

1st EGI Council in Amsterdam

Amsterdam was the host city for the first EGI Council on 9 July 2009. The Council took place after reception of the signatures of the EGI Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by 24 NGIs.

During the first quarter of 2009, very important steps have been taken towards the establishment of the EGI.

On 20 January 2009, the EGI Policy Board endorsed the EGI Blueprint, the document defining the common roadmap for the construction of the new European grid organization taking over the responsibility for the grid infrastructure from current projects.

On 2 March 2009, the city of Amsterdam was chosen to host the EGI organization (EGI.eu, formerly called EGI.org), the coordinating body for the EGI.

Another major step toward the establishment of the EGI

The signing of the MoU by the NGIs, and the organization of the first EGI Council represent further important steps towards the establishment of the EGI.

Ludek Matyska, the EGI_DS Director, emphasized this point at the Council meeting in Amsterdam:

“By signing the MoU, the NGIs confirmed that they were ready to implement the EGI as defined in the EGI Blueprint, and to commit financially to the establishment of the EGI.eu. The first EGI Council showed the wide support for the EGI through several important decisions taken, including the appointment of the interim EGI.eu director and confirmation of leaders of the Editorial Board, who will be responsible for preparing the EGI projects.



The first EGI Council took place in Amsterdam, on 9 July 2009

Thus, lead persons necessary to actually prepare and run the EGI are identified and their positions assured.”

The EGI Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is an important document covering the period up to the formation of the EGI.eu and the establishment of the EGI statutes.

By signing this document, the NGIs have agreed on the role and responsibilities of individual parties, the membership fees and other issues necessary to finalize the setup of the EGI.

Currently, only NGIs from the EU member and associated countries are eligible for membership in the EGI Council.

The Council represents the governing body of the EGI. It is made up of NGIs as well as other members such as European institutions represented in the EIROFORUM and non-voting observers from NGIs that, while eligible for membership, have not yet signed the MoU.

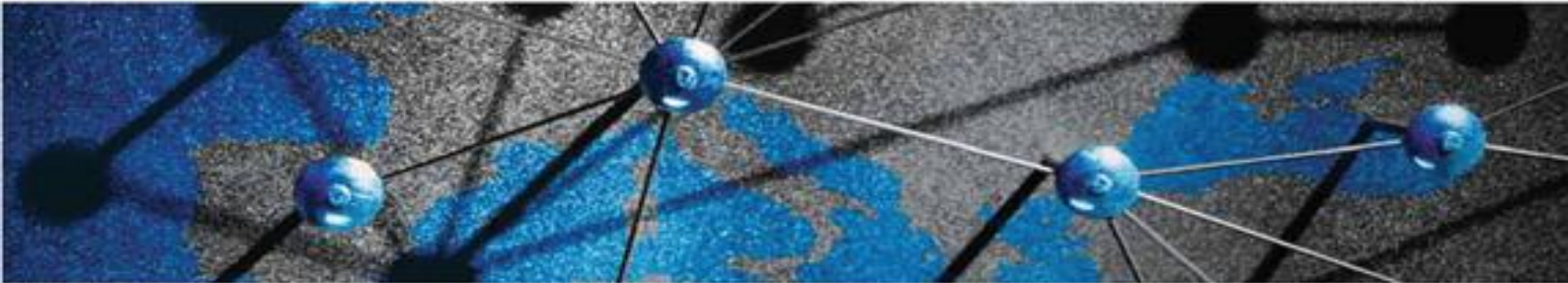
During the first EGI Council, additional experts representing either the EGI_DS project or other current grid

infrastructures were also present. From now on, the EGI Council will represent the main decision-making body of the EGI.

The MoU signatories were able to exercise at the Council their voting rights under this new framework. This concerned, in particular, the actions needed for the final establishment of the EGI.eu, the nomination of the interim EGI.eu director, and the authorized composition and leadership of the Editorial Board to guide the preparation of the EGI EU proposals.

The EGI Council also discussed the draft version of the EGI Convention and Statutes, documents that will govern EGI.eu, and the EGI Collaboration in future. A first draft of the proposed EGI project structure was presented and widely discussed, providing valuable input for its further refinement.

NGIs are asked to nominate experts ready to contribute to the actual EGI project text and also to bid for EGI international tasks they will implement as a part of their future involvement in EGI operations.



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An interim EGI.eu director and an Editorial board to lead future EGI proposals

On 9 July, the EGI Council approved the nomination of **Steven Newhouse** as the interim EGI.eu Project Director.



Steven Newhouse

Newhouse is currently working at CERN and is the Technical Director of the EGEE project.

Laura Perini (INFN, Italy) has been appointed as editor of the EGI project proposal focusing on operation of EGI.eu.



Laura Perini

Charles Loomis (LAL/IN2P3, France) will be editor of the EU project proposal focusing on the EGI Applications and Scientific Support Clusters.

The Editorial Board coordinated by the interim EGI.eu director, will lead the preparation of the EGI proposals to the European Commission.

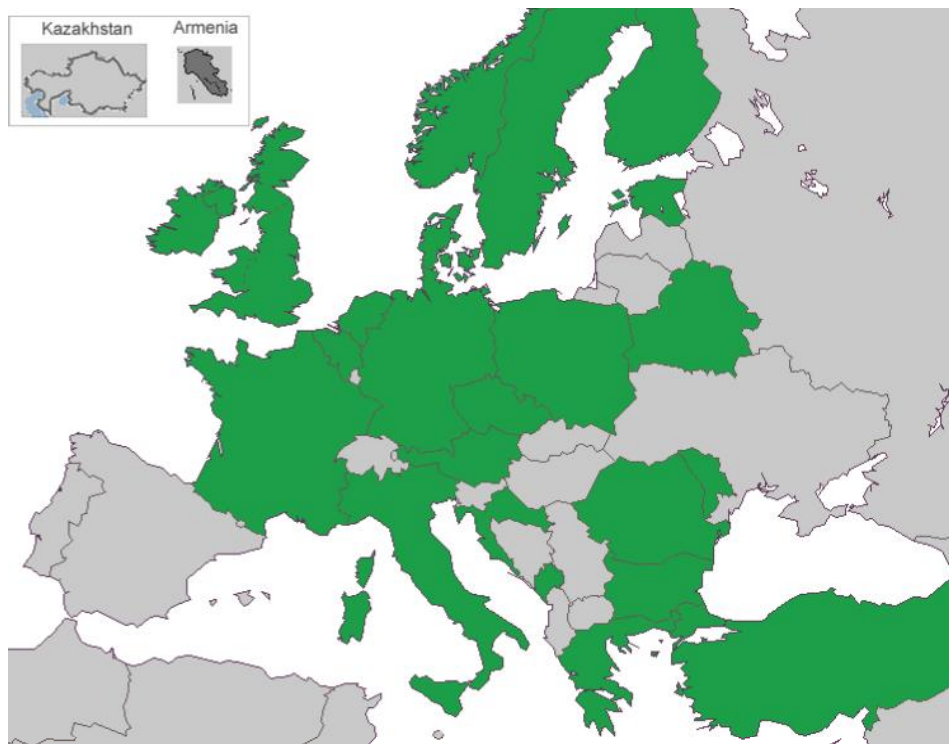


Charles Loomis

EGI Steering Committee

An EGI Steering Committee was also formed to supervise the proposal work and the formation of the EGI.eu.

The Committee has a representation based on the federations resembling those previously implemented in the EGEE projects: BENELUX, Central, France, DECH, Italy with Malta, Northern and Baltic, UK-Ireland, South-East, South-West and CERN.



Map showing the countries (in green) that have signed the EGI MoU

Coming Events

PRACE Industry Seminar

7-8 September
Toulouse, France
www.prace-project.eu

EGEE 09 Conference

21-25 September
Barcelona, Spain
www.egee09.eu-egee.org

Supercomputing 09

14-20 November
Portland, Oregon, USA
www.sc09.supercomputing.org



News from the National Grid Initiatives - Norway



norgrid

Text: Dr. Jacko Koster, Norwegian NGI Representative

The Norwegian Grid Initiative (NorGrid) was established in 2007. The main purpose of NorGrid is to develop and coordinate the provision of a national grid service for the academic research community in Norway.

The major functions in NorGrid are to prepare frequently used scientific applications for execution on a grid infrastructure, to provide a reliable grid service on the existing computation and storage infrastructure in Norway, and in particular, to implement the Norwegian Tier-1 and Tier-2 contributions to the Worldwide LHC Computing Grid Project (WLCG).

NorGrid is the Norwegian co-ordinating body for participation in European grid infrastructures, such as EGEE and EGI. The NorGrid consortium consists of the universities of Trondheim (NTNU), Bergen (UiB), Oslo (UiO) and Tromsø (UiT), while UNINETT Sigma, the "daughter" of the NREN UNINETT, is the coordinating partner. The initiative is funded by the Research Council of Norway through its programme eVITA on eScience.

NorGrid as part of a national e-Infrastructure

NorGrid provides services for computation, scientific data and application deployment. The services are available for research and education at all universities, university colleges, research organisations and other parties that contribute to funding

of the national e-Infrastructure. NorGrid does not operate its own hardware resources, but provides user-friendly grid interfaces and secure access to other national e-Infrastructures.

In other words, NorGrid builds on the national infrastructures for high-performance computing (Notur) and scientific data (NorStore). The Notur infrastructure includes two large scale clusters at UiT (5632 cores) and UiO (ca. 4000 cores) and two massively parallel systems: a Cray XT4 at UiB (5552 cores) and an IBM p575+ at NTNU (944 cores). The NorStore infrastructure includes two large scale storage facilities (total 1.2 PetaByte net disk).

Important tasks for NorGrid are to deliver a Norwegian Tier-2 for the LHC experiment ATLAS, and to contribute resources to the Nordic Tier-1 centre coordinated by the Nordic Data Grid Facility (NDGF). For this purpose, UiB and UiO operate, compute and store resources that serve both the Norwegian Tier-2 and Nordic Tier-1. The computation resources are integrated in larger computation clusters such that idle capacity can be used for other scientific purposes when not used by the WLCG collaboration. This has proved quite useful in 2008 and 2009 due to the postponed start-up of the LHC.

NorGrid aims to deploy ARC as its single grid middleware. This is a natural choice as the development of ARC is strongly anchored in the Nordic countries. Another reason is the limited amount of personnel resources that is currently available in NorGrid; this requires that

the initiative must avoid deploying multiple middleware stacks. An important implication of this choice is that successful technical integration of NorGrid in European grid infrastructures very much depends on the interoperability of ARC with other major middleware, such as, for example, gLite and UNICORE.

Overall, a key consideration in Norway is that the infrastructures for grid (NorGrid), high-performance computing (Notur) and scientific data (NorStore) must co-exist and be coordinated and operated by the same consortium. The result is an integrated national e-Infrastructure that is available for all scientists and sciences in Norway and that delivers services that integrate capacity and capability computing, scientific data, grid-based access and high-level application support.

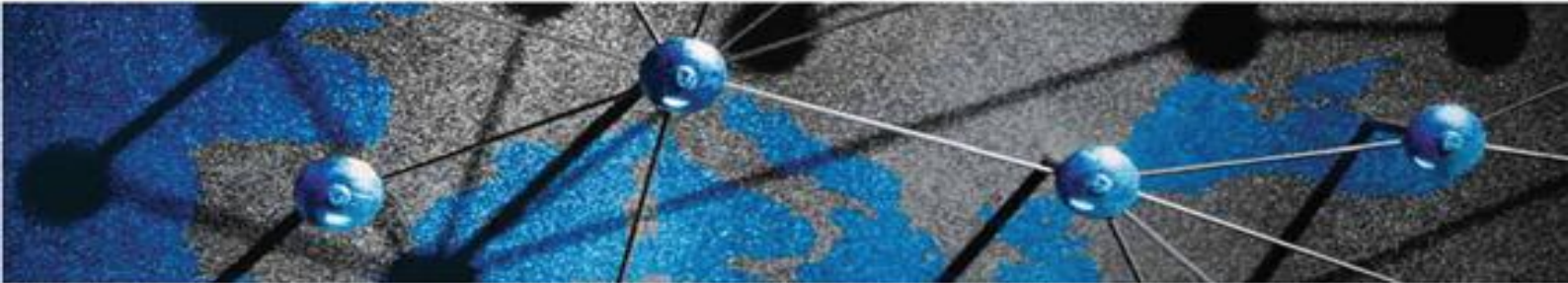
Towards EGI

The participation of NorGrid in EGEE is small. One reason for this is that NorGrid was only established in 2007 (the second year of EGEE-II). In addition, the aim to deploy only the ARC middleware restricts the possibilities of NorGrid to participate in the current EGEE framework where gLite plays a dominant role. NorGrid strongly supports the pan-European framework EGI, as it is currently being defined by the EGI Design Study. NorGrid is well placed to fulfil its role and functions as Norwegian NGI within EGI.

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News from the National Grid Initiatives - Belgium



Text: Rosette Vandenbroucke, BEgrid co-ordinator

The Belgian Grid initiative started in February 2003. Its goal was to provide a platform for stimulating grid projects in Belgium, principally among the research community, and to bring grid knowledge and expertise in Belgium to the level of the other European countries.

The lead of this initiative was taken by BELNET, the Belgian research network after the roll-out of their multi-gigabit network infrastructure. The BEgrid infrastructure grew out of this initiative.

The BEgrid Infrastructure

BEgrid currently includes about 1000 cores and 30 terabytes of storage capacity, and continues to grow. This computing and storage capacity is distributed across the different participants of the project.

All BEgrid clusters run the gLite middleware, whose installation is mostly realised by Quattor. In order to provide a sustainable service to the users, BEgrid runs centrally at BELNET major grid services such as a VOMS, a WMS, a top-level BDII and a LFC. A MyProxy server will be installed after the summer. There is also a central command-level User Interface available and the

last efforts are being made to bring a P-grade portal into production.

Software on BEgrid

Many users are bringing their own applications to the grid, but in order to accommodate major user requests BEgrid will install open source as well as commercial software packages on the grid. Among these are not only the popular Matlab and Octave packages but also those well known in the bio-informatics environment like R and BLAST, packages in the chemical world, etc. It is already clear that the availability of applications will boost the use of the BEgrid infrastructure.

BEgrid support

User support is realised via the BEgrid team at BELNET and via the managers of the BEgrid clusters. In view of the participation in EGI (see below) this service will be extended. A mailing list via which users can interact is also available. Cluster managers interact via their own mailing list to discuss installation or upgrade problems, and they adapt the BEgrid wiki with information relative to their work as well as information for the end user.

BEgrid and its international grid connections

BEgrid is affiliated to the European project EGEE. Two of its main partners (VUB and ULB) are partners in EGEE-III. But also BEgrid resource providers that are not EGEE-III members have been certified for EGEE and bring resources at the European level.

There is also a bilateral agreement between BEgrid and NLgrid allowing researchers from both countries to share part of their grid infrastructure. NLgrid supports a Belgian VO and vice versa, BEgrid supports a Dutch VO.



Rosette Vandenbroucke

BEgrid and EGI

BEgrid thinks that a sustainable European grid infrastructure is a must and hence supports fully the European Grid Initiative. BEgrid has signed the Letter of Intent and the Memorandum of Understanding to become a full member of EGI. Work is ongoing inside BEgrid to ensure that the NGI requirements, defined in the EGI Blueprint, can be fully met.

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Partners: CESNET, CERN, CNRS, CSC, DFN, GRNET, LMU, INFN and STFC



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