31th e-IRG delegates meeting

Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 5 December 2012

Public Summary
Reports and News

Pekka Karp reported from EC that discussions on the Horizon 2020 advisory structure have started. Advisory groups consisting of independent experts will be established each with 20-30 members and including representatives from the civil society. There will be an open call for members of the Advisory Groups. Research Infrastructures will fall in the Excellent Science group. There has been a call by DG CNECT for the "Connect Advisory Forum for ICT Research and Innovation" (CAF), which will be one of the Advisory Groups, another group will be advising on Research Infrastructures. The Excellence Science pillar will focus on societal challenges. Pekka Karp informed further that DG CNECT is working on its own objectives and that the Director has decided to open an external consultation.

Bjørn Henrichsen reported from ESFRI that a decision on the amendment of the ERIC regulation is expected early summer. The main issue was equal treatment of all ERIC members, even non-EU ones.

The Blue Paper was discussed in the September ESFRI meeting and received a very positive response. ESFRI would like to see clarified the policy implications from this report for the ESFRI projects. The Blue Paper will also have to be discussed with the cluster projects on the roadmap to try to create synergies between projects. Bjørn Henrichsen sees it as good way for e-IRG and ESFRI to work together.

Bjørn Henrichsen mentioned that the EC has established an Expert Group on the assessment and evaluation of maturity of the ESFRI projects. The report of the Implementation Group shows existing problems, in particular the financial problems. A proposal to the Competitiveness Council is to give ESFRI the mandate to follow more closely the ESFRI projects, their implementation and prioritisation. Henrichsen said that it is seen as too expensive to fund all the projects.

Nearly all ESFRI projects are based on state-of-the-art e-Infrastructure in their fields, they have competence and the point is to create synergies to develop a system, not islands. To make a comprehensive European system they have to be linked; different clusters have to work together, e.g. SSH with ENV. Henrichsen said that e-Infrastructures are crucial and that this has to be made clear.

The news reported from the countries included:

- France: Has appointed two new e-IRG delegates.

- Bulgaria: The Ministry of Transport has produced a Digital Agenda for Bulgaria.
- Denmark: A new organisation (Danish e-Infrastructure Cooperation DeIC) is in place for all e-Infrastructure. Discussions on how to finance and organise its components have restarted; interesting process.
- Italy: The ministry has just concluded a public consultation to define a strategy for Horizon 2020.
- Serbia: There has been a change in the government and there is a new Ministry for Science.
- Germany: D-grid comes to an end now and they are working on sustainability. There is a discussion how to pay for the EGI fees and it is not clear what result will be. Tomorrow there will be a meeting about sustainability.
- Greece: In the last months several GRNET activities have provided results: a Cloud service, a dropbox-type service for storage (pithos), sophisticated e-voting system for universities (with game theory aspects).
- Hungary: The first 100Gbps connection will be in production early next year between CERN and Budapest, where the new CERN-remote centre is located (connectivity Geneva-Budapest provided by GEANT). After 15 years the government has decided that the NREN should cover the entire education sector, also primary and secondary schools.
- United Kingdom: Are waiting like Ireland on budgetary statement. A rumour is that there might be increased funding. Sustainability could be based on private sector use of publicly funded infrastructure. Improving skills and training is also an important issue.
- Finland: Are heavily implementing data storage services (dropbox-type for rescue of data) so that scientists can use a secure server. Opened in October green data centre in Kajaani where the first batch of systems has been installed.
- Sweden: New budget for research from the government: significant increase of funding. On the e-Infrastructure level SNIC has moved out from the Research Council to the university but will remain a distributed centre. It has a new Board. There is a new strategy document.
- Norway: Had in 2005 a 10-years initiative, which reorganised the national infrastructure for 10-year. This comes to an end and now they are looking how to reorganise for next period.

Discussion with invited experts of the outcome of the e-IRG workshop

Maria Ramalho (PRACE aisbl), **Steven Newhouse** (EGI.eu) and **Valentino Cavalli** (TERENA) joined as external experts the discussion about the outcome of the e-IRG workshop, which has had data as its main topic. During the last semester e-IRG had focused on data issues and the questions that e-IRG now has to answer are:

- is further stimulation of the data area needed?
- how should e-IRG relate to RDA? Endorse, recommend, participate, support, observe?
- should e-IRG continue the relations to EUDAT and OpenAIREPlus?

The e-IRG concluded from the discussion that the work of RDA is very in line with e-IRG's work and that it is important to work together and facilitate discussions but remain independent. e-IRG can endorse relevant points with its policy documents. RDA has the HSLF (High Level Strategy Forum), which could be a platform for relation with e-IRG.

e-IRG the coordination platform – implementation of e-IRG strategy

e-IRG's new strategy has two main action lines 1) establish e-IRG as main advisory body on e-Infrastructures internationally and 2) develop e-IRG as the coordination platform for all components. To implement the second action line e-IRG will provide a forum where e-Infrastructure organisations can meet, identify common interests and aim at providing even better services. In this session Steven Newhouse presented a proposal on a Digital Research Infrastructure ERIC, which will address the needs for an integrated one-stop-shop service, with integrated governance, which is also able to address the financial challenges. He presented the possible governance structure of this ERIC including advisory bodies, the core functions and services and the related business models. The proposed approach will focus on operations first and leave innovation to be community-driven. The EGI Council authorised on 21.11.2012 Steven Newhouse to start a consultation with other stakeholders and to assess their interest. It was said that e-IRG could be the advisory body in the figure but that this decision is up to the national bodies.

In the discussion that followed there were mixed reactions about the digital RI ERIC. A series of comments and points were made:

- The focus is on HTC/Clouds, being tailored to EGI, and not so much on networking and HPC components.
- The service provisioning and coordination are merged, while they should be separate.
- A shift to commercial providers should be made for commodity services. Such an ERIC should not be enforced, rather be voluntary.
- Stakeholders should be indeed brought together, being more inclusive, and structures should be simplified. However, operations should be probably kept independent.
- EU integration is difficult and that taking actions should be the case only if the users empower us. However, separating co-ordination from service provision is an interesting approach.
- The way forward is a federated approach keeping the distributed nature and not a monolithic structure.
- If this is not appreciated, I would like to see other ideas for the future vision and how the e- Infrastructure ecosystem will evolve.
- The role of the users is important in this discussion.

It was agreed to let the different e-Infrastructure organisations have bilateral or multi-lateral discussions and then invite them to report in one of the next e-IRG meetings.

Roadmap 2012

The e-IRG Roadmap 2012 is approved with some minor changes; the pre-final version will be closed on the 10th of January of 2013.

Follow-up on reports Task Forces

The Blue Paper on Data Management has been discussed with ESFRI. It has been printed (with Blue cover) and will be presented at the upcoming ESFRI meeting. An ESFRI/e-IRG working group has been established that will create policy recommendations based on the Blue Paper.

The recommendations document from the Cloud Computing Task Force will be finalised in January 2103.

Task Force on Legal Issues

Bob Day presented the goal of TFLI and the plan for the work. The Task Force on Legal Issues will focus on legal-regulatory issues of public e-Infrastructures first (e.g. in academic-private partnerships) and propose a strategy to address these issues. Regarding the commercial use of the public e-Infrastructures the TFLI will restrict to EU law so that it is feasible to converge. The preliminary list of issues comprises:

- Legal: Acceptable Usage Policies suitability for e-Infrastructure providers
- Commercial: Service Level Agreement and service wrap – one stop shopping, licensing of e-Infrastructure components, ownership of results, Intellectual Property and data, charging models, cyber security.
- Yannis Ioannidis mentioned that an RDA Working Group on Legal Issues is being formed and some of the issues are overlapping. Connections can be investigated, so as to monitor or cooperate.

White Paper 2013

Rossend Llurba presented the status of the White Paper 2013. He presented the ToR, which covers the process, the content, the structure, etc. In the discussion the following points were made, including new topics:

- The document should be accessible from outside communities (citizens). Data is one of the topics, so have a broader look from these outer communities, i.e. not restricting purely on research and expand to external audiences and not focus too much inwards. This is also related to the EC objective that research should be driven by the needs of the society and the societal challenges (e.g. the environment)
- Standards, de jure and de facto can be another topic: simplifying and harmonising standards for data.
- User involvement is also a very important topic that we need to improve and address how to organise ourselves for this

- Coordination between different e-Infrastructure actors, but also coordination between EU and national (e.g. PRACE vs. national HPC centres). A lot of different national systems exist and we need to understand how the different countries are organized and at least have a proposal for a process.
- The work from the e-IRG/ESFRI WG on data could be also included (ask the WG to suggest things that can be included.
- The same could be the case of the legal work (TFLI), however the timeline was not aligned and thus not compatible.   The following champions were identified for the topics:

Topic	Champion
Big Data Access	Greece
EU integration/coordination	The Netherlands
Standards on data	Italy

Each topic should have a separate paragraph for User Involvement and coordination of EU-national efforts. A first draft should be ready in February in time for the e-IRG delegates meeting in Dublin, the final version is foreseen to be ready in May. It was agreed that a faster, efficient, creative process should be followed, similar to the one of the reaction documents.

Handover of e-IRG Chairmanship

Gudmund Høst handed the Chair of e-IRG over to **Sverker Holmgren**. The new Chair reflected on the roles of e-IRG and thanked Gudmund Høst for his valuable contribution.