

EGI.org in Amsterdam

Amsterdam was chosen to host EGI.org, the coordinating organization responsible for managing the European Grid Initiative (EGI). The decision was made at the last EGI policy board meeting in Catania on Monday 2 March 2009. It is a major step for the EGI project, which has now entered in a new phase.

"The choice of the location of the EGI.org headquarters is a further and decisive step towards the implementation of a sustainable European grid infrastructure", said **Gaspar Barreira**, Chairman of the EGI Policy Board. "From now on we will be all be mobilised for the real establishment of a new international research infrastructure in Europe, where a large number of countries will put together and operate the world's largest grid computing facility."

Members of the EGI_Design Study (EGI_DS) team, responsible for the definition and implementation of the new organization's activities, also warmly welcomed this decision: "This decision on the EGI.org location is another major milestone for the establishment of the EGI", said **Ludek Matyska**, the

EGI_DS Project Director. "With this decision, the European grid community, represented by the EGI Policy Board, confirmed once again its commitment to the EGI model as the future for grid infrastructure in Europe." "This decision comes just after the approval of the EGI Blueprint in Prague, on 20 January 2009", added **Jürgen Knobloch**, the EGI_DS Technical Director. "We can now proceed with the transition strategy from EGEE and other Grid infrastructures in Europe to EGI".

The Dutch capital was selected ahead of seven other European cities that also expressed their interest in hosting the EGI Organization. "We are very honoured that the European grid community has chosen Amsterdam to host EGI.org", said **Patrick Aerts**, Director of the National Compute Facility (NCF), the Netherlands, after the announcement of the decision. "We thank all EGI-Policy Board members, and especially our runners-up for the trust that they have placed in the Netherlands".

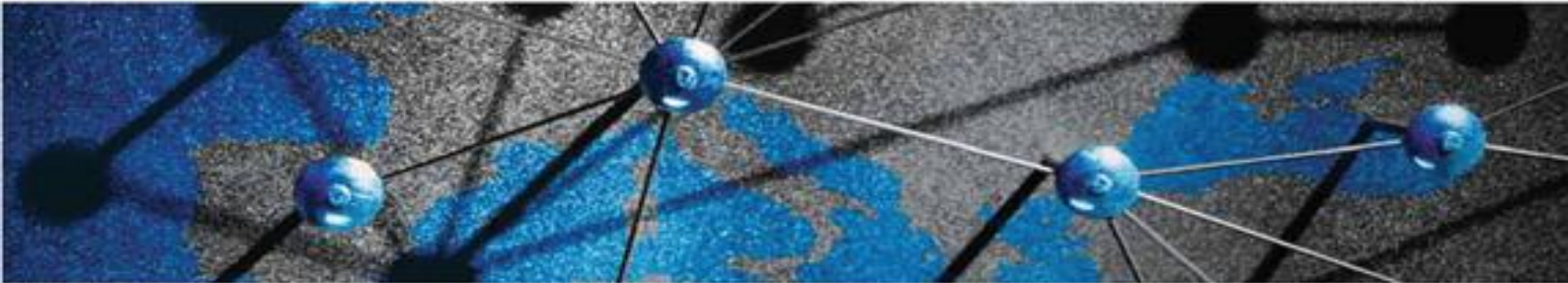
Amsterdam offers many advantages for the location of EGI.org. It is one of the best locations concerning international access,

with Schiphol airport connected to almost all European airports, and also has a very good local transport network. The EGI.org headquarters will be located in Science Park Amsterdam, a place situated near the main highways, yet reachable by bike from the centre of Amsterdam. With a total area of 70 hectares, Science Park Amsterdam has been devoted to science for over half a century, and enjoys excellent technological infrastructure. It is an internationally renowned centre for scientific research, education and know-ledge-related business activities, where a large number of top-level knowledge institutes are located.

Full operations of the EGI Organization are to begin in 2010. Within the EGI partnership, EGI.org and National Grid Initiatives (NGIs) will work together to operate and further develop a sustainable, long-term grid infrastructure, enabling optimal sharing of computing and data resources. The main role of EGI.org will be to facilitate the interaction and collaboration between the different NGIs, and to provide a common managerial and operational framework for the pan-European grid infrastructure.



Science Park Amsterdam will host the future EGI.org headquarters



Catania Workshop: Transition Towards EGI



Catania Conference Center Le Ciminiera

Around 150-200 people attended the “Transition Towards EGI” workshop, on Monday 2 March 2009, in Catania, Italy. This workshop was held during the 4th EGEE User Forum / OGF 25 event. It focused on the transition from EGEE and other existing Grid infrastructures in Europe to the EGI model, and offered a general overview on the current situation of the EGI project. The EGI workshop was composed of a series of presentations from the EGI_Design Study (EGI_DS) team, to which users and representatives of different Grid infrastructures answered by sharing their expectations and their views about EGI.

Ludek Matyska, the EGI_DS Project Director provided an overview on the status of the EGI_DS. He pointed out that the design of the sustainable pan-European Grid Infrastructure model had been successfully completed, and then endorsed by the EGI Policy Board in Prague on 20 January 2009. Matyska then called for a rapid achievement of the last step – the set up of the EGI organization – in order to complete the transition towards the EGI model.

The event in Catania enabled good progress of the project, with the selection of the EGI Organization headquar-

ters. Amsterdam was chosen as the host city for EGI.org during the Policy Board meeting that followed the workshop.

The presentations from the EGI_DS team during the EGI workshop provided key information on that what remains to be done now that the location of the EGI Organization headquarters has been decided. **Jürgen Knobloch** (CERN) and **Per Öster** (CSC) detailed the EGI timeline and the key steps from the EGI Blueprint to the EGI concrete implementation.

The **EGI Blueprint** document is a proposal to establish a sustainable, long-term grid infrastructure in Europe. It presents a vision of the transition towards the new EGI model, and includes practical information on the relevant requirements regarding the implementation, operation, user interaction with, and management of the corresponding infrastructure, as well as the preliminary budget outline. The EGI Blueprint final version was endorsed by the EGI Policy Board in Prague, on 20 January, 2009.

“Will it be possible to have EGI in place before the end of EGEE?” That is one of the questions the EGI_DS team currently has in mind, and it will work hard to achieve this objective in order to ensure the smoothest transition from EGEE to EGI. The signing of the MoU by NGIs, the hiring of the EGI.org Director, the preparation of the EU proposal and the launch of the EGI.org are the main milestones that remain to be completed.

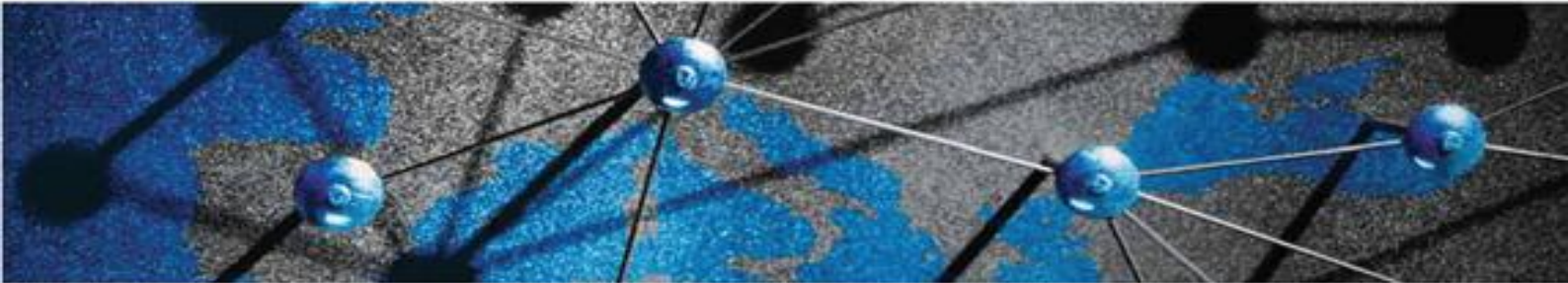
Diana Cristi (INFN) also raised the issue of the representation of user communities and EIROForum members within the EGI management structure, and some of the key functions which will be operated within EGI were presented by **Micro Mazzucato** (INFN) and **Tiziana Fer-**

rari (INFN). **Guy Wormser** (Institut des Grilles, CNRS), for his part, encouraged the establishment of NGIs within each country, emphasizing the fact that the commitment of NGIs to the EGI project is absolutely crucial for its implementation.

EGI has defined four main functions which will have to be carried out if it is to achieve its primary goal: the Operations and Security functions, which include all the services that are required to provide a large-scale production-quality grid for science in Europe; the Middleware functions, which comprise all the tasks that are required to ensure the maintenance, support and interoperability of the middleware stacks currently deployed on the e-Infrastructure; the User Community services, which provide the essential interface and basic support for existing and new user communities; and the External Liaison tasks, concerned with project outreach and dissemination, and with maintaining relations with other relevant grids and organisations.

For each of these functions, the bulk of the activities will be performed by the NGIs. EGI.org will, together with some other actors, carry out the tasks that are international in scope, and will coordinate the work of the NGIs. Roles and responsibilities will thus be shared, split between the functions for which EGI.org is directly responsible and those left primarily to the NGIs, in which it has only an oversight role.





Grid-Ireland 1/2



Text: Dr. Brian Coghlan, Irish NGI Representative and John Walsh, Irish NGI Alternate.

Grid-Ireland was established in 1999 to develop and coordinate the provision of a national grid service for the academic research community in Ireland. It is recognised internationally as the Irish co-ordinating body for grid activities in major EU projects, such as the EGEE and Int.EU.Grid. It is the body that issues grid certificates accepted by most major grid infrastructures.

The Grid Operations Centre (OpsCentre), based in Trinity College Dublin, manages the Regional Operational Centre (ROC) for Ireland. This is a component part of the distributed UK/I federation ROC in EGEE. It is funded under the national research initiatives HEA PRTL cycle 4 and by the EU FP7.

Grid-Ireland Infrastructure

Since 2003, a key component of the Grid-Ireland strategy is the provision of a uniformly configured point-of-presence (or "Gateways") at the institutes of higher education and research. The "Gateways" consist of a homogeneous set of hardware and software resources. The OpsCentre centrally manages the day-to-day running of the Gateways, thus providing a stable uniform service by a small team of grid experts. The institutes connect to the Grid and share their resources via their local Gateway. Grid-Ireland cur-

rently has a point-of-presence in 18 institutions. The Gateways are based on the gLite middleware stack. Some alternative (and additional) middleware is also investigated and supported.

A second key component in the Grid-Ireland strategy was the early adaptation of hardware virtualisation technologies as a means to lowering the total cost of ownership, whilst providing as many services at the national level as possible.

Grid-Ireland manages a national VOMS service, WMS, top-level BDII, RGMA registry and an LFC. Our outreach and dissemination effort provides Migrating Desktop and P-Grade portals, as well as a self-paced eLearning system, user support and user application development, and user helpdesk. The national CA is supported by two regional authorities.

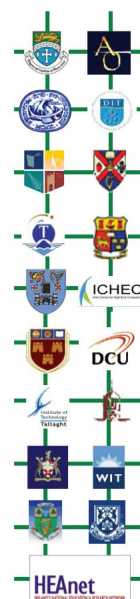
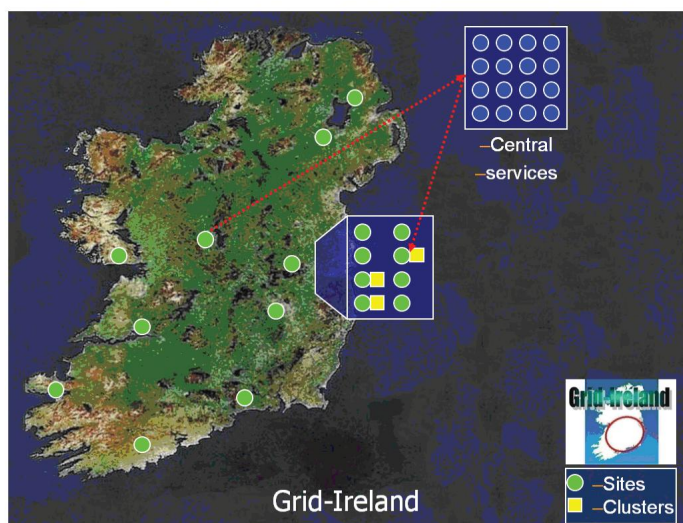
The OpsCentre maintains a fully virtualised replica of production services and gateway services. This allows middleware deployment scenarios to be tested rigorously prior to being rolled out nationally. The OpsCentre leads the effort for gLite middleware platform portability in the EGEE-III project, and is

also currently establishing a national grid-enabled data service.

Integrated e-Infrastructure

In September 2007, an initiative, called e-INIS, involving the Irish academic institutions and major network and computational infrastructure providers was begun. Its mission is to coordinate and enhance activities to create a sustainable national e-infrastructure offering: a core High Performance Computing (HPC) facility to all Irish third-level communities; a single point access to integrated computational, data and network resources; provision of these resources at a scale that is internationally competitive; access to high level expert user support and training; and a recognised Irish nexus for international e-infrastructure initiatives.

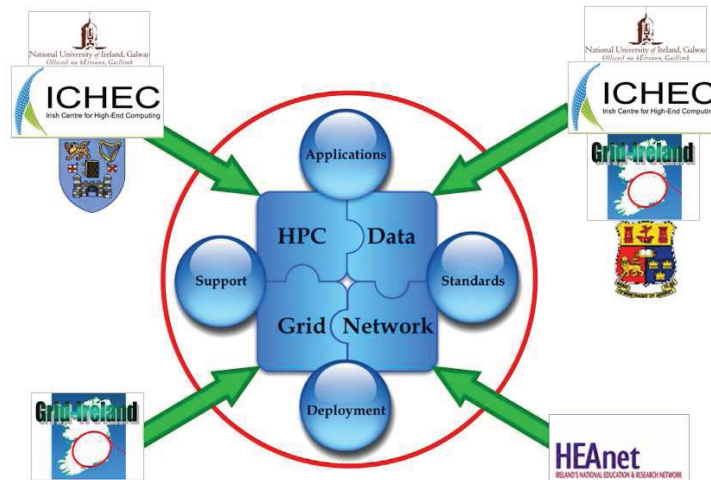
The key expected outcome is an integrated national e-infrastructure which includes: availability to the entire community; capacity and capability computing; a pilot data service; secure network and grid services; specialist high-level support; and a management and business plan for long-term support. e-INIS runs until December 2010.



Grid-Ireland 2/2

Towards EGI

Grid-Ireland strongly supports the need for a pan-European co-ordinating body, such as that proposed by the EGI Design Study. National and cross-European Scientific collaborations can exploit many of the benefits brought about current grid technologies. The EGI Blueprint, recently endorsed by the EGI Design Study Policy Board, sets out some of the roles and functions that an NGI should provide. Grid-Ireland is well placed to fulfil these requirements.



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Coming Events

SSC Workshop: Preparing SSCs for EGI, 5-6 May, Athens, Greece

EGEE/EGI_DS sponsored workshop to discuss the formation of Specific Support Clusters (SSCs) for the European Grid Infrastructure (EGI).

Research Connection 2009, 7-8 May, Prague, Czech Republic

Joint EGEE/EGI booth at the event

e-IRG Workshop, 14-15 May, Prague, Czech Republic

ISC09, International Supercomputing Conference, 23-26 June, Hamburg, Germany

EGI booth at the conference

EGEE 09 Conference, 21-25 September, Barcelona, Spain

Supercomputing 09, 14-20 November, Portland, Oregon, USA

EGEE/EGI joint boot at the conference

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