

**Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development  
Web-Based Networking Structure**

Application to the University of Regina *Technology Innovation Fund*  
Friday, February 3, 2006

**Nature and purpose of the project:**

As part of its commitment to advance the *Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)*, the United Nations University (UNU) is identifying Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCE on ESD) at a global level. Higher education institutions are expected to lead this regional coordination. The University of Regina was formally invited by Charles Hopkins, holder of the UNESCO Chair at York University heading up identification of Regional Centres of Expertise in North and South America, to develop an RCE on ESD. The proposed region in Saskatchewan includes the cities of Saskatoon and Regina along with the corridor between the two cities. In framing an RCE on ESD proposal, 42 individuals representing a broad cross-section of organizations interested in education for sustainable development (ESD) were brought together at the University of Regina on August 25, 2005. Follow-up meetings were held at the University of Regina with Charles Hopkins present on November 2-3, 2005, and at the University of Saskatchewan on November 4, 2005. A subsequent meeting occurred in Craik, SK, on December 21 with representatives from the University of Regina, SIAST, the University of Saskatchewan, the City of Regina, the City of Saskatoon, and the town of Craik. A general description of the United Nations University RCE initiative as well as documents describing the Saskatchewan RCE on ESD are available at:

<http://www.ias.unu.edu/research/details.cfm/ArticleID/466/search/yes>  
<http://142.3.35.101/RCE>

A central interest of organizations participating in the Regional Centre of Expertise is to create a Web-based structure that would enable knowledge sharing and networking among regional ESD participants and between established RCEs. A portable laptop computer is required for remote and in-person meetings with organizations in the region to receive direction and feedback in developing this Web-based structure. The laptop will also be used by a supervised graduate student in creating the RCE website with various networking technologies along with periodic uploading to a server that hosts the material. Open Source Software would be used on the laptop, enabling a high degree of customization, a minimization of costs, and a capacity for sharing with other RCEs, especially in developing countries. It is envisioned that various forms of collaborative and social software will be used to facilitate this networking such as wikis, blogs, email listservers, group discussion boards, and a content management system (CMS).

**Names of participants and academic units:**

Roger Petry, Philosophy, Luther College (contact person)  
Lyle Benko, Education (retired)  
Alec Couros, Education  
Tanya Dahms, Chemistry and Biochemistry  
Daryl Hepting, Computer Science  
Dena McMartin, Engineering

Note: Other RCE participants will be involved at various stages (see website for listing).

**Project contact person:**

Roger Petry, Luther College, University of Regina  
Telephone: 585-5295  
Email: [roger.petry@uregina.ca](mailto:roger.petry@uregina.ca)

**Budget (with items and costs):**

Linux Compatible Laptop Computer (\$1400 + tax) \$1600

The laptop will minimally have the following:

- 1024 MB RAM
- 100 GB Hard Drive
- 15.4" Widescreen Display
- DVD +/- R/RW and CD-RW Combo Drive

**Contributions by Others:**

- \$1000 to initially employ a graduate student to develop the Web-based structure from Roger Petry at Luther College (approximately 60 hours at \$16.49/hour); a potential exists for additional student funding from other sources
- Luther College to provide a server to host the Web site and office space for a graduate student working on the project
- Faculty members contributing to travel and meeting expenses through their own funds

**Expected outcome(s) addressing issues of sustainability and innovation:**

The general outcomes to be achieved by the project include: (1) a capacity for ongoing cataloguing, researching, and archiving of Education for Sustainable Development projects in the region, (2) postings of new initiatives, developments, seminars, and meetings by educational level and topic, (3) sharing of research (such as educational methods) and other ESD documents (such as curricula) developed in the region, and (4) opportunities for informed communication to the public on sustainable development issues of high importance to the region.

This first phase aims at sharing easily codifiable ESD knowledge within the region and will produce, among other things, a Web site for the Saskatchewan RCE. The six sustainability issues currently identified as a focus for the RCE include: (1) Climate Change, (2) Health, (3) Farming and Local Food Production, Consumption, and Waste Reduction, (4) Reconnecting to Natural Prairie Ecosystems, (5) Supporting and Bridging Cultures For Sustainable Living and Community Building, and (6) Sustainable Infrastructure including Water and Energy. Formal, informal and non-formal education within our region enabled by the RCE will provide a base for new technologies linked to changes in lifestyle and consumption patterns. While the UNU does not provide any funding towards establishing RCEs, the ability to network with other regions on the cutting edge of sustainable development globally complements the University of Regina's own commitments to sustainability research and international relations. Ongoing sustainability of the project is expected through adopting systems that are easily maintained, particularly through volunteers. Significant research opportunities would become available that build on this work, given the large collaborative scope of the project, its regional focus, its interdisciplinary nature, and the relevance of the sustainability issues addressed to Saskatchewan and Canadian communities. A second future phase of the project could aim at incorporating Open Source networking technologies for facilitating tacit knowledge sharing at ESD resource centres, providing hands-on educational experiences within communities.

**Time-line(s):**

- (1) Laptop purchase, student hire, initial definition of project requirements, system architecture, and identification of possible Open Source Software applications (March-April, 2006)
- (2) Consultation with and feedback from Saskatchewan RCE members regarding further networking needs and priorities (May-June, 2006)
- (3) Development of prototype for Saskatchewan RCE on ESD Web-based structure (July-October, 2006)
- (4) Feedback and incorporation of changes from Saskatchewan RCE users (Nov. - Jan., 2007)