Dear EGEE-II project members,

As we approach what will be a well-deserved holiday period for all, I would like to take the opportunity to look back on this year's achievements and provide a preview of what awaits us in 2008.

2007 was punctuated by a series of important events for the project. The EGEE User Forum (the second in the series) was held in conjunction with the Open Grid Forum (OGF) in Manchester, UK, in May, bringing together the user and standards communities to network and learn from each other. More than 900 participants saw demonstrations and presentations highlighting real grid usage in the research and commercial domains. Encouraged by the success of this event, we are planning to co-locate with OGF again in spring 2009.

The same month saw the first review of the EGEE-II project by the European Commission (EC) appointed panel of experts. The review was very successful and the resulting recommendations were promptly addressed by the Project Execution Board (PEB) and will continue to be monitored in preparation for final review of the project next year.

The EGEE'07 conference, held in Budapest on the first week of October, attracted more than 620 participants from 47 countries, with a further 90+ people following the plenary sessions of the first two days via video-conferencing. 86 sessions were held, with 275 talks as well as 12 live demos and 39 posters. This event and the earlier user forum showed the continued expansion of the project's reach, as well as its extensive collaborations through participation of worldwide initiatives and related projects. Plans for a one month extension to the EGEE-II project were put in place by the Collaboration Board and Project Management Board (PMB) which will allow us to complete the programme of work and spread the finance over an extended period.

The EC's seventh Framework Programme (FP7) was launched with a sequence of calls during 2007, EGEE and its collaborating projects worked hard to prepare their next phases and capitalise on the work started in FP6. For EGEE, the third phase of the project was arduously prepared by the PEB and PMB throughout the year in consultation with all interested partners. Sustainable infrastructures are a priority for FP7 and the EGEE-III consortium is structured on a national basis in preparation for the transition to the European Grid Initiative (EGI) model, also launched as a Design Study project in September. The EGEE-III proposal was submitted in September, scoring well in its evaluation with several recommendations to address. Following meetings with the EC in November and December, negotiations for the EGEE-III project are nearing completion with an expected project start date of 1 May 2008.

Several collaborating infrastructure projects submitted proposals in the first calls of the year and are on schedule to start work early in 2008 (e.g. SEE-GRID-SCI), whilst those in the same call as EGEE-III have also entered negotiations with the EC (including BalticGrid-II, EELA-2 and ETICS2). We also saw a significant increase in application support projects that wish to build on the EGEE infrastructure and/or the gLite middleware.

The EGEE infrastructure grew steadily during the year, and now counts over 240 sites in 45 countries, with more than 5000 registered users, and over 200 Virtual Organisations (VOs) connected to the infrastructure. The infrastructure usage now regularly exceeds 100,000 jobs per day from more than 10 scientific domains. This increased activity is particularly noticeable for the non-physics related VOs while the LHC experiments continue to push the boundaries of what is technically possible. The middleware has been the subject of an intensive re-structuring programme, driven by the Technical Coordination group with the goal of reducing the effort required to incorporate new components and port the releases to more platforms. A number of important milestones have been met and the latest status will be presented at the All-activity meeting in Sofia in January. Deployment of gLite on more UNIX distributions before the end of EGEE-II will be an important measure of success for this campaign.

EGEE-II now has six Business Associates: Avanade, Excelian, GridwiseTech, Hitachi, NICE and Platform Computing, doubling the number since last year. Avanade and Excelian came on-board as the result of the Pisa Industry Day, one of six such events this year. The Business track at EGEE'07 brought together key players sharing their expertise on diverse markets and created synergies with a number of projects: SIMDAT, NESSI-GRID, BEinGRID, Health-e-Child, Edutain@Grid, and COMETA. The track highlighted case studies from early adopters across many sectors, technology transfer, and commercial software licensing schemes. EGEE's engagement illustrates increasing interest from numerous business sectors and paves the ground for the challenges ahead to better integrate enterprise and research grids.

2008 will bring many challenges and exciting events for EGEE-II and EGEE-III alike. The third EGEE User Forum will be held in Clermont Ferrand, France in February and will be followed in spring by a transition meeting to mark the handover of EGEE-II to EGEE-III. The EGEE-II final project review will be held before the summer holidays and the family of collaborating projects will come together in Istanbul, Turkey for the EGEE'08 conference in September.
As you can see, 2007 has been a very successful year for EGEE which is the direct result of all your hard work and enthusiasm. I wish you and your families all the very best for the festive season.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Jones
EGEE-II Project Director

**Upcoming events:**

| Month | Event | URL |
|---|---|---|
| December | EGEE Project Office will be closed from Saturday 22nd December 2007 until Sunday 6th January 2008 inclusive | |
| January | 5-8, 9th International Conference on Distributed Computing and Networking, Kolkata, India | http://www.icdcn.org/ |
| | 7-10, HICSS 2008 Grid Computing Mini-track, Big Island, Hawaii, U.S | http://wcl.cs.rpi.edu/hicss-grid/ |
| | 8, 3rd Transport Modelling, ITS and Grid Computing Workshop Meeting, London, UK | http://www.innovits.com/showdoc.asp?doc_id=369 |
| | 14-16, Building Effective Virtual Organizations (BEVO), Washington DC, U.S. | http://www.ci.uchicago.edu/events/VirtOrg2008/index.php?pg=main |
| | 20-25, 25th APAN Meeting, Hawaii, U.S. | http://www.apan.net/meetings/future.html |
| | 21-23, EGEE-II All Activity Meeting, Sofia, Bulgaria | http://indico.cern.ch/conferenceDisplay.py?confId=24443 |
| | 22-25, 6th Australasian Symposium on Grid Computing and e-Research (AusGrid), Wollongong, Australia | http://www.fit.qut.edu.au/ausgrid08/ |
| | 23-25, Florida International Grid School, Miami, Florida, U.S. | https://twiki.grid.iu.edu/twiki/bin/view/Education/FloridaInternationalGridSchool2008 |
| | 30-Feb 1, Pervasive Health 2008, Tampere, Finland | http://www.pervasivehealth.org/ |
| | 30-Feb 2, Mardi Gras Conference 2008, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, U.S. | http://www.mardigrasconference.org/ |
| | 31-Feb 1, International Workshop on Campus Grids and Scientific Applications , Vienna, Austria - | http://barbakus.ani.univie.ac.at/events/Workshop2008/index.htm |
| February | Feb 6-March 12, International Winter School on Grid Computing (WSGC '08), | online at http://www.iceage-eu.org/iwsgc08 |
| | 11-14, 3rd EGEE User Forum, Clermont-Ferrand, France | http://egee-uf3.healthgrid.org/ |
| | 12-14, Parallel and Distributed Computing and Networks, Innsbruck, Austria | http://www.iasted.org/conferences/home-597.html |
| | 13-15, 16th Euromicro International Conference on Parallel, Distributed and network-based Processing (PDP 2008), Toulouse, France | http://www.pdp2008.org/ |
| | 14-18, AAAS Annual Meeting, Boston, U.S. | http://www.aaas.org/meetings/Annual_Meeting/ |
| | 25-29, 22nd Open Grid Forum, Cambridge, MA, U.S. | http://www.gridforum.org/OGF22/ |
| | 29-March 1, International Symposium on Information and Communications Technology For Health (ICT4Health 2008), Manila, Philippines | http://www.math.admu.edu.ph/~raf/ict4health.htm |