

DI@S.net



DI@S.NET PROJECT

Information Society in the European Islands and Isolated Regions

Learn from each others' experiences and build upon each others' achievements

5th Research Framework Program European Commission



www.dias-net.org



What is DIAS.net?

Funded under the European Commission's, Fifth Framework Programme for Research, IST Programme, DIAS.net is a **project** that demonstrates the convergence of technologies, marketable services, information and communication tools, in order to respond to the present and emerging needs and specificities of the European islands.

It started in April 2002 and has a duration of 2 years. The total budget is 2.2 million Euros.

Why islands and isolated regions?

The use of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can help **enhance the economic, social environment** of geographically isolated areas such as islands and isolated regions.

What is the DIAS.net project all about?

The project's end result will be the **DIAS platform**. The platform will provide the following services as well as others that will be defined during the project life

- A project management and planning communication system which permits real-time sharing of work and resources, including common data base and digital file management system.
- A security system for access, authentication and electronic signature
- Safe, shared servers for e-commerce and telework applications
- A dynamic distance learning and training system
- Advanced WWW and internet-based servers and tools to facilitate content dissemination and management

Who is participating in the project?

The project has **13 partners** representing **4 groups**:

- regional governments of islands, five EU regions from Objective 1 and 2 areas;
- networks and associations with activities related to regional development, information society or sustainable development (INSULA, Enaip-ELANET, NICCIEU, FECAI, ISLENET);
- technological partners, service providers and telecommunications; and
- research and development centers of islands who will also promote inter-regional cooperation.

The project leader is the **Comunidad Autonoma de Canarias**.

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Information Society
Technologies

Island Economies and Information Society

Island communities face two main barriers when it comes to accessing and using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

Firstly, it is the problem of the regional divide, that is to say the remote location of the islands. Secondly, it is the digital divide manifested by the lack of infrastructure and local expertise. Enterprises, especially micro-enterprises, which are the backbone of island economies, are not in the position to use the Internet and ICTs as business tools which will open new opportunities for socio-economic development. In addition, the effect of these two digital divides collectively leads to the formation of wider gaps between insular communities and the economic centres of Europe.

These communities need these new technologies to overcome their present weaknesses and gain access to sources of knowledge as well as new opportunities to learn, to work and compete at international level.

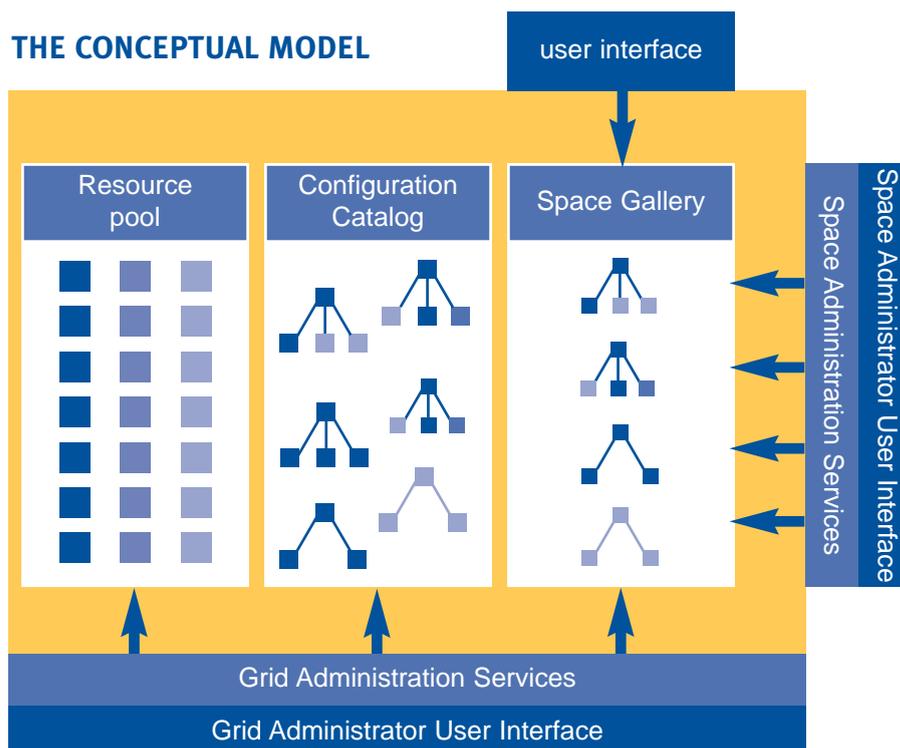
The DIAS.net project can make a difference

The Dias.net project will address the following:

- identification of regional interventions that are relevant to the project
- evaluation and selection of technologies and applications that will lead to innovation and synergies at local level
- set up of a platform to deliver innovative services and a climate of sharing of knowledge for SMEs and local/regional governments

The DIAS.net platform: the concept

The platform consists of a set of servers and open source applications, which are integrated into a small digital ecosystem, a dynamically evolving environment to share services and knowledge.



DIAS.net services online

The platform integrates two groups of services:

Predefined services:

- Content management
- Project management
- Document management
- Voting system management with electronic signature
- Chamber-sign authentication management
- Forum service
- Chat services
- Agenda services
- Marketplace and employment bureau management

Additional Services

This group contains a minimum of one service per participating region or two to three services for all participating regions, chosen to satisfy the expectations and needs detected during the “needs analysis” stage of the project. Services will address some of the following areas of interest: **e-Health, e-Administration, e-inclusion and telework, and e-Economy, including tourism.**

In general,

the platform will facilitate collaboration between geographically dispersed teams in different scientific disciplines and industrial areas, by enabling them to share data and computing infrastructure, working together in real time. It will be a useful instrument in the hands of the members of the four thematic networks to be set-up during the project, e-Health, e-Administration, e-inclusion and telework, and e-Economy, including tourism.

Another aim of the system is to provide

the tools for the creation, use, maintenance and administration of telematic services that can be accessed via the Internet, that are of interest especially to SMEs, associations, networks and other active actors in the European islands.

The platform will also be a vital tool for the project team, the partners and the DIAS Association. It will help with the day-to-day tasks and internal running of the association, which will use electronic decision-making systems with electronic signatures and electronic data exchange.

The following are some examples of work that the association will be able to carry out using this tool:

- The drawing up and approval of annual budgets and accounts,
- Authorization for investment plans or for starting up initiatives, programmes or projects,
- Management and transfer of funds,
- Exchange of management reports and documents,
- Setting up of consortia for projects, or other inter-regional initiatives.

The DIAS.net Home Page

The main objective is to offer a friendly interface to the user. Visitors will access the DIAS.net platform through a single entry point. After logging in, the user's profile will be automatically identified by the system which will allow access to those services that he or she will be authorised to use. A set of tools will allow both users and administrators to operate innovative services using simple and guided menus.

The figure shows the prototype's home page

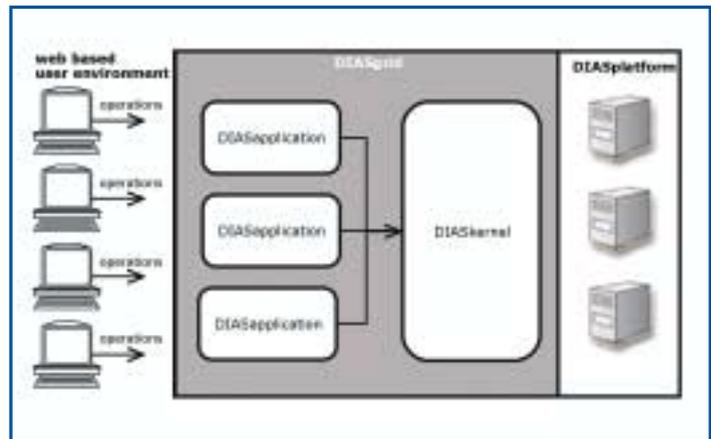


www.dias-net.org

DIASgrid - the software

DIASgrid is the software we have developed to implement the platform.

The figure shows the architecture layers of DIASgrid.



Digital Islands association

The portal is the main instrument with which we will try to achieve the project objective: “enhancing regions’ competences to transform their economies and social framework into a digital economy”.

Local governments are best placed to know local needs and promote local interests. Local and regional authorities, therefore, should have the responsibility to plan and provide Internet-based services which would best meet local needs. However, due to lack of expertise in insular communities, the task becomes quite difficult. It is precisely this gap that the creation of Dias Association aims at addressing. The Association, which will bring together the Digital Islands will develop, implement and give continuity to the synonymous platform.

On April 10, 2002 , in Tenerife, Canary Islands, nine island regions signed the Memorandum of Understanding of the Association: Aland, Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, Gozo (Malta), Hiiumaa, Madeira, North Aegean Region, South Aegean Region and Sardinia.

DIAS.net interventions in the Regions

A significant number of Information Society related interventions is currently taking place in all participating regions that will help regional authorities gain valuable experience in providing Internet-based services. These interventions were proposed by the regional authorities responsible for the implementation of EU Structural Policy. Their main aims are to address the e-Europe 2005 Action Plan priorities and to cover specific regional needs.

The table presents the thematic fields of these regional support interventions:

DIAS.net Regional Interventions, Support Actions									
PARTNERS	Studies – Pilots						Awareness raising - Dissemination	Good Practices	Bench marking
	Broadband infrastructure	e-Administration	e-Inclusion	e-Health services	Working in the knowledge based economy	Other (not yet specified)			
Canary Islands	•					•	•		
Sardinia		•					•	•	
Madeira		•	•		•				
Hiiumaa						•			
North Aegean Region		•						•	•
South Aegean Region				•				•	
NICCIEU							•		

The themes

The Canary Islands' intervention, "Pilot on new telecommunication infrastructures and services for isolated and rural areas", focuses on **Broadband Infrastructure**. It covers:

- the establishment of a Plan for the Extension of Broadband Services in the Canary Islands,
- the creation of a network of "Broadband Rural Homes",
- the establishment of Rural Service Centres in isolated areas.

e-Administration issues are dealt with by three participating regions:

- Sardinia, whose intervention "Monitoring of the progresses made in the e-government project EMOUN-SAR" will supervise and evaluate the results of this Sardinian Mountain Municipalities' initiative. Another Sardinian intervention: "Analysis of User needs for the future web portal of the Region" aims at contributing to the development of the portal of the Regional Authority through web-scanning of other regional portals, as well as through the distribution and processing of a questionnaire addressed to key stakeholders of the region.
- Madeira's intervention, "Future scenarios for ICTs in Madeira – 2010", having public administration on-line service delivery as a key issue, intends to preview expected developments and the state of Information Society in the region in a broad range of sectors.
- Finally, the Region of North Aegean, with its intervention "e-Government", aims at the prioritisation of regional needs with regard to services to be provided on-line as well as the transfer of European best practices and current trends concerning electronic administration.

e-Inclusion as well as **Working in the knowledge based economy** are the focus of another Madeira proposal named "Pilot project on tele-work, involving also physically disabled people", which aims to support related actions foreseen in the Regional IS Plan.

e-Health services will be the subject of the intervention "Telemedicine" proposed by the Region of South Aegean, which aims at transferring at regional level EU R&D results and European best practices with regard to telemedicine implementation.

Dissemination and awareness raising is the objective of

- the Canary Islands intervention named "Portal of Innovation of the European Islands", under which a portal will be developed providing information about innovation sources in the European Islands, as well as tools that will facilitate the creation of collaborative innovation environments.
- the "Development and operation of the NICCIEU web site" proposed by the Network of Island Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Union (NICCEU) which will contribute to the dissemination of its activities and the facilitation of the collaboration amongst its members.
- the Sardinian intervention "Updating the Sardinian Region", which will inform the Regional Authority on the different European Programmes in the IS field.

In line with e-Europe 2005 proposed methodology, **good practice** analysis and dissemination as well as **benchmarking** are also addresses in some of the regional interventions:

- Sardinia, "Analysis of User needs for the future web portal of the Region", best practices regarding regional web portals will be analysed, explored and transferred locally.
- Both regions of North and South Aegean aim at making use of European best practice at regional level in the fields of e-government and e-health, respectively. The intervention "Field survey based on key Information Society indicators" of the Region of North Aegean aims at enabling benchmarking of the region with other regions at national and European levels.

Participating insular regions are currently implementing the major bulk of their Information Society plans with the support of EU Structural Funds. The benefits of the proposed interventions are expected to be significant for the local socio-economic development. The methods used and the lessons learned will be available on the DIAS.net web site. This will greatly support the dissemination of their results, and will also allow non-participating regions to learn and share experiences and thereby ensure a significant European added value.

Partnership



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Extensive information on the European Union is available through the EUROPA service at internet website address : <http://europa.eu.int>



The Fifth Framework Programme (FP5) sets out the priorities for the European Union's research, technological development and demonstration (RTD) activities for the period 1998-2002. These priorities have been selected on the basis of a set of common criteria reflecting the major concerns of increasing industrial competitiveness and the quality of life for European citizens.

The strategic objective of the Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme is to realise the benefits of the information society for Europe both by accelerating its emergence and by ensuring that the needs of individuals and enterprises are met. The programme's inter-related research objectives focus on technology developments of the information society and enable the close articulation between research and policy needed for a coherent and inclusive information society.

The IST Programme has four inter-related specific objectives. For the private individual, the objective is to meet the need and expectation of high-quality affordable general interest services. For Europe's enterprises, workers and consumers, the objective is to enable individuals and organisations to innovate and be more effective and efficient in their work, thereby providing the basis for sustainable growth and high added-value employment while also improving the quality of working life. In the sector of multimedia content, the key objective is to confirm Europe as a leading force, realising its full potential. For the enabling technologies which are the foundations of the information society, the programme objective is to drive their development, enhance their applicability and accelerate their take-up in Europe.

The internet web address for the Fifth Framework Programme is:
<http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/home.html>

Further information on IST, the concept of "A user-friendly information society" and the Sixth Framework Programme is available at the internet website address:
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp5.html>

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