



From EGEE to EGI: The future of grids in Europe

Enabling Grids for E-science (EGEE), the largest multidisciplinary Grid in the world has within seven years created a reliable, effective Grid, supporting scientists across the globe in a myriad of disciplines. Now in its third phase, the project needs to secure the future of the Grid for its research communities.

This future is being planned by the European Grid Initiative Design Study (EGI_DS) project, which aims to establish a long term sustainable grid infrastructure in Europe, moving from the existing short term funded project structure to a sustainable service. With over a year's planning done, the EGI_DS is hosting a workshop on Monday 22 October at this year's annual EGEE conference in Istanbul. The EGI Transition Workshop focuses on how to move the EGEE project to the EGI model.

"Thanks to EGEE, and others, production grids are reality today," said Dieter Kranzlmüller of Ludwig-Maximilian University at EGEE'08. "EGI is not a simple continuation of EGEE but should offer a possible solution for all European Grid Infrastructure projects to achieve sustainability."

During the last six months, the EGI Design Study has focused on writing the EGI Blueprint document, a proposal that is designed to determine how to establish a sustainable grid infrastructure in Europe by the end of EGEE-III in spring 2010. The EGI Blueprint presents a vision of the transition towards the new EGI model and includes necessary implications for the implementation, operation, user interaction and management of the corresponding infrastructure.

According to the Blueprint, the EGI will be composed of National Grid Initiatives (NGI) and an EGI Organisation (EGI.org). The EGI.org will serve as a "glue" enabling coherence between the NGIs for the benefit of users. EGI.org will link existing NGIs and actively support the set-up and initiation of new NGIs. It will ensure pan-European grid coordination – with an aim to standardise wherever reasonable. The EGI.org will provide central functions to address primary coordination of the operation of the infrastructure, user support and application development, middleware interfaces and final certification, and management.

The EGI.org is expected to start its operation in 2010. It is important to ensure a smooth transition without interruption from today's EGEE-based infrastructure into the future EGI model. The transition period from the current Grids in Europe to EGI began in May 2008 and will continue through the initial three years of EGI. It is expected that the number of NGIs contributing to EGI will steadily increase during that time. The main change to this distributed model of the EGI will be organisational, as the emphasis moves from individual interested institutions to national initiatives and from central supervision to central coordination of European NGIs.

It is essential that the operating large-scale production grid continues to serve the scientific communities through the transition period with at least the same quality and level of satisfaction as today. Therefore the transition to the EGI model has to be guaranteed for EGEE and other EU-funded projects, such as DEISA and PRACE without disruption. This is currently being discussed at the EGI Transition Workshop. "We have very strong indications that we are on the right track with the general ideas of the Blueprint. Now we must make sure that user communities dependent on the present e-Infrastructures can feel confidence in our plans. In the transition we must ensure continuation of the critical and well working parts of the present grids but also encourage wider adoption of Grid technologies by user communities not satisfied with currently available e-Infrastructures. Going from current grids and EGEE in particular to EGI is not only a transition, it is also an opportunity for change," states Ludek Matyska, Project Director of EGI_DS.

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Notes for Editors

Enabling Grids for E-science

The Enabling Grids for E-science (EGEE) project is co-funded by the European Commission. The project aims to provide researchers in both academia and industry with access to major computing resources, independent of their geographic location.

EGEE's main aims are:

1. To build a secure, reliable and robust grid infrastructure
2. To supply a computing resource specifically intended to be used by many different scientific disciplines
3. To attract, engage and support a wide range of users from science and industry, and provide them with extensive technical and training support.

For more information see <http://www.eu-egee.org/> or contact Catherine Gater, EGEE Dissemination, Outreach and Communications Manager, on + 41 22 767 41 76 or email Catherine.Gater@cern.ch.

For conference details visit <http://egee08.eu-egee.org/>

Follow the EGEE conference live via the EGEE'08 GridCast at <http://gridtalk-project.blogspot.com/>

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European Grid Initiative

For more information about the EGI Design Study, visit <http://www.eu-egi.eu>, or download the report from <http://www.eu-egi.eu/blueprint.pdf>.

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