



Swiss researchers join forces to capitalise on Grids

Geneva, 5 October 2006 –The Swiss Grid Initiative was officially launched last week during the EGEE'06 conference. This initiative aims to bring together the various academic and research institutions involved in distributed computing projects in Switzerland. This will gather all the expertise to support the Swiss research community in making use of Grid technology for applications in need of high throughput and ubiquitous computing. The aim of the initiative is to provide a central hub for collaboration and knowledge dissemination, and to represent the interests of the national research community towards funding bodies, international projects, standardisation bodies and industry.

“This was actually the first time that most players involved in Grid projects in Switzerland came together to discuss this idea,” says Peter Kunszt, from the Swiss National Supercomputing Centre (CSCS), who organised the one-day event. “The level of interest shown was very encouraging and everybody agreed that it is important to bundle our forces on a national level in the Swiss Grid Initiative.”

In total, representatives from a dozen national and international Grid projects were present at the meeting, from initiatives for specific types of applications over Grid technology projects to related infrastructures. Pooling these efforts, the Swiss Grid Initiative aims to become the national driver for Grids, building on the existing structures to eventually provide a national Grid computing infrastructure for the research community in Switzerland. Driven by science and the computing needs of the scientists, the initiative will act as a central point for connecting the various fields involved and encouraging collaboration between computer science and the applications using the Grid infrastructure. The new Swiss Grid Initiative will also represent the interests of the national research community towards other national and international projects and bodies and enable more effective collaboration across borders.

The Swiss Grid meeting was held in the framework of the EGEE'06 conference organised by the Enabling Grids for E-science (EGEE) project. “National Grid Initiatives are very important for EGEE to ensure long-term sustainability of its infrastructure,” says Erwin Laure, EGEE Technical Director. “EGEE is collaborating closely with national bodies around Europe to set in place a structure for administering and managing the Grid to ensure a persistent service for science in the future. We are looking forward to a fruitful collaboration with the Swiss Grid Initiative and wish the project all the best.”

The next step for Swiss Grid will be to formalise the interactions between the different projects involved and to set up the organisational structures involving all interested institutions, with CSCS and SWITCH catalysing the effort. A follow-on meeting will be held later this year.

Notes to the Editor:

1. The new Swiss Grid Initiative targets to pool and structure the efforts for representing the interests of the Swiss academic and research institutions involved in various national and international Grid projects. Projects and organisations involved for the moment are: ChemGrid, Condor Grid, CoreGrid, Diligent, EGEE, Embrace, ISS, KnowARC, LCG, SEPAC, Swiss Bio Grid, SWITCH and CSCS. For more information see <http://www.swiss-grid.org>

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2. The Swiss National Supercomputing Centre (CSCS) provides, develops and promotes technical and scientific services for the Swiss research community on the fields of high-performance and high-throughput computing. CSCS also has the mandate to initiate and to manage at least one national Grid initiative. For more information see <http://www.cscs.ch/>

3. The Swiss Education and Research Network (SWITCH) was established as a foundation by the Swiss Confederation and eight university cantons to create, promote and offer the necessary basis for the effective use of modern methods of telecomputing in teaching and research in Switzerland, to be involved in and to support such methods. It is a non-profit foundation that does not pursue commercial aims. For more information see <http://www.switch.ch/>

4. The Enabling Grids for E-science (EGEE) project is funded by the European Commission and the second two-year phase of the project (EGEE-II) began on 1 April 2006. The project operates the largest multi-science Grid infrastructure in the world with some 200 sites connected around the globe, providing researchers in both academia and industry with access to major computing resources, independent of their geographic location. For more information see <http://www.eu-egee.org/>
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