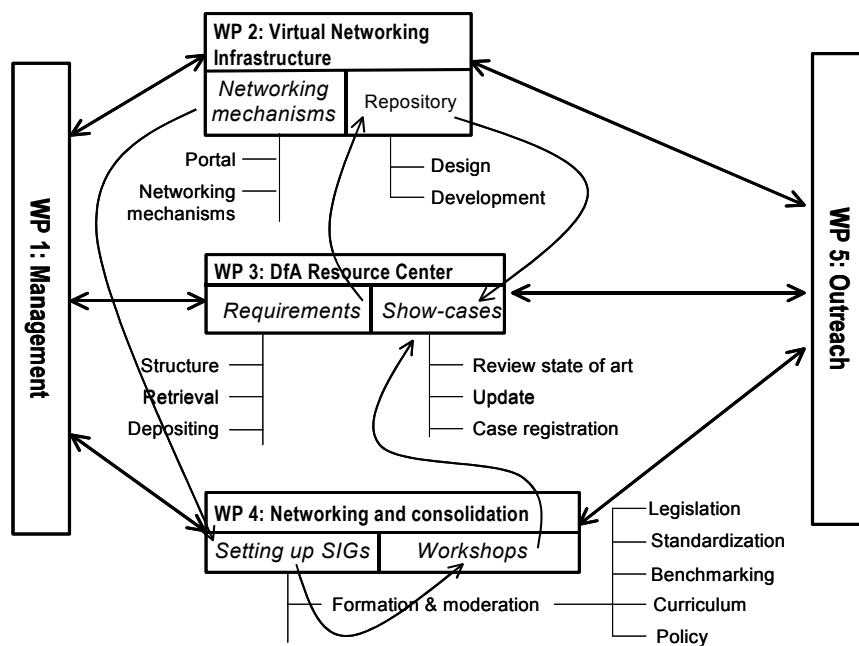


Figure 1: Interdependencies between the workpackages

6.2.2 Detailed work package description

Work package number:	WP 1 Management
<p>Objectives. To lead and co-ordinate the consortium, to liaise with the European Commission, to interface with other third parties such as networks, consortia, organisations, industry, international bodies, etc., as well as to monitor progress and arrange for management meetings and reviews.</p>	
<p>Description of work. The work in this WP will be organized among three main tasks:</p> <p><i>Task 1.1: Administrative management.</i> This task will set up the required mechanism for the project's administrative support. Tools for this purpose are already available and are regularly used by the project coordinator in other EC-funded project work. The task will also be concerned with the preparation of management reports to be sent to the EC, either as quarterly or periodic progress reports, as well as the arrangement of Project Management Committee meetings and the activities associated with them (i.e., preparation of meeting agenda, minutes, etc). Finally, the project will make all necessary efforts to set up an Advisory Board in order to ensure end-user organisations and industry participation and involvement throughout the D4ALLnet lifecycle.</p> <p><i>Task 1.2: Technical management.</i> A Project Management Committee (PMC) comprising all contractors and members will be instituted. The Co-ordinating Contractor will perform a quality control function through operational techniques and activities, which assure fulfilment of the project's objectives. The Co-ordinator will ensure the quality of the management process by continuously monitoring the progress of the project, measured against milestones and intermediate yardsticks, as specified within the project. In case of delays or failure to fulfil yardsticks or milestones, the Co-ordinator will propose and initiate suitable measures (e.g., resource re-allocation, task-force creation, etc.) to address the issues involved or solve a problem. The quality assurance process will be agreed in the project management committee and detail how project deliverables are prepared, timing of circulation within the consortium, format, table of contents, etc.</p> <p><i>Task 1.3: Liaisons and project presentation.</i> Preparation of project presentation, contact with other EC-funded thematic networks, projects, EDeAN, European policy initiatives, CEN/ISSS DfA Workshop, ISO Technical Committees and international communities and groups in USA and China, participation in Technical Review Meetings, etc.</p>	

Work package number :	WP 2 Virtual Networking Infrastructure
<p>Objectives. The objective of this work package is to set up the infrastructure to facilitate virtual networking amongst members of the Thematic Network. This infrastructure will be accessible by people with disabilities, following the principles of DfA.</p>	
<p>Description of work. Three primary tasks constitute the technical activities of this work package, which are described below.</p> <p><i>Task 2.1: Virtual Networking requirements (Month 1- Month 6).</i> The network will rely primarily on Internet-based communication tools to carry out its various activities. As a result, there should be appropriate networking mechanisms suitable for this medium and targeted towards information knowledge sharing, on-line discussions, viewpoint expression, and exchange of experience in the course of e-meetings. Such a tool is currently under development by ICS-FORTH in the context of the SEN-IST-NET thematic network, and an operational prototype is available on-line at <http://www.senist.net>. The developed mechanisms of the SEN-IST-NET portal, appropriately modified and enhanced (in accordance with the allocated budget), will form the basis for virtual networking, and for storing and retrieving information and knowledge in the context of the D4ALLnet project. The first task, therefore, will be to elicit the related basic requirements in the context of D4ALLnet.</p> <p><i>Task 2.2: Virtual Networking infrastructure (Month 2-Month 6).</i> The second task of the work package is to implement the necessary infrastructure for the network activities at the level of Special Interest Groups (SIGs). SIGs have proved to be very effective models of interaction and cooperation between stakeholders sharing common interests. Accordingly, the project's web portal will develop the necessary mechanisms which will operate at different levels (SIG formation, setting of rules, moderation, agendas, contributions, virtual meetings, etc) in order to encourage and facilitate membership, participation and interaction between SIG members. The D4ALLnet web portal will be accessible by disabled users, following the principles of DfA.</p> <p><i>Task 2.3: Maintenance of the D4ALLnet web portal (Month 6-36).</i> The third task concerns the maintenance of the D4ALLnet web portal to accommodate the feedback gained from actual use.</p>	

Work package number :	WP 3 DfA Resource Centre
<p>Objectives. The aim of this work package is to develop a European wide resource base, accessible through the D4ALLnet web portal, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge on DfA, through the provision of services to DfA actors. The D4ALLnet Resource Centre will provide access to best practices, design guidelines, case studies, user experiences, on-going developments in standards committees, policy forums, etc.), and will act as a focal point in Europe for the dissemination of current knowledge and best practice. It is expected that the contents and information services to be offered through the DfA Resource Centre will become particularly useful for designers and developers of modern on-line public services, since they will be provided with a validated code of practice on how to address specific targets of the eEurope 2005 action plan, such as e-accessibility and e-inclusion with regards to e-government, e-learning, e-health, etc</p>	
<p>Description of work. The work in this WP will be organized among two main tasks:</p> <p><i>Task 3.1: Resource Centre Requirements (Month 1- Month 6).</i> This task will collect and elaborate the user requirements for storing and retrieving information and knowledge in the context of the D4ALLnet infrastructure. The carrying out of this is done in close cooperation with EDeAN and other stakeholders and actors in the field.</p> <p><i>Task 3.2: DfA best practices (Month 1-Month 36).</i> This task will develop a process for collecting, and filtering DfA knowledge and experiences from the network (i.e. SIGs), as well as third parties connected to the network (i.e. standards bodies, other IST-funded projects, information providers and in general users registered as level 2 and/or level 3 SIG participants). Such information will be authored to become available via the D4ALLnet web portal for discussion and dissemination. This process will be continuous and structured, and it will take account of the consensus and the accumulated wisdom of the entire network. The D4ALLnet Resource Centre will be organized in such a way so as to provide a place to start searching. The tools needed for this purpose (e.g., search mechanisms, templates for data collection and information presentation) will be available to authorised users of the D4ALLnet web portal. Consulting the D4ALLnet Resource Centre could be conceived as being analogous in many ways to consulting a bibliography of bibliographies. All reasonable effort will be made to ensure accuracy and to ensure that links are active. In summary, the Resource Centre is expected to host information on thematic areas associated with SIGs (e.g. standards, legislation, benchmarking, technology, etc) and to provide services such as information search, data gathering and filtering, databases available through the Web, as well as technical services, such as guides for cataloguing, scripting, product acquisition, etc. The D4ALLnet Resource Centre will also be organized in such a way that it will be easy for authorized information providers (e.g., SIG moderators, research projects, standardisation committees and other sources of new information) to feed preliminary drafts for public commentary round or final results of their work into the Resource Centre.</p>	

Work package number :	WP 4 Networking & consolidation
<p>Objectives. The aim of this work package is to foster networking and consolidation activities within the Thematic Network and to act as a catalyst for, and facilitator of, networking and dissemination activities. This work package will also implement the mechanisms of cooperation between D4ALLnet and other projects, and related communities, described in section 5.3.</p>	
<p>Description of work. The work in this WP will be organized among three main tasks:</p> <p><i>Task 4.1: Set up for virtual networking (Month 3 - Month 6).</i> In this task, all preparatory actions needed for virtual networking are carried out. These include setting up the special interest groups, registration to special interest groups, assignment of moderators, etc. The foreseen special interest groups and the corresponding moderators are: Policy and Legislation (Moderator: Jan Ekberg, STAKES); Standardisation (Moderator: to be assigned); Curricula on DfA (Moderator: Yngve Sundblad, CID-KTH); Benchmarking (Moderator: Christian Bühler, FTB); Proactive Assessment (Moderator: Pier Luigi Emiliani, CNR-IFAC). Additional SIGs may be formed as the need arises, beyond the scope of the D4ALLnet project (e.g., in the context of EDeAN). The scheme of participation in SIGs is elaborated in Sections 5.2.3.1.</p> <p><i>Task 4.2: Virtual networking (Month 6 - Month 36).</i> Virtual networking implies activities carried out by SIG registered members over the Internet, using the D4ALLnet web portal. Initial discussions need to be launched to identify the key topics of interest shared among the members of the special interest groups. Once a SIG has been set up, the first task will be to describe the theme to be discussed, the objectives and the proposed means to achieve them. This description will be publicly available to facilitate at any time new members to join these discussions. The moderators of SIGs will be responsible to prepare the background documents and consolidate them before publication, in close co-operation with the SIG members. The process of filtering and consolidation of contributions leads to draft recommendations for the topic(s) of interest of each SIG, and contributes to data collection for the on-line Resource Centre. Additionally, the SIG moderator will initiate contacts with third parties (e.g. other Thematics networks such as IDCnet) to streamline activities and to ensure convergence and cooperation.</p> <p><i>Task 4.3: Consolidation activities (Month 18 - Month 36).</i> The final task of this work package is to organize and carry out several consolidation activities in the form of thematic workshops. These workshops will aim to finalize project results on the topics of the SIGs. Each workshop will be preceded by a preparatory stage where members of the network exchange opinions on various aspects (i.e. agenda, technical content), circulate documentation and in general develop the ground and the reference materials for the workshop to follow. All these tasks will be facilitated by the communication platform of the D4ALLnet web portal. Then, workshops are intended as consolidation mechanisms rather than exploratory events. Each SIG moderator undertakes the responsibility to organize one thematic workshop with the participation of appropriately selected experts in the field.</p>	

Work package number:	WP 5 Outreach
<p>Objectives. This work package will be concerned with dissemination activities aiming to reach different communities of beneficiaries of the project's results, including the academic and research, industry, user organisations of disabled people, NGOs, policy makers, etc.</p>	
<p>Description of work. The tasks of this work package are:</p> <p><i>Task 5.1: Content preparation and project presentation materials.</i> Materials will be provided in order to support different activities as DfA information days, DfA workshops, DfA seminars, DfA information mailings. The task will incrementally build and compile an information package to facilitate the above outreach activities. In addition, it will develop project posters and a project leaflet.</p> <p><i>Task 5.2: Information days and seminars.</i> These constitute the means by which the project will approach designated target communities in the course of outreach activities. Information days and seminars will be organised by National Contact Centres to inform local communities on project developments. Seminars will be concentrated activities, organised by one or more members of a national network of excellence to provide technical accounts on thematic areas related to the project. Seminars and information days can be held in conjunction with other mainstream activities, such as major workshops or conferences, to ensure higher level of participation. In all these actions, dissemination is prepared centrally and implemented in a decentralised approach: To this effect, D4ALLnet will take the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential multipliers and seminar hosts in the countries of Europe. The potential multipliers will be requested to present a plan of dissemination actions. The National Contact Centres of EDeAN will perform this task, but other candidates will be also identified. • Prepare training material (in English). • Report the experience gained. <p><i>Task 5.3: Other outreach activities.</i> In addition to the above, the outreach activities will also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk shows and reportage about meetings, participants and implemented activities at regional and national television • Articles, announcements, and press conference at regional and national press. • Meetings and Round tables and participation in conferences. • Internet based promotion. • SIG announcements through the D4ALLnet web portal, etc. 	