

**AUSTRALIAN eRESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL (AeRIC)**  
**AeRIC Meeting - Thursday, 23 April 2009**

**AGENDA ITEM 6: ASeSS BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2009/2010**

**Paper: ASeSS Annual Business Plan for 2009/2010**

**Purpose**

To provide AeRIC with a summary of the NCRIS Team's assessment of the ASeSS Annual Business Plan for 2009/2010.

**Background**

A contract for the *ASSDA Services for E-Social Science* (ASeSS) project was signed with The Australian National University (ANU) on 15 October 2008. The contract provides funding of \$3 million over 3 years, for two main elements:

- A data archive component, to improve the curation and archiving of social science data, and
- A Virtual Organisation component, to provide integrated web based access to ASSDA held and other similarly curated data.

The second component was funded such that ASeSS could co-invest in a NeAT project if an agreed project plan could be developed with ARCS and ANDS, but it was not dependent on a NeAT project to proceed.

ANU submitted the 2009/10 Annual Business Plan for ASeSS on 31 March 2009.

In assessing the Annual Business Plan, the NCRIS team gives particular consideration to:

- the required content for the Plan, as specified in the funding agreement;
- the alignment with the capability investment plan as approved by NCRIS; and
- the degree to which any variations might represent a change requiring re-appraisal by NCRIS.

**Summary**

The ASeSS Business Plan for 2009/10 outlines progress in implementing the Interim Implementation Plan submitted in October 2008 and details planned future activities and associated milestones for 2009/10 and beyond. Overall, its contents are in accordance with the requirements specified in the Funding Agreement.

**Issues**

- 1) ASeSS has identified areas of significant progress to date, including the recruitment and training of a significant number of archivists across several nodes and the strengthening of the ASSDA partnership across nodes.
- 2) The project has already engaged strongly with the leading international institutions and is planning considerable training and development activities to

support further international collaboration in the social science data archive community, including software interoperability and the co-development of open source tools.

- 3) ANUSF is planning to host a five-day international workshop in July this year for technical staff, tools and technology developers to discuss a common architecture for social science and related archives and to identify the best open source tools that might be adopted by those archives.

There may be an advantage in seeking further information about this workshop and pursuing the involvement of ANDS in the workshop, as part of the ongoing need to align ANDS and ASeSS activities across data federating communities.

- 4) The Business Plan identifies a number of specific risks:

- the co-ordination of the outcomes of the Archive services and VO services components of the project and the continuation of the VO Services (NeAT) project which is governed under separate arrangements with ARCS/ ANDS, and
- the retention of trained archivist staff.

The question of the governance of the NeAT VO project has arisen in the context of a broader resistance to NeAT governance processes and should not be seen as relating to this project in particular.

A NeAT project plan has now been agreed by the Project Committee and is with ANDS and ARCS Executive Committees for approval.

NCRIS Team

April 2009