

The Requirements of OCCASION from its Partners

Peter T. Kirstein, 9 July 2006

1. Introduction

There has been some question, both from the OCCASION partners and the Exco, on exactly what is expected from the OCCASION partners as part of the Silk Project. This note is an attempt to clarify this issue. Here it should be realised that there are already several documents which have addressed the issue in some detail: the OCCASION Contract (CONTRACT), the Description of Work (DOW) and the Consortium Agreement.(CA). This note is more to clarify these documents. Most of the material here has been presented already at SB12; I repeat it only because several questions since the meeting make it clear that the material needs repeating – if only so I can refer to sections of it in answer to questions. I also expect to update the document over time.

Most of the document is directed at the OCCASION NREN partners – whom I call the OCCASION Partners (ARENA, GRENA, AZRENA, KAZRENA, KRENA and TARENA; others are directed at the Silk NRENs who are not partners – but who benefit from OCCASION funds, whom I call OCCASION Associates (TURENA and UZSCINET). On the whole Afghanistan benefits directly only from NATO funds – so that they will be just called AFRENA. They are not under the same rules as those benefiting from EC funds. Nevertheless, I have discussed AFRENA's case also with Hadassa and Robert, and we agree that they should be covered by the same rules; they should be regarded as OCCASION Associates.

For most of this note I talk about "OCCASION Partners". The considerations for the OCCASION Associates TURENA and UZSCINET should be the same – even though the payment mechanism will be different (and the TURENA budget less). Even AFRENA should consider itself covered.

2. The Extent of the Finances

Only the OCCASION Partners and the OCCASION Associates can benefit directly from OCCASION funds. They do so in three ways:

1. The OCCASION Partners have a direct budget in their own names. These are 25K€ for each OCCASION Partner.
2. The OCCASION Associates are supposed to have similar resources – administered by RUG. These are 25K€ for each OCCASION Associate.
3. There are funds in the DESY and RUG budgets designated as being on behalf of the OCCASION partners or Associates. These are about 250K€

We want the funds in (2) to be as similar as we can to those in (1). The funds in (3) are roughly equivalent to those in (1) and (2) per partner. Those administered by RUG are meant mainly for dealing with the anomaly of the OCCASION Associates not having a formal contract with the EC and for handling central functions like the central costs of meetings. The funds administered by DESY were meant for equipment – but will be re-designated also for other purposes by agreement. In addition, UCL is responsible to the EC for the disbursement of all the funds.

In addition to the above, there are the sources of funds which existed under Silk-1 – i.e. donations from Cisco or ISOC, NIGs from NATO, central funds provided by NATO (normally via DESY) and independent arrangements – e.g. those via OSI and perhaps the World Bank.

Many of these resources also have implied commitments; this has not been understood fully by the partners.

3. The OCCASION Partner Budgets

The intended make-up of the OCCASION Partner budget is spelt out in the CA and DOW.

Partner	Item	Budget	mm
NREN	Staff	5	12
	Travel	11	
	Equip	0	
	Consumables	0	
	Other	5	
	O/H (20%)	4	
	TOTAL	25	
	Prepayment	11.5	
	Paid	8.7	

Table 1 The approximate funds for each Silk NREN

In fact because per SB10 was paid by RUG, and the budgets were made up in January, these budgets were slightly reduced – by about 1K€ per partner – plus the relevant 20% O/H. As a result each partner received about 23.8 K€ in the contract. There was an anomaly for KRENA, because they were Host in SB10 and so had no direct costs. They received the full 25K€ As a result of SB11, when the partners should have paid their full costs, many will be charged a further 1K€, this time GRENA was the exception, because they were the Host. This 1K€ will be credited to RUG eventually in the payments.

Note all Travel and Living of attending SBs for OCCASION partners should be paid directly by the partners. This situation is different for the Associated Partners. Here hotels and living will be paid by RUG, and travel may be paid directly by the OCCASION Associate or by RUG – whichever is the more convenient.

Besides their own budgets, DESY and RUG have a budget for the NRENs of 163 K€ and 63K€- in each case plus O/H. The DESY budget was intended mainly to provide a conferencing unit per partner (108K€) and some central equipment. In practice we have received this already, so much of this could be used for other purposes. RUG's budget included 10K€ for the travel of OCCASION associates, 15 K€ for the central costs of OCCASION meetings and 38K€ for the direct costs of OCCASION associate staff.

UCL is directly responsible for these costs. Before the full prepayment is transferred, we need to be satisfied that the OCCASION partners realise their obligations and will

live up to them. This requires at the least that each partner makes the relevant budget proposal on how they intend to spend their funds. For staff this includes on what OCCASION work-package they expect to expend their funds – and how they will provide the extra 21 K€ equivalent of their own expenditure which is also mentioned in the DOW.

In addition, it must be realised that the pre-payment is just that. It has been released by the EC, and hence UCL, in order that the partners can incur expenditure. It belongs to the partners only when the Cost Claims have been submitted to the EC and accepted by them. Even then it is liable to the final audit.

4. Expenditure on Silk Board Meetings

The experience with SB10-SB12 has shown already the inadequacy of the RUG budget – with SB12 particularly frightening. During the period of the project, we envisage 7 meetings; this implies that there is a provision of just 2.2K€ of central costs per meeting. The actual costs will be given by RUG, but I expect this to be nearer three times this. Thus we agreed at SB12 to transfer 40K€ from the DESY equipment budget to pay for this. This budget will be reviewed periodically.

Secondly, the 10K€ per partner implies around 1.4K€ per SB. I would like to know how much these expenses really are. So far each partner has brought only the SB member and paid nothing for its own expenses when hosting – except the hospitality. We actually need to have the partners working on the project to participate in some meetings. Thus DESY has brought Kars to two meetings and Vladimir also to one. The presence of Elena, from KRENA, was paid so far by RUG. While really this sort of expense should be at the expense of the OCCASION partner, the budget for this may be inadequate. It is expected that, in general, each partner is responsible for ensuring that the correct people come to the SB meetings to ensure that the work is done efficiently. Nevertheless, if the presence of a technical member of a partner is expected to be of general interest, it will be possible to apply to the OCCASION Exco for central funding for that person. The presence of such a person must have the approval of the Official Silk/OCCASION delegate, but the funding could come from the DESY budget for equipment. We may also decide to hold separate technical meetings – but must review at whose expense these should be held..

The costs of meals, hotel and travel for the official delegates to the SB meetings will be met entirely by the OCCASION partners. If RUG has paid some of this so far, it will be reimbursed from the eventual EC payments – with the OCCASION partner paid less. We agreed previously, and this was confirmed at SB12, that when this is done RUG will actually keep half the overhead implied. This means that if the OCCASION partner SHOULD have paid 1K€ and so would have received 1.2K€ including O/H, If RUG has made the payment, RUG will get 1.1K€ and the partner only 0.1 K€ (and have their eventual payments reduced accordingly). Because of the way overhead must be claimed, it is not yet clear how this mechanism will work in practice.

5. The Situation of TURENA and UZCINET

In principle, the finances of the Associated Partners should be handled in a very similar way to other OCCASION partners. They should be signing a form of Consortium Agreement (CA). I sent them a draft in May, and they agreed at SB12

that they would sign this. I have therefore sent them a new version on July 10 – now giving their addresses and responsible person; this they should sign and return to me. I will then get it signed by UCL, and return the signed forms to them. Their travel will be handled directly by RUG – with payments made by RUG against invoices. Their other expenditure will be handled by a direct agreement with RUG – but discussed also with the Exco to the extent it covers the direct assignments which they agree to do. Payments for such work will be by results – though whether there is a pre-payment must be discussed.

6. Reports and Contributions to Deliverables

The payments from the EC are dependent entirely on the acceptance of the Deliverables by the Reviewers. These Deliverables include the management reports like the quarterly and annual reports.

While UCL writes the management reports, these must be based largely on the Quarterly reports received by the OCCASION partners – with corrections and additions to drafts made by them. I have provided a template, and partners were expected to fill these out. I have all the responses for QR2. In fact most did not indicate that much work had been done. Very few indicated that real manpower had been expended on OCCASION activities. From the QR2 sent to the EC, it must be clear that much more is expected for these QRs. ARENA, GRENA, TARENA and TURENA wrote substantial reports. KAZRENA described their organisations of workshops and their additions to their network – which is just what is required.

While work directly for NATO activity – such as organising for the NATO Science Committee – should be mentioned, it will not add anything to the OCCASION management reports. Organising Workshops for Silk Users does add directly to these reports.

When it comes to the real Deliverables, we expect the OCCASION Partners to make real contributions – both in the work and the reports. Here good examples are the following:

- The work that KRENA has done measuring the performance of the Peribit routers (not reported in QR)
- The testing of the Tanberg units by AFRENA, GRENA and ARENA,
- The identification of User Groups by GRENA and TARENA

7. Planned Activities

In the immediate future, we have to produce the following Deliverables:

Del	Description	WP	Lead	Num mm	Date Due	Date Exp
D1.1	Project Description	1	1	2	2-06	6-06
D5.1	Educational programme	5	3	4	2-06	7-06
D4.1	Provision of facilities of VoIP for the OCCASION community	4	1	6	2-06	7-06
D2.1	The status of the Silk NRENs and their plans for connectivity	2	3	3	3-06	7-06

D5.2	The potential User Groups within the Silk countries	5	3	6	4-06	7-06
D1.2	The impact of the Silk and OCCASION Projects during the first year of the project (M12)	1	1	8	10-06	
D6.1	Plan for using and disseminating knowledge	1	1	4	7-06	
D2.2	Co-funding to Silk during 1st year and agreed funding model for 2nd year	2	1	6	8-06	8-06
D3.1	Description of technical facilities provided and requisite of statistics	3	2	59	10-06	
D4.2	Provision of video conferencing facilities for the OCCASION community	4	1	7	8-06	
D5.3	Assessment of User Group and Training activities in Year 1	5	3	8	10-06	
D2.3	A transition strategy for Silk communications	2	1	10	10-06	
D6.2	Dissemination during 1st year and plans for 2nd year	6	3	16	10-06	

Table 2 The Deliverables due the first year

We need to determine who will be working on each of these. I would like direct names and some plans for activity. This should be part of Section 9 below.

8. Progress Report QR3 and the 1st Management Report

The first project review will be held in early November. For this review, I must provide a Management Report (MR1) covering the period November 1 2005 to July 31, 2006. This report must be provided by the middle of September. It can be based only on what I know has happened and what you have supplied in your Quarterly Reports. As I said earlier, QR1 and QR2 have been of very variable quality; QR3 should make up for this by including all that you have done so far, which has not been included in QR1 and QR2; here you should be noting that the period of QR3 is up to the end of July 2006. Please look at what you have written in QR1 and QR2, and make sure that QR3 includes everything that you should have put in earlier. Unless it is described in the earlier reports, this must include:

- What technical activities relevant to the DoW you have done throughout the first nine months (including which WPs).
- The progress you have made in identifying User Groups to use the Silk facilities.
- The progress you have made in assisting User Groups to use the Silk facilities.
- What is the current extent of your NREN – particularly outside the Capital City.
- What progress you have made in making your NREN sustainable without EC or NATO funding.

- What talks members of your organisation have given or papers they have written concerning OCCASION activity.

Based on this I will provide both QR3 and the Management Report. You are expected to read both documents, and to comment on any omissions, corrections or additions.

9. Note on Your Expected Contributions to the OCCASION Project

I have stated in Section 3, as has Robert, that you should write a note on the OCCASION WPs you intend to participate in, and what you plan to do, as part of your man-power effort for OCCASION. This should include both the funded and unfunded portions. This should be given in your contribution to QR3, or provided in a separate note appended to it. Because we would like to have the people doing the technical work able to contact each other directly, the person responsible for the work in each WP should be identified by each partner. One part of the Description of Work is WP1 management; to do this properly, one must participate in the teleconferences described in Sections 10 and 11.

Release of further funds from the Pre-payments received depends on a satisfactory response from you to Sections 8 and 9. Approval of your eventual claims, and thus to your entitlement to these and further funds, depends on your fulfilling the plans you have outlined.

In the documents I sent you in preparation of the Description or work, you agreed to the following distribution of effort:

WP\ Abbr	UCL	DES Y	RUG	ARE NA	GRE NA	AZR ENA	KAZ REN A	UZS C INET	KRE NA	TUR EN	TAR ENA	TOT AL
1	4	4	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	40
2	4	0	2	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	6	52
3	0	96	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	104
4	2	0	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	29
5	2	0	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	30
6	2	0	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	33
TOT AL	14	100	11	21	22	21	21	21	21	15	21	288

Table 3 Total Effort in of Project in mm

WP\ Abbr	UCL	DES Y	RUG	ARE NA	GRE NA	AZR ENA	KAZ REN A	UZS CINE T	KRE NA	TUR EN	TAR ENA	TOT AL
1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	14
2	4	0	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	29
3	0	16	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	24
4	1	0	1	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	25
5	1	0	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	20
6	2	0	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	18

TOT
AL 12 17 10 12 10 12 12 12 12 9 12 130

Table 4 Funded Effort in of Project in mm

This is not quite what I sent you, since in that document the funded effort for the Associated Partners was put at zero For the purpose of this planning exercise, they have been restored – even though the funding comes via RUG and not the EC directly.

In the plans you are preparing, you should provide columns for your contribution to the project corresponding to figures 1 and 2. I give below the sort of input I would put in this for UCL.

Column	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Actual Total	Actual Funded	Planned Total	Planned Funded	Budgeted Total	Budgeted Funded
WP\	M1-M9	M1-M9	M1-M24	M1-M24	M1-M24	M1-M24
1	3	2	5	4	4	4
2	3	3	4	4	4	4
3	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1	1	4	2	2	1
5	0	0	2	1	2	1
6	0.5	0.5	2	2	2	2
TOTAL	7.5	6.5	17	13	14	12

Table 5 Effort for UCL in Project in mm

Table 5 shows in columns 5 and 6 the same efforts as in Tables 3 and 4. This will always be the case. Column 1 shows that UCL put in somewhat more than budgeted pro rata during the first nine months into WP1, WP2 and WP4. It put in less into WP5 and WP6. WP1 took more, because of the need to set up all the mechanisms to deal with the project, and the discussions with the Project Officer. WP2 took more because of the work concerned with the Silk-2 Tender. WP4 took more because there was more work than expected in the testing between UCL and DESY, and in setting up software versions of the equipment already during the first nine months. It has become clear that WP4 will take more effort than planned; some of this will come from unfunded effort.

While most of the effort in this project will come from Prof. Kirstein personally (Kirstein@cs.ucl.ac.uk, Tel 2902 at UCL), much of the work on WP4 will come from John Andrews (<j.andrews@cs.ucl.ac.uk>, Tel 2900 at UCL) and Piers O'Hanlon (<p.ohanlon@cs.ucl.ac.uk>, Tel 2012).

10. Teleconferences – Audio

We are starting with audio-teleconferences (ATC) immediately after SB12. They will take place at least monthly – more frequently when needed. They will take place in English, and it was stated at the beginning of the OCCASION project that a pre-condition for being a participant was that an English-speaking person would be provided by each partner and associated partner. While it is not expected that each partner is represented at each ATC, they are expected to be represented at most.

At a minimum the ATCs can be carried out with the VoIP IP telephones provided by Cisco under the original donation. We have shown that these can now be used with the DESY Call Manager for multi-way conferences. Under WP4, we intend to explore software IP phones and possibly additional dedicated phones. At least one of the existing phones should be so sited that it is convenient for managerial use in the management ATCs. I expect to have had at least one ATC with six participants from the Silk NRENs before the end of July. We will discuss the provision of further terminals during the project.

11. Teleconferences – Video

Each Partner has been provided with one H.323 Videoconferencing unit (VTC). We expect to carry out VTCs at regular intervals. Again there must be person nominated by each NREN to participate in VTCs. It will be necessary also to ensure that there be a technical person at each site who can assist in making the ATCs and VTCs operational at the site. It is not necessary that this technical person be English-speaking.

Again I expect to have had at least one ATC with six participants from the Silk NRENs before the end of July. We will discuss the provision of further terminals during the project. It is not likely that further expensive Tandberg units will be provided centrally; we expect to concentrate on software units which can be sited in user premises.

12. Teleconferences – Users

Eventually the purpose of the ATC and VTC equipment is to help the Silk users collaborate with others in Europe and elsewhere. For this reason, we will be exploring under WP4 how we might provide more terminal equipment to deploy in user premises, and how to support them there. The equipment already provided under Section 11 is expected to be available for such users – and the organisational arrangements in each NREN should enable this. Widespread use will depend on the provision of adequate bandwidth – which will not be available until Silk-2 is operational.

13. User Groups

Each NREN is expected to have provided already an initial set of users – and named their contacts. This has not happened yet for all partners. It is a requirement for D5.2, which should have been provided to the EC by April 2006 (see Section 7). An initial list must be provided with the 3rd Quarterly Report. Again this is part of the programme of work expected in Section 9.