EGI-InSPIRE

NGI OLA QUESTIONNAIRE

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PROJECT SUMMARY

To support science and innovation, a lasting operational model for e-Science is needed − both for coordinating the infrastructure and for delivering integrated services that cross national borders.

The EGI-InSPIRE project will support the transition from a project-based system to a sustainable pan-European e-Infrastructure, by supporting 'grids' of high-performance computing (HPC) and high-throughput computing (HTC) resources. EGI-InSPIRE will also be ideally placed to integrate new Distributed Computing Infrastructures (DCIs) such as clouds, supercomputing networks and desktop grids, to benefit the user communities within the European Research Area.

EGI-InSPIRE will collect user requirements and provide support for the current and potential new user communities, for example the ESFRI projects. Support will also be given to the current heavy users of the infrastructure, such as high energy physics, computational chemistry and life sciences, as they move their critical services and tools from a centralised support model to one driven by their own individual communities.

The objectives of the project are:

1. The continued operation and expansion of today's production infrastructure by transitioning to a governance model and operational infrastructure that can be increasingly sustained outside of specific project funding.
2. The continued support of researchers within Europe and their international collaborators that are using the current production infrastructure.
3. The support for current heavy users of the infrastructure in earth science, astronomy and astrophysics, fusion, computational chemistry and materials science technology, life sciences and high energy physics as they move to sustainable support models for their own communities.
4. Interfaces that expand access to new user communities including new potential heavy users of the infrastructure from the ESFRI projects.
5. Mechanisms to integrate existing infrastructure providers in Europe and around the world into the production infrastructure, so as to provide transparent access to all authorised users.
6. Establish processes and procedures to allow the integration of new DCI technologies (e.g. clouds, volunteer desktop grids) and heterogeneous resources (e.g. HTC and HPC) into a seamless production infrastructure as they mature and demonstrate value to the EGI community.

The EGI community is a federation of independent national and community resource providers, whose resources support specific research communities and international collaborators both within Europe and worldwide. EGI.eu, coordinator of EGI-InSPIRE, brings together partner institutions established within the community to provide a set of essential human and technical services that enable secure integrated access to distributed resources on behalf of the community.

The production infrastructure supports Virtual Research Communities − structured international user communities − that are grouped into specific research domains. VRCs are formally represented within EGI at both a technical and strategic level.

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1. OLA NGI QUESTIONNAIRE

1.1. OLA STATUS

1. Number of certified sites in the NGI
18 sites in total. There are three sites in Belgium and 15 in the Netherlands.

2. Number of sites that have already signed an OLA or comparable document
About 14 sites have signed the EGEE SLD.

3. In case of a comparable document being used, describe deviations from the metrics used in the original EGI OLA document.
Not applicable.

4. What is the main obstacle to the adoption of the OLA by all sites?
This is unknown yet until the OLA is in a final state and presented to the sites for them to review.

5. Which are the main considerations / objections of sites to the OLA?
See point 4.

6. Describe any modifications that you would consider to the OLA metrics definitions?
Nothing needs to change at this moment.

7. Are there any metrics that should be added/removed from the OLA? Include a brief justification for your answer.
Nothing needs to be added for now as far as we are concerned.

1.2. ENFORCEMENT METHODOLOGY

8. Are there any improvements you would propose to apply in your NGI to the current enforcement methodology of the OLA? (Monthly League Table, justifications for breach of A/R metrics)
Sites should be able to directly get an overview of their performance metrics. Gridview should be modified to support this. In addition, site should receive the monthly report on their performance.

9. What kind of rewards/penalties for sites would you consider for over/underachieving sites?
I think that the numbers in the league table are sufficient "punishment" for underachieving sites since nobody wants to be a bad site. In that sense it may be good to provide the sites also with the league table every month.

10. Do you find the current system for providing justifications for A/R failures adequate? If not why? What else would you use?
The system is adequate.

11. Do the justifications in general adequately describe the incident, main cause and the recovery strategy used?
This is not clear yet because we have only just begun with this. This should be reviewed over a longer period of time.

1.3. MONITORING TOOLS

14. Describe any defects that you've encountered with the OLA monitoring tools currently used (e.g. Nagios, GridView)?

Gridview should be updated to meet EGI needs. If this is not feasible, a new tool to monitor availability metrics should be developed.

15. Describe any improvements that you would consider to the OLA monitoring tools currently used (e.g. NAgios, GridView)?

New Nagios tests should pass a certification process before they are put into production.

1.4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

16. Do you think that the OLA should remain part of site certificate process or there is a different procedure you would like to use?

Yes, the OLA should remain part of the certification process.

17. How do you (or would you) manage OLAs in your NGI?

We intend to use the generic EGI OLA.

18. Would you object to an increase of the minimum Availability/Reliability thresholds to 80% and 85% and respectively?

We strongly object to raising the minimum Availability/Reliability thresholds. This will not make the grid more reliable but will only increase the amount of paperwork for people. A substantially increased amount of tickets will be raised to sites. Sites that are understaffed or badly monitored will continue to be that way. Only then site admins need to put information in GGUS tickets every month. We believe in a gentle push upwards, meaning that the threshold should be set so that every month a certain percentage of sites fail to make the threshold where "certain" is not too large. If almost every body meets the threshold, the threshold can be increased somewhat. From our experience, in June 46 sites did not reach the 70%/75% threshold and in July it was something like 50 or so. Out of the 364 sites that are currently in the BDII we would say that these numbers are high enough. The threshold should stay at 70%/75%.

19. Would you object to permitting a grace period of 6 month for new sites were availability and reliability thresholds are 70% and 75% respectively?

We would prefer not to have such a grace period. If a site is certified and becomes part of the production infrastructure, it should meet the same requirements as other sites that are already in the infrastructure. If site admins have difficulties in running their services reliably, they can always turn to the NGI 1st line support for help. Don't make procedures more complicated if it is not necessary.

20. What thresholds would you like to see for EGI core servicers? Do you agree with 80%/85% as in sites?

Core services are services running at NGI or even multi NGI level. If they are unreliable this would seriously affect the work of VOs, rendering multiple sites as useless to them. We would say that this threshold should lie at 85%/90% or 90%/90% or so. Assuming that these services would run at well equipped and sufficiently staffed sites this should be feasible.

21. Please provide any additional comments that were not covered with the previous questions

The following remark has nothing to do with the OLA but instead of thinking about punishment and rewards it maybe a good idea to organise a workshop on "how to run an EGI grid site" for site admins. How to get yourself organised (people on duty monitoring GGUS, monitoring systems etc.), what you need to monitor and how you monitor it, best ways to set things up etc. Site admins from high performing sites (big sites and small sites) should be the tutors on this workshop. All of this stuff could be documented in a best practices wiki. Providing reliable grid services should not be realised by just OLAs and penalties if sites don't do well. Sites should also be helped to do it right. In the end this saves the ROD and COD teams work and it helps the users.