

SDL.development: An online instrument for supporting SDL-base projects

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INNESTO final conference, Arezzo 28 June 04



The idea

SDL.development is the main practical instrument developed by the INNESTO project. The idea was

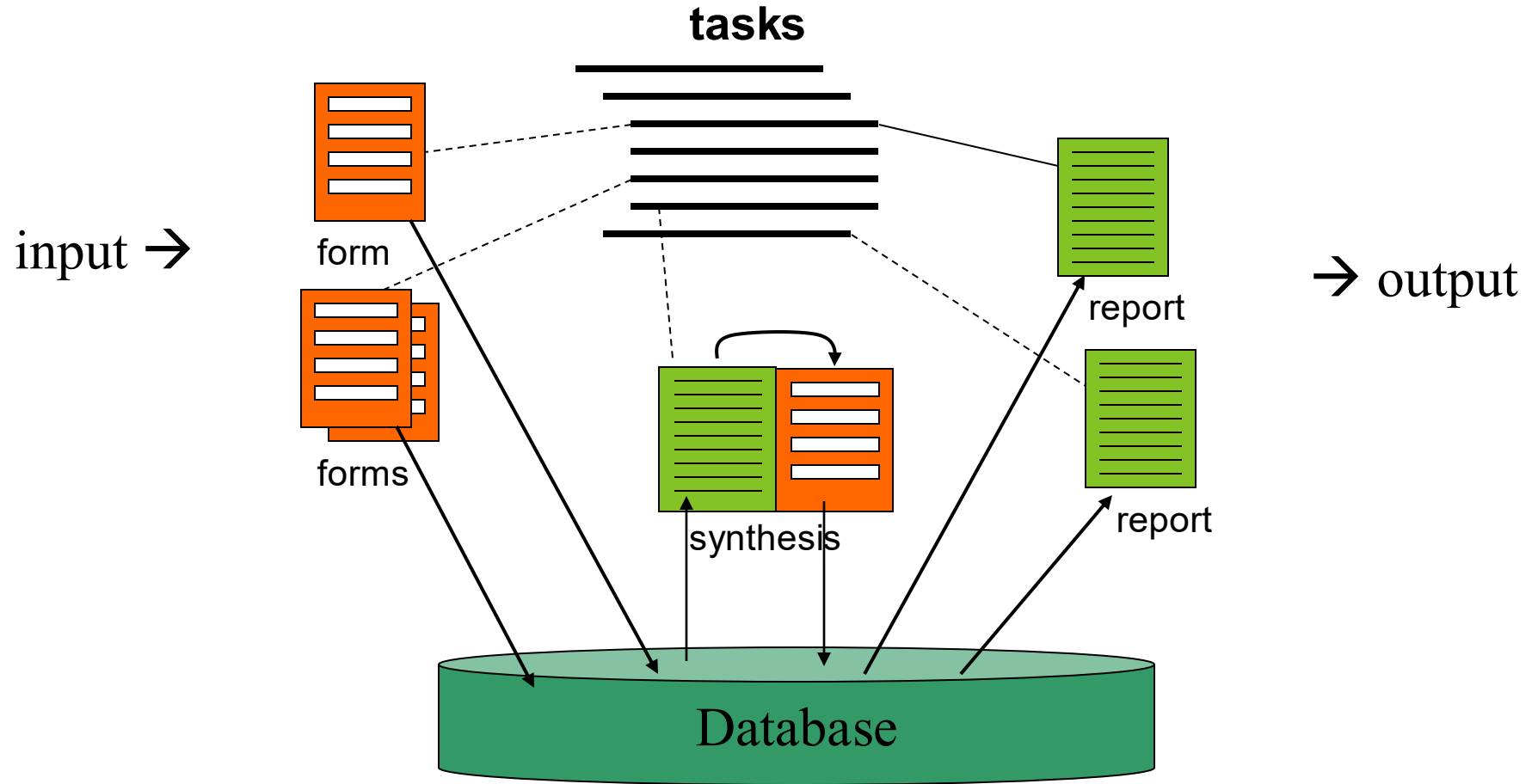
- to provide a software support for all phases of an SDL project
→ an overall documentation and visualisation tool**
- to conceive it as a collaborative instrument based on the Internet
→ a communication tool for all actors involved**
- to construct it along a tree of tasks
→ a project management tool**
- to base it on existing technologies in the SQM system
→ a usable system at the end of the project**

General features of *SDL.development*

- The whole instrument is organised along a hierarchy of tasks
- Tasks can be defined in order to fulfil a large variety of functions
- Forms (input) and Reports (output) can be defined in each task
- A library of pre-defined tasks and aspects provides guidelines

main tasks	main tools in each task	form/report features
1. Local Context Analysis (LCA)	• define/complete FORM	• link to aspects
2. District Logistics Analysis (DLA)	• define/show REPORT	• different field formats
3. Strategy Development (STD)	• edit SYNTHESIS	• data sourcing from the whole system
4. Programme Development (PRD)	• HELP / Glossary	• calculation fields
5. Programme Implementation (PRI)		• pdf output
		• XML links possible

Tasks, Forms and Reports



Using a form

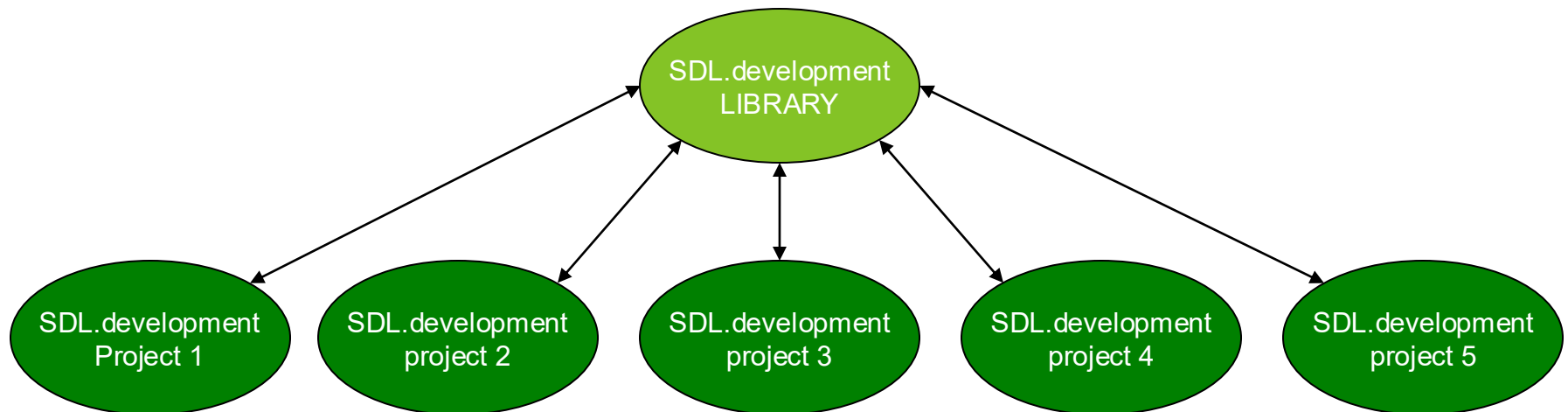
- **A form is the general interface for collecting structured information**
- **It can be used for different kinds of information**
 - opinions
 - qualitative information
 - hard facts (e.g. document analysis)
 - quantitative data
- **It can be used for different sources of information**
 - results of a workshop (reporter fills in)
 - individual opinion of knowledge (individual fills in)
 - results of an interview (individual fills in)
 - data analysis (researcher fills in)
 - definition of categories (consultant fills in)

Defining Forms and Reports

- **Forms can be defined very flexibly using**
 - a hierarchical structure of elements
 - titles and explanations
 - graphical elements
 - a choice of templates for different kinds of questions
 - libraries of aspects and indicators
 - results of previous tasks
- **Forms can be defined quickly by**
 - copying and then modifying forms previously defined in other tasks
 - using libraries of pre-defined forms
- **Reports are based on the results of a filled-in form. They can be defined in the same manner.**

The SDL libraries

- **The main results of INNTESTO will be contained in**
 - the structure of SDL.development
 - the SDL.development libraries
- **The SDL.development libraries contain**
 - a standard collection of elements (tasks, forms and reports) becoming the basis of every new SDL project
 - predefined elements reflecting experiences from INNTESTO pilot projects
 - predefined elements from other SDL projects
- **Every SDL.development project has access to the libraries**
 - upload / administration by the network coordinator
 - download by pilot project administrator



The layers of SDL.development

User data in a specific project

Tasks and aspects defined in a specific project

Libraries of predefined tasks and aspects
including forms and reports

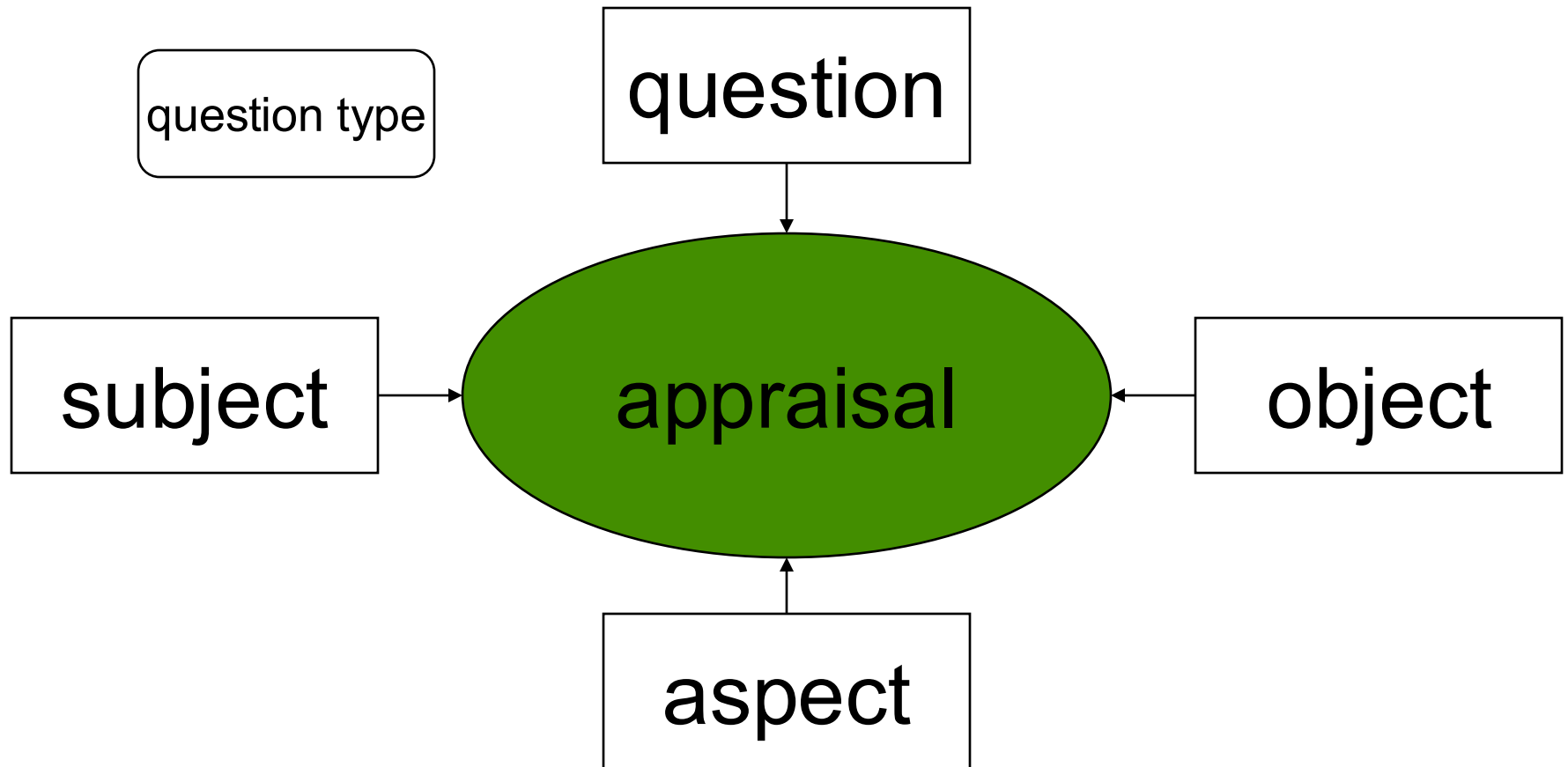
Basic system
Tools and structures for tasks, forms, reports, aspects

User administration

Aspects, appraisals, indicators and the construction of a flexible instrument

- **The basic idea of the SDL approach is to combine qualitative, quantitative and procedural elements in a structured way**
- **Standardised instruments should reflect the experience of many years and projects while providing considerable flexibility for adaptation to specific contexts**
- **A standard set of aspects provides an analysis framework which can be applied to any step in the policy cycle. SDL.development helps to easily work with this framework.**
- **Qualitative appraisals are considered as complementary and both necessary. SDL.development cant treat both**

Definition of an elementary appraisal



User administration and the license concept

- **SDL.development has been conceived for providing services to a large number of projects on the basis of a central database server**
- **every new project gets a license for SDL.development and corresponding passwords**
- **the system allows to define different parameters of the license (duration, number of tasks etc.)**
- **individual passwords and access control on the object level guarantee a high degree of security for confidential data**
- **authors of information elements can decide themselves in detail on who shall have access to the data**
- **Stepwise disclosure of confidential data is an important feature for the establishment of co-operations between companies**

The evolution of SDL.development

- **The original concept: based on the single functions for the users**
- **Integration of the functions into a coherent task structure**
- **Development of the graphical outfit**
- **Programming of the instrument using SQM system technologies**
- **Usability tests**
- **Development of a complex user management instrument for ensuring confidentiality and allowing the definition of licenses**
- **Transfer of the whole programme onto a new technical structure (ez publish)**
- **Implementation of the INNESTO pilot projects**

Perspectives

- **SDL.development shall become the central instrument for managing the SDL network**
- **Based on the INNESTO experience the first set of libraries will be defined in the next months**
- **Additional projects shall contribute to a shared collection of experiences accessible through the libraries**
- **Additional tools will be introduced (better visualisation, improved synthesis tools, more sophisticated treatment of quantitative data...)**