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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1.1. OLA STATUS

1. Number of certified sites in the NGI 17

2. Number of sites that have already signed an OLA or comparable document 7

3. In case of a comparable document being used, describe deviations from the metrics used in the original EGI OLA document.

The comparable documents are the WLCG MoUs signed with the tier1 and the tier2s.

4. What is the main obstacle to the adoption of the OLA by all sites?

The criteria in the mentioned OLA might be accepted by the sites, but they won't sign with the NGI, see point 5.

Also, the NGI considers that EGI is not empowered to enforce the signature of an OLA between the sites and the NGI. If asked NGI France will consider to sign an OLA with EGI, though.

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

In addition to what has been said in the previous point, even if sites would consider to sign an OLA with the NGI this would take a very long time and require much effort involving lawyers and several committees. The sentence contained in the OLA referenced (https://documents.egi.eu/document/31) saying that it is not legally binding will not help, as this statement itself will have to be interpreted in the countries legal context. As the purpose of an OLA is to guarantee a certain level of service, this can be achieved otherwise. The legal construction of the French NGI guarantees that the NGI's Operations Centre can take adequate measures if a site is found "out of bounds" repeatedly (see paragraph 1.2).

6. Describe any modifications that you would consider to the OLA metrics definitions?

Currently all sites which are under the operational responsibility of NGI France fulfil the minimum resource requirements and are normally above the availability / reliability metrics.

We are planning to set up a national GOCDB according to the model provided by the GOCDB developers. This would allow for introducing sites with different metrics and a national scope in addition to the current ones. The OLA is not taking into account this possibility.

7. Are there any metrics that should be added/removed from the OLA? Include a brief justification for your answer.

We use additional metrics already, like asking for a minimum "life time" of the site of at least one year (this means, once certified and in production the site must stay registered in GOCDB for at least one year) and applying more stringent response time during an initial period when the site just has passed certification and has entered production. On the side of the NGI's Operations Centre the operators are

informed of that and the NGI's site support staff is more readily available, to keep "flapping" during the first time on the production grid low.
We also require that a site's security contact is accessible for the NGI's and EGI's security mailing lists (we had a case where mails from a listserver were filtered).

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) No.
9. What kind of rewards/penalties for sites would you consider for over/underachieving sites? No rewards. Penalties: just suspending the site if it is constantly underperforming.
10. Do you find the current system for providing justifications for A/R failures adequate? If not why? What else would you use? Adequate for giving a first indication of what went wrong. On repetitive errors or low performance, NGI operations does the follow up and takes corrective actions.
11. Do the justifications in general adequately describe the incident, main cause and the recovery strategy used? As far as the French NGI is concerned, yes. No opinion for other NGIs.

1.3. MONITORING TOOLS

14. Describe any defects that you've encountered with the OLA monitoring tools currently used (e.g. Nagios, GridView)? Performance of some French sites were overestimated by NAGIOS. We signalled that.
In general, the change from SAM to NAGIOS is too recent to give a reasonable feedback. For the moment it is still difficult to distinguish a simple bug from a design problem.
15. Describe any improvements that you would consider to the OLA monitoring tools currently used (e.g. NAgios, GridView)? This issue has already been raised elsewhere; to summarize, in comparison to SAM, NAGIOS gives less detailed indications of the source of an error and also less history but access to that helped the sites a lot in debugging.

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? We don't require the sites to sign an OLA but we tell them what criteria will be applied before they get certified and in which cases sites will become uncertified again or get suspended. This is accepted by the sites, sufficient to get the sites to perform correctly, and avoids long discussions with the legal departments of various large institutions.
17. How do you (or would you) manage OLAs in your NGI? As described above. In addition, changes can be discussed and agreed upon in regular meetings. An escalation procedure is available but was not needed yet.
18. Would you object to an increase of the minimum Availability/Reliability thresholds to 80% and 85% and respectively? We would not object to this for the sites currently visible to EGI.
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? No, but we would not think that this is useful: the thresholds are too high for the first month of a site and too low if allowed for six months.
20. What thresholds would you like to see for EGI core servicers? Do you agree with 80%/85% as in sites? If we are talking of services like the messaging system, GOCDB, Operations Portal + operations dashboard, GGUS, the values are not high enough and should be somewhere beyond 98 percent (means 2 percent of total unavailability in a year, which makes about 5 days).

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

Currently the French NGI enforces the suggested OLA but has no obligation to do this with respect to EGI, because there is no document signed between EGI and NGI if we aren't mistaken. The situation is different for EGI-InSPIRE but that project does not cover all activities of our NGI and is limited in time anyway. EGI should interact with the NGIs and not try to interfere with the management of Operations within the NGI.