

**EGI-Engage**

Long tail of science platform deployment report

M5.1

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Abstract

This document contains the release information and the technical usability review of the long tail of science platform, the portal: access.egi.eu

The goal of the portal is to provide a zero-barrier access point to EGI services for the individual users or the small groups of researchers.

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**TERMINOLOGY**

A complete project glossary is provided at the following page: <http://www.egi.eu/about/glossary/>

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**Executive summary**

This milestone records the release of the long tail of science platform, and its deployment as a prototype service for the EGI individual users and small research groups.

The platform reduces the barriers for new users in terms of requesting specific credentials for EGI, and of requesting resources.

The deployed services are a user registration portal, access.egi.eu, where users request access to the LTOS pool of resources, and where the requests are authorized and membership are managed, and an attribute authority that is queried by the services to retrieve the authorization status of the user trying to access the services.

The platform is complemented by science gateways, a catch-all VO, and a pool of dedicated resources, which are out of the scope of this document. With all these enabling components, users of the long tail of science, do not need to worry about entering a VO, or having their own VO approved and supported, neither users need to worry about credentials. The platform should guide the users from the first contact to the actual submission of their tasks.

# Introduction

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tool name** | *Access.egi.eu* |
| **Tool url** | *https://access.egi.eu/start* |
| **Tool wiki page** | *https://wiki.egi.eu/wiki/LToS* |
| **Description** | *The long-tail of science refers to the individual researchers and small laboratories who - opposed to large, expensive collaborations - do not have access to computational resources and online services to manage and analyse large amount of data. This EGI platform allows individual researchers and small research teams to perform compute and data-intensive simulations on large, distributed networks of computers in a user friendly way.* |
| **Customer of the tool** | *Indivudal researchers and small research groups. NGIs exposing their services through the platfom* |
| **User of the service** | *Individual researchers or small research groups with limited* |
| **User Documentation** | *https://access.egi.eu/start* |
| **Technical Documentation** | *https://wiki.egi.eu/wiki/Long-tail\_of\_science* |
| **Product team** | *Cyfronet* |
| **License** | *Apache 2* |
| **Source code** |  |

# Service architecture

## High-Level Service architecture

**

* Access.egi.eu (user registration portal): The entry point for users who wants to access the EGI services. It provides also management tools for the support team to authorize requests
* Resource pool: accessible through the per user sub proxies, that are robot certificates containing information about the individual user accessing the platform. The resources in the pool support the catch-all VO dedicated to the LTOS.
* Science gateways and portals exposing services and tools to the users. The have to be integrated with the authentication and authorization services in the platform.

## Integration and dependencies

Access.egi.eu needs to integrate with:

* Unity as an attribute authority and IDP proxy, it is deployed by the same team deploying access.egi.eu, but not maintained by them
* Science Gateways and services. Access.egi.eu enable users to access third party services. Such as science gateways.
* PUSP the resources supporting the long tail of science, need to enable the per user sub proxies, this is released as part of the LCMAP tool, and already in UMD.

# Release notes

## Requirements covered in the release

This is the first release of the tool, the main requirements were the user stories as described in section 4.

A set of additional detailed requirements have been registered in the EGI RT[[1]](#footnote-1), and the following have been implemented:

<https://rt.egi.eu/rt/Ticket/Display.html?id=9686>

<https://rt.egi.eu/rt/Ticket/Display.html?id=9684>

<https://rt.egi.eu/rt/Ticket/Display.html?id=9680>

<https://rt.egi.eu/rt/Ticket/Display.html?id=9642>

<https://rt.egi.eu/rt/Ticket/Display.html?id=9601>

<https://rt.egi.eu/rt/Ticket/Display.html?id=9599>

<https://rt.egi.eu/rt/Ticket/Display.html?id=9598>

# Feedback on satisfaction

*Who was involved in testing and what the outcome of the review was*

## User Story: new user wants to access resources

### Description

A researcher, or small group of researchers, need to access computing/storage/cloud resources, or need to access more specialized services available.

The user will need to access the portal access.egi.eu with username/password credentials. The user needs to insert their information (the portal will guide the user through the registration), the information needed are the affiliation or references of a research institution, and the relevant personal data. The user needs to ask for resources describing the purpose of their research. User should accept the VO AUP.

Once the request is being approved, the user should be notified, and then they should be able to access the science gateways linked in the portal access.egi.eu, and use EGI resources through the science gateways.

### Structured review

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Is the tool satisfying the use case?** | *Yes, the tool seems satisfying the users needs* |
| **Are all the sections and links properly working?** | *Yes* |
| **Learnability (how easy is it for users to accomplish basic tasks of the use case?)** | *All the steps to perform for accomplishing the several tasks are easy to do* |
| **Ease in finding the information in the tool** | *Very easy* |
| **Ease to keep track of the location in the site** | *<Please report your findings here>* |
| **Is the help section explaining well how to use the tool?** | *yes* |
| **Ease to make mistakes when performing an action** | *Very low probability* |
| **Is the interface familiar/intuitive for the users?** | *The interface is very intuitive and familiar* |
| **Unexpected or confusing behaviour of the tool, including bugs** | *Not for the moment* |

## User Story: admin user approves or rejects requests

### Description

The access.egi.eu portal has a restricted area where the user support users can access and have an overview of the pending requests, have access to the information filled in by the users, and approve or reject the requests.

**Note:** this section is not open to all the users and therefore the individual operators can be trained: the interface can be less intuitive than for the previous user case.

### Structured review

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Is the tool satisfying the use case?** | *The tool allows to manage the users subscritpions and their resources requests* |
| **Are all the sections and links properly working?** | In the Approve affiliationsection something doesn’t work properly:   * **clicking on the "messages" button brings you on a white page** * **clicking on the "notification" button doesn't produce anything** * **clicking on the "tasks" button doesn't produce anything** * **no one of the 4 coloured button on the left menu produces any action** * **neither the logout button works** * **in the “Affiliation page” when selecting one or more users and performing the action proposed at the bottom of the page, the action is executed but the page is not refreshed** * **in the “Users” page, it seems not possible deleting the subscribed users** |
| **Learnability (how easy is it for users to accomplish basic tasks of the use case?)** | *It is not immediate understanding the actions an operator can perform* |
| **Ease in finding the information in the tool** | *Poor information about the tasks to perform* |
| **Ease to keep track of the location in the site** | *<Please report your findings here>* |
| **Is the help section explaining well how to use the tool?** | *No help section is present* |
| **Ease to make mistakes when performing an action** | *In many cases you should click only on ACCEPT/REJECT buttons, so the probability to make mistakes is low* |
| **Is the interface familiar/intuitive for the users?** | *quite intuitive* |
| **Unexpected or confusing behaviour of the tool, including bugs** | *See above* |

## Open review

<Provide here any additional comment and an overall opinion on the tool>

### User portal

When accessing for the first time to https://access.egi.eu/start , it is presented in a simple way the purpose of the portal and what is the service provided.

The user is soon invited to register to the tool for trying the service, and the navigation through the page is intuitive for getting more information about the platform. It is also explained how to access to it.

The access to the platform is done through either an EGI SSO account or a social network account (Google,Facebook).

Once the user is registered and signed in (https://access.egi.eu/#/dashboard) there are two steps to do before accessing to the Science Gateway: adding her affiliation and requesting the resources.

* In the https://access.egi.eu/#/account page, the user can easily edit her profile and affiliation(s): there is also the possibility to connect this account to the LinkedIn and ResearchGate ones.
* In the "resources" page (https://e-grant.egi.eu/ltos/) the user can perform an allocation resources request, providing some basic information like the time period, the scientific discipline, and a motivation; then also more specific information are required, like the CPU and/or the storage capacity needed for using the HTC resources, and/or the equivalent ones for the CLOUD resources. The so filled in request can be sent for the approval or also saved in case the user prefer sending it in another moment; other options are the cancellation (for cleaning all the information and filling them in again) and the invalidation (completely delete the request). Always in the "resources" page it is shown all the requests made by the user (submitted, accepted, rejected, drafts, starred) and a click on the request name will display all the details.

In case the user needs more information about the platform, in the dashboard page there is a link to the "Long tail of science" wiki with detailed explanations.

During my review I was able to test the email notifications that are properly sent when an affiliation is accepted or rejected.

For the user is not possible deleting any old affiliation owned: maybe the developers can add this feature in the future.

### Approve affiliation portal

Link: https://access.egi.eu:8888/modules#/list/Affiliations

When accessing to the main page, for me at the first use of the portal it's not clear which action I can do and where to go for doing anything. It would be helpful, when passing the mouse cursor over the buttons, if it appeared a menu with a brief information regarding that particular button.

There is somethings that doesn't work properly:

* clicking on the "messages" button brings you on a white page
* clicking on the "notification" button doesn't produce anything
* clicking on the "tasks" button doesn't produce anything
* no one of the 4 coloured button on the left menu produces any action
* neither the logout button works

Through the left menu the operator can browse the subscribed users and their affiliations:

* in the "Affiliations" page it is possible to accept or reject any users affiliations; after clicking on the button in the "Action" column for a particular user, the page is updated; when selecting one or more users and performing the action proposed at the bottom of the page, the action is executed but the page is not refreshed.
* In the "Users" page it is only possible seeing the users details but no other action is allowed; it would be useful having the possibility to accept/reject the affiliations also on the users details page.

In any case, it seems not possible deleting the subscribed users.

During my review, I was not able to test the email notifications to admins.

In conclusion,

### Approve resources portal

Link: https://e-grant.egi.eu/ltos/

When accessing to the page, the requests are displayed into several categories: inbox, outbox, accepted, rejected, starred, and all.

The operator can easily check the details of any request, and in case perform the proper actions on the incoming ones: change, accept or reject request, and find resources.

With the change request action, the admin can modify any field of the request, and then send it to the customer. The request so modified is displayed into the outbox category for being processed by another party (even though is not clear to me what does it means).

There is also a button for creating a resources request: it is not clear the sense of having this available for the admins. After creating a request in this way, it is not displayed with the ones coming from the users.

### Conclusion

**In addition:**

**Is the tool fit for production?**

<Please, provide here your opinion as a reviewer>

In conclusion, the User Portal is intuitive and easy to use and in my opinion is ready for production.

Instead, the “Approve Affiliation Portal” is not intuitive as the users one and it is required a certain expertise for using it at the best, though only a restricted number of people will access to it. Several things have to be fixed before entering the production.

Regarding the “Approve Resource Portal”, it is easy to use and ready for production, even though it would be useful having more information about the sections of the portal and the meaning of the buttons for performing any action.

**Are the information in section 1,2 and 3 of this document complete?**

Yes, they well explain the purpose of the platform

# Future plans

The following are the tasks that still need to be performed on the technical LTOS platform:

1. Monitoring of access.egi.eu, SGs. Update SG integration doc in Wiki accordingly
2. Setup GGUS units for trouble tickets as needed. Update SG integration doc in Wiki accordingly. Setup email list for user profile and resource request approvers. Register this in URP for notification about new requests
3. Define identity vetting manual (what is a ‘good enough profile’, how much capacity to allocate) – for user request approvers
4. Define and implement security monitoring and user suspension process
5. Manage user-level quota inside the SG (e.g. userX cannot start more than X VMs in parallel) SG to get input from URP.
6. Define and implement process for downtime notification
7. Separate accounts for user request approvers
8. Notification about new requests, about request approval/rejection
9. Notification emails about new requests should include user’s country in the subject (so NGI people could identify and respond easily to their new users)
10. Edugain integration
11. ORCID and ResearchGate links in affiliation profile
12. Discuss acknowledgement text (Explicit about providers?; More visible in SGs?)
13. Provide a method for users to check their resource consumption
14. Instructions for users on how to propose new applications, gateways, sites for integration

1. https://rt.egi.eu/rt/Dashboards/6458/LTOS%20requirements [↑](#footnote-ref-1)