Call for tender – A study on digital publishing and developing countries

International Alliance of Independent Publishers – July 2010

Background and aim of the study

- The main aim of the "Digital Publishing and Developing Countries" programme, undertaken by the International Alliance of Independent Publishers in partnership with the Prince Claus Foundation, seeks to "determine digital publishing's role as a future publishing resource in developing countries."

- It consists of four consecutive phases to span over the next three years (2010-2012).

- The first phase of the programme consists of performing a study that would serve to both address some basic questions regarding the general thrust and lay the groundwork for future phases.

Introduction of programme partners

- **International Alliance of Independent publishers** (www.alliance-editeurs.org)

Founded in 2002, the International Alliance of Independent Publishers is a non-profit association which coordinates an international network comprising 85 publishing houses and groups of publishers from 47 countries. The Alliance organizes international meeting and carries out advocacy work to foster independence. It also backs international publishing projects — in the form of assistance with translation or co-publishing. Finally, the Alliance contributes to the promotion and diffusion of productions from the South to the North and modestly tries to invert one-way trade flows. The Alliance thus contributes to enhancing the accessibility of works and ideas, to defending and promoting bibliodiversity.

- **Prince Claus Fund** (www.princeclausfund.org)

Culture is a Basic Need: The Prince Claus Fund actively seeks international cultural collaborations with partners of excellence in spaces of need. The Prince Claus Fund provides immediate cultural rescue as well as support to sustainable cultural processes. It takes initiatives to raise awareness on the importance of culture in everyday life and for development. The Fund works in the spirit of Prince Claus' belief that one cannot develop people, but people develop themselves. The Prince Claus Fund is based in Amsterdam and is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Postcode Lottery.

Study Specifications: Potential Structure

The study could be geared around three main aims:

1. Firstly, it should **provide a concise overview of digital publishing in developing or emerging countries.**

- What initiatives are already in place in developing countries? Who are the main players? What initial conclusions can we draw from what we have observed?

- Is there a specific trend in emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, Mexico, South Africa), as there is for other economic activities in which digital technology is used? If so, what main conclusions can we draw from what we have observed?

- Is there a growing divide separating those developing countries that are more and more involved in digital book publishing and those developing countries that would be isolated by or possibly indifferent to the digital publishing revolution?

2. It would therefore be useful to **establish, through a forward-looking approach, the overall outcomes and possible scenarios.**

- If there is a growing divide or indifference in developing countries, what are the possible risks tied to this situation? Could established publishing groups from developing countries possibly be compromised by the digitisation of content?

- Under what conditions could digital publishing play a role for publishers in developing countries similar to that of mobile telephony, as an instrument of change (a new technology that closes an existing gap in development due to a lack of infrastructure and raw materials)?

- Taking into account that e-readers and similar products are largely produced, sold and used in developed countries, can digital publishing fulfil readers' needs, whether for education or for leisure, in developing countries? Is the personal computer the "must-have" device in this context? Since the main problem facing publishing in developing countries is weak demand ("lack of readers"), will the virtualisation of content and its "portability" help publishers in developing countries to reach new markets and readers more easily?

- Does digital publishing offer an opportunity for bibliodiversity, especially for publishers and content in developing countries? It is one among many new tools that help publishers to address their usual problems linked to geographical, political, economical and developmental contexts: lack or expense of raw materials (paper, for example), lack of infrastructure or its inefficiency in handling elements of the business (printing, for example), narrow and inexperienced distribution networks, the expense of advertising and marketing etc.

- From another vantage point, which sectors would see little or no effect from the digitisation of content in developing countries, in areas such as creative output and prepress?

- How do different scenarios relate to the following: 1) a structural lag in publishing which is never overcome and that leads to the isolation of a developing country (it then becomes a "paper zone", further reducing their content availability in information and educational systems across the globe, or 2) rapid technological development that is specifically tailored to developing countries.

3. Lastly, given 1) the actual conditions in the field; 2) the possible outcomes at this time; 3) the types of partners in the field, we prefer finishing the study **with a phase comprised of in-depth consideration of recommendations and proposals.**

- What **proposals will be made to the Digital Publishing and Developing Countries programme partners**, bearing in mind that the next phases of the programme offered by the Alliance will take shape during international and interprofessional trade fairs as well as a life-size test (digital publishing or joint digital publishing involving publishers from developing countries)?

- What **recommendations would you make to publishers** from developing countries? To encourage cooperation among publishers, what cooperative efforts should be organised within the Alliance's network (eventually involving publishers from developing countries and those from developed countries, to share technology and know-how, for example)?

- And in general, what **proposals could be made to international organisations** (UNESCO, CERLALC etc) **and to authorities** in developing countries to encourage understanding (and even development) of digitisation of publishing?

Study Specifications: Systematic Structure

- Specific studies that could form chapters of the overall study, by geographic area or region (Africa, Latin America, and Asia);
- An overview, analysing the entire study in a few pages;
- Short articles describing the work in progress, particularly surprising or original developments etc;
- A final document in digital form, as well as in its printed form, where applicable, will include all of the analyses, appendices etc. This report could be part of the "Reports on the Publishing World" published by the Alliance or could be used in whole or in part to contribute to the Alliance's online resources (the "Analysis" and/or "E-learning" columns);
- The entire budget for all phases of the study should be between €6,000 and €10,000.

Candidates

- If this study interests you, please apply by **29/08/2010.**

- Applicants should preferably, but not necessarily, be able to speak and write in both French and English (and possibly Spanish), a grasp of one of the two languages is sufficient.

- Applications shall comprise the following elements, to be e-mailed to lhugues@alliance-editeurs.org:
    - a letter of introduction;
    - a proposal for the implementation of the study;
    - an estimated budget proposal for the completion of the study, itemised if possible by cost centres;
    - a provisional project schedule.

- There are no prior restrictions on candidates, though they could be asked to provide billing information according to French legal requirements, and paid in royalties if their work is eventually published etc.

- Selection of the candidate will take place via a committee composed of Thierry Quinqueton (Alliance Chairman) and Laurence Hugues (Alliance Director), Serge Dontchueng Kouam (French-language Network Coordinator for the Alliance), a representative of the Prince Claus Foundation, and Étienne Galliand (Double Ponctuation). The committee will make its selection prior to 20/09/2010 and will inform the candidates of their decision while not required to explain the reasons behind their decision.

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