Dear EGEE-II project members,

A retrospective of 2006 was the subject of my last letter of 2006, and a forward look to the challenges in store for 2007 is what I greet you with in this issue, with my very best wishes to all of you for a prosperous and happy new year.

2007 is the year of the LHC start-up, a key event for the Grid community as a whole, and in particular for CERN and the HEP community. While many groups already use the EGEE infrastructure on a daily basis, this will be the first production usage of the Grid on this scale, with some 15 petabytes per year of data to process from the four LHC experiments Virtual Organisations. By providing the infrastructure to support the LHC in collaboration with the LCG project, EGEE will be playing a key role in the LHC programme.

2007 is also the year of the launch of the seventh Framework Programme of the European Commission (FP7), the first calls have been published and are relevant for user community specific projects that make use of the EGEE infrastructure as well the preparation of the European Grid Initiative (EGI) Design Study. A small number of EGEE members from NA1 and NA5 have been tasked with the preparation of this EGI Design Study, and through workshops and dedicated federation meetings, the team will produce the proposal for submission in early May. The series of meetings around Europe that started in Spring 2006 have continued in 2007 with the Nordic countries and the UK to discuss the organisation of Grid initiatives at the national level. Further meetings are scheduled in coming months to ensure all nations are on-board in this venture. In parallel, EGEE-III preparation capitalises on the momentum gained towards the end of 2006 and the proposal is gradually taking shape. Related projects are also busy preparing their future and discussions are taking place to ensure coherence and collaboration with EGEE in the programmes of work.

January 2007 started with an All Activity meeting in Bologna, Italy, at which activities presented their progress over the first three quarters of the EGEE-II project, and at which "break-out sessions" were held for the first time to discuss significant issues. One such session was dedicated to gLite middleware and the stability of its components. This was followed-up at the PMB meeting after the event when it was agreed to form a task force to produce a plan and timetable for stabilising gLite components by the Summer of this year. Another break-out session at the All Activity Meeting covered web pages, documentation and dissemination activities to ensure the coherence of all material presented to the outside. This All Activity meeting paves the way for the preparation of the first periodic report and the revision of the plans for the remaining 12 months of the project for each activity, which will lead on to their presentation at the review in May 2007.

The project's External Advisory Committee, a board of experts external to the project set up to assist and advise on project progress, has been formed and is composed of the following members: Phil Andrews (SDSC), Frederica Darema (NSF), Carole Goble (University of Manchester), Eike Jessen (DFN) and David Snelling (Fujitsu).

Further, the EGEE Business Associate Programme, which counts as members NICE, Platform (pending the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding) and PriceWaterhouseCoopers, will soon welcome a new addition, namely GridwiseTech. The EBA programme, a new innovation in EGEE-II, helps the project work more closely with businesses interested in active collaboration on a range of topics. More information is available on-line at http://www.eu-egee.org/egee-business-associates.

Finally, the preparation for the joint OGF/EGEE User Forum is well underway, and I take this opportunity to remind you that abstracts for the event must be submitted by 31 January (See 'events" below for details). This combined event will further strengthen the links between EGEE and the Open Grid Forum, bringing users and standards bodies together to ensure that the future of the Grid is complemented by the establishment of key standards. The User Forum hallmark is the ample space devoted to discussions between users and the service providers, and the interactive demonstration of the status of prototypes and of the applications already in production status. Please come in large numbers to this key EGEE event and we shall tell you when the registration opens.

So there is much to plan for and look forward to this year, and we will ensure you are kept informed of progress in all areas through these monthly letters.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Jones
EGEE-II Project Director

Upcoming events:

Month	Event	URL
January	29 Jan – 2 Feb, OGF Chapel Hill, USA	http://www.ogf.org/OGF19/events_ogf19.php
February	23, Industry Day Budapest, Hungary	http://www.eu-egee.org/egee_events/industryday/
	26-27, EGI Workshop Munich, Germany	http://www.eu-egi.org/workshop/
March	1, Joint EELA-EGEE Industry Day Madrid, Spain	http://www.eu-egee.org/egee_events/industryday/EGEE_Industry_Day_Spain/
May	7-11, OGF/EGEE User Forum Manchester, U.K.	Call for abstracts open: http://indico.cern.ch/conferenceCFA.py?confId=7247 Deadline 31 January
	15-16, EGEE-II Review CERN, Geneva, Switzerland	http://egee-technical.web.cern.ch/egee-technical/EU-reviews/index-review1.html