

Observation from the EGEE-III Final Review

13th June 2011

1. The reviewers strongly endorse the declared aim of EGI to be technology neutral. This applies but is not limited to the choice of middleware suppliers and infrastructure management tools.

Comment: Structures within EGI have been set up to be technology neutral. The Technology Coordination Board (TCB) includes representatives from the EMI and IGE projects and has an open structure to allow other technology providers to join. The operational integration of UNICORE and Globus has been a focus during the second half of PY1. This integration of a greater diversity of technology into the operational infrastructure has led to the development of clearer interfaces for the operational tools in order to support this integration process and potentially other management tools.

2. EGI should aspire to assume a leading role in the realm of technology awareness within the community.

Comment: Through the annual Technical and User Forums, EGI continues to support the interaction of different technology providers and provides a platform for them to promote the capabilities of their technology within the community. A strong outreach strategy based on the achievements presented at these meetings, carried out through the website, blogs, newsletters, articles and promotional materials keeps awareness high within the community throughout the year.

3. EGI should maintain with vigour the successful series of User Forums and technology meetings for the sake of increasing technology awareness and staying in contact with users as well as keeping pace with their evolving and emerging requirements.

Comment: The EGI Technical Forum took place in Amsterdam in September 2010 and the EGI User Forum took place in Vilnius in April 2011. A Technical Forum is planned for Lyon in September 2011 and these events will continue. A dedicated requirements capturing activity has been established to collect the needs from end-users and operations communities and to feed these requirements into the development cycles.

4. The reviewers strongly endorse the systematic processes of consultation among the projects taking on from EGEE-III, including EGI-InSPIRE, EMI, IGE and other DCI projects as well as concerted actions that would benefit the projects and the community at large.

Comment: A joint collaborative roadmap was produced across the DCI projects in September 2010 [<https://documents.egi.eu/document/172>]. Individual collaborations between the DCI projects take place as desired by the individual projects. EGI.eu is establishing formal collaborations with the DCI projects that are critical for its activities. Currently MoUs have been established with EMI, IGE and StratusLab. Discussions are starting with the projects relating to the desktop grids community. The DCI projects feature heavily in the sessions organised at the User and Technical Forums.

5. EGI should fully exploit the opportunity to learn from the NGIs. Efforts geared at capturing their feedback as comprehensively as possible are likely to be repaid several times over.

Comment: Fundamental to EGI is the existence of strong NGIs, and their engagement with EGI.eu and each other is supported through their participation within EGI-InSPIRE. The level of engagement varies considerably between the NGIs – frequently correlated by the NGI's own maturity and size. Engagement within the operational infrastructure is probably most complete and is still growing across user support, policy and dissemination. Questionnaires during the year from the operations, policy and user community functions within EGI.eu have helped understand the position of the NGIs on some issues. Mechanisms such as the Forums and the F2F meetings that take place there and elsewhere are critical for building these collaborations and communication. The EGI Council held a dedicated workshop in February 2011 to help communication amongst the community on strategic issues. However, the smaller partners in the project who would most benefit from these interactions to build experience within their own NGIs are the most challenged to provide dedicated staff or the supporting

travel costs to engage with the broader community. This is an issue that has become apparent at the end of the first year that needs to be addressed on behalf of the community as a whole.

6. EGI should aim in collaboration with the NGIs to systematically collect information about the participants of the training program and their subsequent take-up of the infrastructure.

Comment: The coordination of training activity that takes place in the NGIs (as only the coordination role is supported within the EGI-InSPIRE project) is effected through the maintenance of a database of events happening in the NGIs, as well as a list of trainers and a digital library of training material. During PY1, UEDIN which was providing the training services for EGI-InSPIRE left the UK JRU. Following this unplanned action the work has been transferred to STFC within the UK JRU. There was no interruption in the service offered to the community, however development of these services has been delayed as the result of this unplanned move as the new team comes up to speed in this area. These aspects will be followed up in PY2 through the recently established Training Working Group.

7. EGI should explore ways of capturing measures of user satisfaction, including the consolidation of the measures captured directly by the NGIs.

Comment: EGI continues to establish MoUs with the Virtual Research Communities through relevant community structures. These VRCs are invited to join discussions and provide requirements through the User Community Board (UCB). These VRCs may be ESFRI projects, existing collaborations, EC projects or other structures. Currently, these include the WeNMR project and the Life Sciences Grid Community. Discussions continue with the WLCG community, the MAPPER & DECIDE projects and with the DARIAH and CLARIN communities relating to a letter of intent. In the meantime the UCB meetings are open to existing community representatives from the former EGEE projects and from other groups who have expressed an interest in providing requirements and feedback on their use of the infrastructure. This is an area that will be explored further in PY2 in conjunction with the NGIs.

8. The reviewers believe that as a result of EGEE-III activities during the last year EGI is well aware of the technological and market challenges; it should face them with the necessary pragmatism and flexibility.

Comment: The first year has required a pragmatic flexibility as the partners in the project have worked to establish themselves in their new roles as providers of national, international and global tasks. In particular EGI.eu, as a result of an active recruitment effort in 2010, came up to a full staffing level only in January 2011, as a consequence delivering 66% of the expected effort during the first 8 months of the project. The diversity in NGI maturity has also presented particular organisational challenges. This will have an impact on how rapidly the community can migrate to new technology platforms in order to increase the services it can potentially offer to new communities, enabling it to meet the technological and market challenges identified during EGEE-III.