

Paris, 19 June 2006

The Steria – Institut de France Foundation Grant: the 2007 application process is now open to students

The Steria – Institut de France Foundation Grant supports student projects in France that use information technology to help people in need. It enables them to carry out useful and innovative projects for the community, supported by volunteer staff from Steria with the necessary project management experience and technological expertise. The application process for candidates for the fourth edition of the Foundation's Grant is now open. Students from major French business and engineering schools may sign up for the competition at www.fondationsteria.org and submit their ideas between now and 10 January 2007. At the end of the selection period, the winning team will receive a grant of up to €15,000.

The Steria – Institut de France Foundation Grant: using IT to support student solidarity

The purpose of the Foundation's Grant is to boost the awareness of students at leading engineering and business schools of the role they can play to help people in need, as part of charitable projects: fighting exclusion or illiteracy, helping the elderly or the disabled and protecting the environment are just a few examples.

The students are therefore invited to draw on the lessons learned in class and on their creativity to submit ideas before 10 January 2007 for projects to be completed between March and September of the same year and using innovative technology. Three project ideas will then be shortlisted based on the criteria determined by the Foundation, which include: the use of new technologies; the capacity to adapt these new tools to the needs and purposes of a community structure or project; the emphasis on human support for the tools provided and their suitability for the people who will use them; and the measures taken to ensure the sustainability of the project. The chosen teams will present their project on 1 March 2007 before the Foundation Grand Jury of academics and Steria managers.

Applying for the 2007 Steria – Institut de France Foundation Grant: what to do

Students interested in applying for the Grant must form an association. Their initial enrolment should be for a team of 3 to 6 persons with a brief description of the project. They may then request support from a Steria sponsor to help them develop their project.

The students have until 10 January 2007 to submit a full application for the grant, which must comply with the following guidelines:

- applications should include a detailed summary of the project of a maximum of 20 pages;
- they should also feature a simplified budget (1 page) and a provisional project schedule (1 page);
- they should be in Word format (.doc) and no larger than 2MB.

Application forms and rules can be downloaded from www.fondationsteria.org.

A look back at the winners of previous grants

2006: "cHeer uP!" for young cancer patients

In 2006, the jury selected the "cHeer uP!" project by students from Supélec engineering school. A team of four students set up a lending system for laptop computers with Internet access in isolation rooms at the Institut Gustave Roussy in Villejuif (near Paris) for 18 to 25 year-olds suffering from leukaemia.

The patients will also be able to archive their data (course work, data from their personal projects) on the server to be installed in the department. Finally, as part of this project, the Supélec students wanted to ensure optimum security for the Internet connection, in conjunction with the hospital's IT department.

2005: "Manette" – home automation for the disabled

In 2005, the jury opted for "Manette", a project from six engineering students from ISEN in Toulon that is designed to enable wheelchair users to control domestic electrical appliances (lights, heating, television, etc.) using a PDA. The project successfully completed the acceptance testing phase on 17 June 2005. The students demonstrated a prototype version of the "manette" before the Trophée association for disabled persons and the ISEN board of trustees at a presentation attended by therapists, company directors and local politicians. All of the functions listed at the beginning of the contract work perfectly and are suitable for use by disabled people in terms of reliability, flexibility, design and user friendliness.

2004: CVK – a "Custom Virtual Keyboard" for disabled persons, free of charge

This student project, which in 2004 benefited from the first Steria – Institut de France Foundation grant, came about through the partnership between the Raymond Poincaré hospital in Garches, near Paris, a specialist rehabilitation centre for motor-handicapped persons, and the school of IT engineering In'Tech INFO (Esiea Group). The application displays a virtual keyboard on a computer screen, thereby providing an alternative means of writing for persons who are unable to use a regular keyboard. CVK can be downloaded free of charge at www.cvk.fr; it can then be customised and configured for the user's computer. Furthermore, CVK is Open Source, which software developers to enhance the keyboard.

For more information, log on to www.fondationsteria.org

About the Institut de France (www.institut-de-france.fr)

The Institut de France groups together five academies: the Académie Française, the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, the Académie des Sciences, the Académie des Beaux-Arts and the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques. It was founded on 25 October 1795 and is currently chaired by a former Prime Minister of France, Chancellor Gabriel de Broglie.

About Steria (www.steria.com)

Extensive expertise in its three core businesses of consulting, systems integration and managed services has made Steria a leading end-to-end IT services provider for companies and public authorities throughout Europe.

With a revenue of €1.2 billion and 9,300 employees, Steria is one of the top ten European IT services companies.

Understanding the challenges facing its customers enables Steria to design business-specific solutions with high added value in all of its fields of expertise – the public sector and healthcare, banking/insurance, telecommunications and utilities/transport/manufacturing – as well as innovative technological solutions. Based on over 35 years' experience in managing large-scale projects, an exceptional ability to respond and an industrial approach to business, Steria has developed a result-based culture with a commitment to service quality and customer satisfaction.

Steria's employees, who hold 24% of the Group's capital, draw on its core values of simplicity, creativity, independence, respect and openness to transform the latest technology into added-value services, enabling Steria to help its customers achieve and maintain competitive advantage. Steria is listed on Euronext Paris, Eurolist (Compartment B).

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