

Minutes for the 3rd I3 Forum Meeting

Attendees

Project	Name
CARE	Roy Aleksan
EC representative	Daniel Pasini
ENSCONET	Monique Henry
EU-Artech	Antonio Sgamellotti
EUFAR	Jean-Louis Brenguier
EUROCHAMP	Prof. Dr. Peter Wiesen
EuroMagNET	J.C.Maan
europlanet	Michel Blanc
HPC-Europa	Francesca Garofalo
HPC-EUROPA	Sanzio Bassini
IA-SFS	Michele Bertolo
IA-SFS	Professor M. Altarelli

Project	Name
ILIAS	Prof. Neil Spooner
Laserlab Europe	Daniela Stozno
Laserlab Europe	Wolfgang Sandner
MNT Europe	André ROUZAUD
NMI3	Julie Bellingham
NMI3	Robert McGreevy
OPTICON	Gerry Gilmore
OPTICON	John Davies
RADIONET	Phil Diamond
SYNTHESYS	Graham Higley
SYNTHESYS	Vanessa Pike

1. Welcome and short summaries

Each I3 present gave a short summary of their project details and current status (see Appendix A)

2. I3 forum proposal

There is a single partner proposal in place to fund an I3 forum. Daniel Pasini informed that this was likely to be funded. This meeting discussed the possible I3 aims as a collective.

There were four primary motives for forming the group:

- To enable us to share experience, find common ground, and be able to approach the commission with a coordinated, single voice on important issues that affect us all. By finding and raising awareness of the problems we face collectively, we can act as a lobbying group to influence FP7, to assist both us and the EC. We can also work to influence ESFRI and the infrastructure roadmap process.
- To exchange best practice for reporting etc.
- To exchange best practice and ideas for dissemination, media communication and public understanding of science. Find the commonality of large infrastructures; work together to publicise why infrastructures are important and the need for long term funding. The SYNTHESYS coordinators have volunteered to assist with this. Graham Higley and Vanessa Pike both work at the Natural History Museum and, as its role is so 'public facing', they have wide experience of dissemination. The possibility of holding an I3 conference was discussed.

I3 forum. Frankfurt airport conference centre, 1st June 2005

- Only a few I3s are based on a common type of problem ('horizontal'), rather than a common type of facility ('vertical'). The market for vertical I3 is probably saturated, whereas there is a potential and a need for expansion of horizontal I3. This will need some change of Commission rules/attitudes towards project overlap (e.g. facilities should be able to offer access through both vertical and horizontal I3).

The floor was opened for other suggestions of how the I3 forum could be useful:

- As national funding is the main source for many facilities, swapping practice on how other types of facility acquire funding outside the I3 would be useful. For example, how to obtain funding for transnational access outside an I3, e.g. bilateral exchange of aircraft time, or exchange of aircraft time for access to some other facility type. It was suggested that, as there are a wide variety of approaches, it may be beneficial to have a small meeting to discuss what works within our fields before FP7. This could be a topic for the large conference on Research Infrastructures to be held in Nottingham, UK, December 6-7.
- Another possibility is common computing, use of GRID, high performance computing. Managing data etc. is a common issue.
- Design studies are also a way of getting a horizontal structure, and these could be investigated in the I3 forum. Daniel Pasini advised that there are no more calls for FP6, which gives some more time to prepare for FP7.
- Discussing the future of I3s and research infrastructure funding and keeping up to date with current news. There were twenty I3s in the first call, and thirteen in the second call. Some current I3s have two ways of progressing into FP7, to expand in size, or to split into smaller I3s. It is felt by the I3 that the size has reached the maximum which is manageable, so that in future there will be more I3s, rather than larger I3s.
- To discuss methods that individual groups use to manage the access programs

A central communication point is required to collect and disseminate all this information. The NMI3 management will act as a central information point for the time being, but this will be devolved to an online forum. **Action: Julie Bellingham**

As the name I3 forum is quite similar to that of EIROFORUM, which also has some overlap of aims, we need to think of a new name. Suggestions should be sent to Julie Bellingham. The name should not be Round Table, as these are not funded by the EC. **Action: all.**

3. Project discussion

The project discussed common problems with reporting. These are detailed in appendix A.

Robert reported that Elena Righi Steele has mentioned a new contract amendment is available for partners who have spent less than 150K€. No audit would be required for these partners. The list of possible contract amendments should be circulated to all I3 coordinators. **Action: Robert McGreevy**

4. Other types of contract

Several I3s have 'sister' design studies, which in some cases are specifically meant to be complementary to the I3 (for example, Opticon, Radionet). NMI3 has a complementary construction project.

5. Commission proposal for FP7 (Daniel Pasini) and I3 input

The commission's proposal was made on 6th April. This will now be debated by member states and the European parliament and hopefully be adopted by June 2006. It is likely a seven year framework programme will not be allowed. The current proposal is for 72.7 Billion € and this will almost certainly be reduced, but the budget should be more than FP6.

FP7 will be organised in 4 specific programmes:

1/ Cooperation (44.4 B€) > collaborative transnational research activities

Support research activities carried out in transnational activities, networking, technology in certain thematic areas.

2/ Ideas (11.86 B€) > Basic research implemented through a European Research Council (ERC)

Support to cutting edge research

3/ People (7.13 B€) > Marie Curie etc

Training, career development, industry-academia, international cooperation

4/ Capacities (7.49 B€, of which 3.96 B€ is research infrastructures)

> facilities, science and society, etc

Infrastructures, research potentials in convergence regions, SME support, science and society

Also have **1.82 B€** budgeted for the **JRC** (Joint Research Centre)

The program for research infrastructures will include transnational access, integrating activities and research e-infrastructure. There will be support for the construction of new infrastructures through a two stage process, preparatory: restricted calls targeting priority projects (based on the ESFRI roadmap, which is distinct from the list of opportunities) and then the construction projects, which will be developed following successful stage 1. One potential mechanism for construction funding, is loans for billion euro construction projects, with the Commission providing insurance against defaulting (risk sharing). The UK delegates noted that UK partners were unlikely to be able to make use of this type of contract.

6 April 2005	Proposal
September 2005	Specific programs proposal
December 2005	First reading at EP
January 2006	Common position at council
March 2006	2nd reading at EP
June 2006	Specific program

As a lobbying group, we can make an impact at the Specific Program stage. It was agreed that before then, we need to have clear points and advice for the EC. We should design a document and present it to the EC, to share our experience in managing infrastructures. The production of the document should start now, as the deadline will be June 2006, when they begin writing the specific program.

The possibility of expanding the access program to include a small percentage of the funds for users from developing countries was discussed. It could be expanded to all countries, rather than limiting to developing countries.

6. ESFRI Infrastructures Roadmap

Robert McGreevy has spoken to John Wood regarding ESFRI. They have set up three subject panels: Physical Sciences, biology/medicine, humanities. These have created a number of expert groups and the chairs of these are known.

ESFRI is not a Commission body, it is composed of governmental representatives. The expert groups are being populated now. This is not being done in a transparent way and there is no clear call for nominations. There is a chance that I3s could be influential; expert groups should at least be encouraged to take input from the I3s. The process for ESFRI may take 2 years, i.e. slower than the FP7 process. There is a list of opportunities from ESFRI of science options but they are not the roadmap, i.e. this was created without external consultation. Development of the roadmap should (hopefully) be different. Lobbying the national representatives of ESFRI is important, so that they take input from the research infrastructures.

Robert McGreevy: provide details of ESFRI committees, and contact details where possible.

The ESFRI website with the list of members is available on the CORDIS:

http://www.cordis.lu/era/esfri_home.htm

7. Actions and future activities:

Have general and specialist meetings for swapping best practice. Information can be collected by e-mail, circulated and discussed separately. Possible future meetings:

- I. Swapping best practice for annual reporting.
Attendees: Those involved in the practical aspects of the I3 management.
- II. Swapping best practice on dealing with national funding bodies
Attendees: Small group with an interest, who represent several countries.
- III. Small working group for interface for dialogue with the commission
Attendees: Nominated group, which covers range of disciplines
- IV. Meeting on public understanding of science
Graham Higley and Vanessa Pike to organise

Other important dates and meetings planned:

- I. Communicating European Research 2005, International Conference Brussels, 14-15 Nov 2005
- II. Conference on infrastructures. (All I3 will be invited). Nottingham, UK 6-7 Dec 2005

Find a new name for the I3 forum. Champagne for the winner! **(Action: all)**

Set up a website for the I3 forum. This involves:

- Collecting names and information about the projects.
- Setting up forum area, so we can swap information online.
- Can include design and construction projects for research infrastructures.
- Formal collection of data about problems we all commonly face (statistically analysed so we can formally present the information)
- ESFRI information: Robert McGreevy will collect together any information available on a biweekly basis and e-mail out to I3 forum members.

Appendix A – Short summary of the I3s present

(NA = network activity, TA = transnational access, JRA = joint research activity)

- Project name:** NMI3
Start date: Jan 2004
Project details: 23 Partners connected with neutron science. 21 M€, 4 NA, 12 TA, 8 JRA
Current status: Going through finance corrections and audits
Specific problems: Underspend, and problems arising from finance rules complications about the reporting period / planning period. We needed audits from even those with zero spend to ensure a second year payment.
- Project name:** ILIAS
Start date: April 2004
Project details: Particle astrophysics. The I3 covers a wide range of physics. 6 NA, 3 JRAs (majority of finance). 1 TA (underground labs). 20 partners, 7.8 M€.
Current status: Just finishing report, missing one audit certificate.
Specific problems: The project is underspent (spent 49%). The funding arrived in June, but money is tied in recruitment, which takes time. Decided to get audits.
- Project name:** IA-SFS
Start date: March 2004
Project details: 16 partners
Current status: Waiting for feedback from report (was sent 10 days ago, due in Feb 2005)
Specific problems: No major problems, access is the main part of the contract, and the project is not underspent.
- Project name:** SYNTHESYS
Start date: Feb 2004
Project details: Project has Access and networking components only
Current status: The report took a long time to submit and is a month and a half late. One partner was a problem for information.
Specific problems: The spending is on track, as there was an anticipated slow start. Not providing audits this year – coasting with amount they have already. Had understanding they could apply for JRA in second call. Rules changed, and was frustrating as the entire point of one NA was to develop the JRA.
- Project name:** HPC – Europa
Start date: Jan 2004
Project details: 11 partners, 14 M€
Current status: Submitted report. Waiting for feedback. Applying for amendment of one of partners (cost model)
Specific problems: None reported

Project name: Radionet
Start date: Jan 2004
Project details: 20 partners 12.4 M€
Current status: Report approved, second year funds on way!
Specific problems: Underspent, but claimed 135% access claimed to make up underspend, and didn't provide audits.

Project name: Europlanet
Start date: Jan 2005
Project details: 40 partners, 2 M€
Current status: New project.
Specific problems: Large number of participants, difficult to manage.

Project name: ENSCONET
Start date: Nov 2004
Project details: 19 partners
Current status: New project.
Specific problems:

Project name: Euromagnet
Start date: Jan 2005
Project details: Access 50% of total (4 M€). 12 partners, all very different.
Current status: New project.
Specific problems:

Project name: EUROCHAMP
Start date: June 2004
Project details: 11 partners, with a new partner (as of last week). Going through necessary contract amendment. M€ budget. 3 networking, 2 JRA. No access.
Current status: No report due yet.
Specific problems: None mentioned

Project name: CARE
Start date: Jan 2005
Project details: Particle physics accelerators, with 22 partners. The project has small associated partners, where the big partner pays small partners. The project is mostly JRAs and has no access. 15.2 M€
Current status: Submitted project in Feb.
Specific problems: Money received in May/June. Can't spend quickly, so first yr everyone underspent. Problem getting to 70% funding. Second payment obtained by adding a second report. Only one partner was required to complete a report to fill the finance gap.

Project name: MNT europe
Start date: Jan 2005
Project details: Microelectronics. 5 partners. 11 M€.
Current status: New project
Specific problems:

Project name: Laserlab
Start date: Jan 2005
Project details: 17 laser partners, 1 non-laser partners, 14 M€ of which 65% access
Current status: have got feedback on budget items
Specific problems: Just over spending limit., so no funding problems.

Project name: EUFAR
Start date: 1st November 2004
Project details: 24 partners, with 15 operating aircraft. 20% networking, 20% to one jra and 60% access
Current status: New project
Specific problems:

Project name: Opticon
Start date: Jan 2004
Project details: 47 partners (inc 8 funding organisations, so 86 labs actively involved in the project) >19 M€ integrated into 45 M€ program.
Current status: Late starting because it took ages to sort out the contract. Have submitted the report, but worried about trivial text corrections.
Specific problems: Issues same as others; no money till September which resulted in cash flow problems and only half of the advance being spent. Admin hassles. One major issue: sci and tech program is constrained by bureaucracy. Resources not used efficiently due to inflexible reporting. The rules were not made clear until after the report submitted (i.e. if any partner submits audit, all must!)

Project name: EU-Artech
Start date: June 2004
Project details: 4.5 M€
Current status: Writing report.
Specific problems: