



Coordinating IT department engagement in EC projects

Bob Jones

8 September 2009

This note outlines a proposal for the coordination of IT department's engagement in European Commission projects.

Introduction

In the transition from the EGEE series of projects to European Grid Initiative (EGI¹) the landscape of European Commission (EC) grid related projects and CERN's role will change. The EGEE series of projects have had an important coordinating and integrating effect on the grid landscape in Europe and have provided a central position for the IT department. The transition to EGI will imply a fragmentation of the grid projects and a reduction of CERN's coordinating role. The IT department has been involved in approximately 10 EC grid related projects² concurrently for the last six years and it is expected that this level of activity will continue even though the total size of the department's engagement in terms of manpower and budget will probably decline. The Project Office (PO) and Collaborating Projects Liaison Office (CPLO³) run by CERN (IT/EGE group) are responsible for managing the EGEE project and overseeing relations with collaborating projects. They are also providing important expertise and support for IT department's engagement in a number of EC projects. This expertise and support covers administrative, financial, reporting and managerial aspects during the preparation, negotiation, execution and completion of the EC projects. The personnel costs of the PO and CPLO are covered by EC funds received from the projects. Unless action is taken now the PO & CPLO will cease to exist when the current batch of EC projects completes during the first half of 2010 with the personnel either leaving CERN or being assigned to other tasks.

Representatives of different groups in the IT department are currently preparing their participation in a number of EC proposals to be submitted in November 2009. IT management needs to have a clear view of its engagement in these proposals and detailed tracking of their progress to ensure they are consistent, complimentary and address the department's programme of work and the needs of WLCG. Consequently it is urgent these functions continue and the scope enlarged during the month of September 2009 so that we can ensure the current set and future proposals are well prepared. Through spring 2010 these functions can continue to be performed by the PO and CPLO and have the associated costs covered by the current projects. Beyond this date a new "home" will be required and the costs should be covered by a fraction of the EC funds attributed to IT department for the continuing and newly approved projects.

Functions

The key oversight and support functions necessary to coordinate IT department's engagement in EC projects include:

- Centralise all necessary information to allow IT department's management to make informed decisions concerning engagement in EC projects

¹ <http://web.eu-egi.eu/>

² <http://it-div.web.cern.ch/it-div/physicscomputing/ECprojects.asp>

³ <http://collaborating.eu-egEE.org/index.php?id=152>



- This will include project descriptions, key documents (proposal and associated forms such as GPFs, evaluation reports, description of work, grant agreement, consortium agreement and amendments etc.), current status, CERN's role and responsibilities, budget and list of personnel resources involved;
- Identify synergies between projects and ensure IT department's engagement contributes to its programme of work and priorities for WLCG;
- Represent IT department in the management structures of EC projects;
- Coordinate IT department's liaison with other departments at CERN for EC-related activities
 - CERN's EU office (DG-EU) to ensure CERN-wide consistency and provide summaries of IT department's engagement in EC projects;
 - DG-RPC-EUT for project budget preparation, tracking and payments;
 - Human resources advisor (HRA) for personnel to be funded via EC project funds;
 - DG-LS and DG-KTT for legal matters concerning grant agreements, consortium agreements, intellectual property rights etc.;
- Liaise with other EIROFORUM⁴ labs for matters related to IT department's activities;
- Liaise with the relevant directorates of the EC and report to IT management on future funding directions and opportunities;
- Archive essential material from completed projects (financial records are archived by DG-RPC-EUT).

Relationship to the CERN EU office

The EU office (DG-EU) led by Svetlomir Stavrev has two staff. Amongst other tasks, the EU office supervises the review and approval process of new project proposals prior to signature by the DG⁵. The EU office has been given the management responsibility for the EuCARD⁶ project (which CERN is coordinating) without the possibility of expanding its manpower. Hence it is unlikely that it will be able to offer a service for the preparation, oversight and support of EC projects to IT department, but will continue to provide guidance and assistance where possible.

Resources

Based on the experience gathered by the PO and CPLO over the last six years, it is estimated that a team of 3 people is necessary to provide the coordination functions outlined above: a senior manager, a deputy and an administrative assistant. It is foreseen that the personnel costs for the deputy and administrative assistant as well as the travel costs of the manager will be covered by a fraction of the EC funds received via the projects. Additional resources are necessary for the management of EC projects that IT department leads and are not included in this estimation.

Next Steps

We are currently gathering all available information about the on-going projects and proposals that will be published (protected) via sharepoint at the start of September and a meeting with all the stakeholders will be organised during the month of September.

⁴ <http://www.eiroforum.org/>

⁵ http://dg-rpc.web.cern.ch/dg-rpc/EU_Procedures_overview.htm

⁶ <http://cern.ch/eucard>