

TERENA Task Force on European Middleware Co-ordination and Collaboration

Terms of Reference

Final Version

September 2006

1. The mandate of the Task Force on European Middleware Co-ordination and Collaboration is renewed under the auspices of the TERENA Technical Programme to continue its efforts in promoting the development and deployment of open and interoperable middleware infrastructures among national and regional research and education networking organisations and academic and research institutions.

The Task Force will focus its activities on Europe and neighbouring countries and on middleware infrastructures and initiatives operated by research and education networks.

The Task Force will continue to be known as **TF-EMC2** (Task Force for European Middleware Co-ordination and Collaboration).

2. The aims of this Task Force will be:

- a. to provide a forum for exchanging experiences and knowledge.
- b. to promote development and testing of innovative middleware technologies;
- c. to promote the use of common standards and procedures in the middleware infrastructures;
- d. to establish pilot services for the European academic community and, specifically, to run and extend the current TACAR pilot;
- e. to liaise with other middleware activities at international level, such as the Open Grid Forum (OGF) and Internet2;
- f. to promote the actual use of middleware infrastructures at the campuses;
- g. to co-ordinate and provide support to other TERENA activities and task forces and, more specifically, to establish a close cooperation with TF-Mobility on the common goals around federated network resource access.
- h. to co-ordinate and provide support to other joint initiatives and projects and, specifically, to provide a forum for Joint Research Activity "Roaming and Authorisation" (JRA5) in the GEANT2 project to receive feedback on its work from a wider community

3. Over the last years we have been confronted with an increased demand for middleware services, due also to a variety of technologies available.

Giving the high degree of synergy among the activities of TF-EMC2 and those of TF-Mobility (both task forces address middleware issues albeit in different context), a common Steering Committee will be established consisting of members of these task forces. This committee will be known as **ECAM** (European Committee for Academic Middleware). TF-EMC2's representatives in ECAM will be its chair and work item leaders.

ECAM will act as a leadership group dedicated to promote innovative and open middleware technologies and infrastructures. Additional members may be added to ECAM by unanimous agreement of its current members.

ECAM will meet (approx.) every two weeks, using telephone or videoconference. Face-to-face meetings will be held adjacent to regular meetings of TF-Mobility and TF-EMC2.

Reports on the activities of the steering committee and proposals for actions will be presented at TF-Mobility and/or TF-EMC2 meetings.

4. The Chair of the Task Force will be Diego Lopez (RedIRIS), who will be responsible for preparing the agenda of each meeting, and for co-ordinating the work of the Task Force. He will also be responsible for ensuring that the agreed deliverables are produced. Work items can additionally have activity leaders who will be responsible for ensuring that agreed deliverables are produced, and preparing the agendas of any sub-group meetings.

5. The secretary of the Task Force will be appointed by TERENA. He/she will be responsible for taking minutes at each meeting, and for making logistical arrangements as necessary. The secretary of the Task Force will act as secretary of ECAM as well.

6. The Task Force will operate with a 2-years mandate, starting 1 September 2006. A report on the progress of the Task Force and the results achieved will be made at the TERENA Networking Conference 2007. The mandate of the Task Force may be renewed by the TERENA Technical Committee (TTC). If the mandate is not renewed, the Task Force will be dissolved. The Task Force may also be dissolved if the TTC considers that it is making insufficient progress or that its activities are no longer useful or relevant, or if the Task Force chair resigns and no replacement can be found.

7. The Task Force will collaborate closely with JRA5 in the GN2 project, liaise with TF-Mobility through ECAM, and provide middleware assessment to any other TERENA Task Force or JRA within the GN2 project. It will collaborate with organisations outside the geographical area or with a different scope whenever such collaboration will assist in achieving the aims of the Task Force. Once per year a joint meeting with JRA5 and TF-Mobility will be organised to exchange information and disseminate results. Guests from other environments can be invited depending on the items to discuss.

8. The Task Force will be open to any individual or representative of an organisation who can offer appropriate expertise, manpower, equipment or services.

9. The Task Force will meet at approximately four-monthly intervals (although this may be via telephone or videoconference). Physical meetings will be held at various locations, taking care to reduce overall costs to participants. Videoconferencing facilities will be made available whenever possible for these meetings. Videoconferencing shall be the preferred method for any other intermediate meetings, when necessary.

10. Reports and other results of the Task Force shall be placed on the public domain, with the exception of information that is subject to a commercial Non-Disclosure Agreement.

11. The Task Force will have a mailing list (tf-emc2@terena.nl) for communication between the participants. The mailing list archive will be publicly available.

List of Work Items and Deliverables

The following work items are considered relevant to this task force. For those items with appointed leaders, their names are included together with their titles:

1) TERENA Academic CA Repository (TACAR) - *Licia Florio (TERENA)*

The success of the TACAR service (currently available through <https://www.tacar.org/>), both in the NREN and Grid communities, makes it one of the most important focuses of the direct task force activities for the coming years. The work will concentrate on evolving the service, according to the new requirements of the user infrastructures, and continuing the promotion of the service through the projects and groups it can contribute to: EGEE-II, EUGridPMA, GN2, International Grid Trust Federation (IGTF)...

It is envisaged that the TACAR activities will be able to deliver the following results:

- + Availability of the new TACAR services at <https://www.tacar.org/>
- + TACAR policy updated according to the (possible) new user area requirements
- + Annual report on TACAR usage and awareness among the user communities

2) AuthN/AuthZ Requester Responder (AA-RR) - *Diego Lopez (RedIRIS)*

The Authentication and Authorisation Requester-Responder has been used to establish an initial service around it, HelloSAML, available through <http://hellosaml.rediris.es/>, used by AA developers worldwide. AA-RR is a key tool for the validation tests in eduGAIN (the AA infrastructure being built by GN2-JRA5) and is used to validate components in the PAPI infrastructure.

It is envisaged that the AA-RR activities will be able to deliver the following results during the duration of the Task Force:

- + A SAML2-compatible version
- + A refined, more sophisticated, version of HelloSAML
- + Specific profiles for eduGAIN, Shibboleth...
- + A version of AA-RR integrated into the Eclipse development environment.
- + Dissemination materials about the AA-RR

3) Campus AA Middleware Issues - *Torbjörn Wiberg (Umeå University)*

Actual use of middleware technologies in campuses is one of the main challenges for these infrastructures to succeed. Activities in order to reach the necessary pervasiveness in campuses shall be one of the main strategic goals of the Task Force. With respect to this, work will concentrate on:

- a. Collaborating with the EuroCAMP gatherings, maintaining the levels of attendance and satisfaction achieved by the events organised so far.
- b. Improve the awareness of these issues through the liaison with national and international IT practitioners associations, and more specifically with EUNIS.

4) Directory Schema - *Victoriano Giral* (University of Malaga)

The maintenance, enhancement and promotion of the SCHAC schema will be one of the key activities within the Task Force regarding directory schemas. The envisaged areas of activity are mainly related to:

- + Enhancing the individual attributes schema already defined
- + Exploring their applicability in more applications, specially the data mobility space defined by the so-called Bologna Process.
- + Extending the schema to cover other application areas, such as group management and ontology representation.

5) Diagnostic-related Activities - *Miroslav Milinovic* (SRCE)

The growing complexity of network services (including network access itself) has led to a situation where the response to a single user request typically involves services of several infrastructural components. This means that it is becoming increasingly difficult both to offer accurate data to users about the status of a given request, and to provide information suitable for assessing service usage and for spotting possible areas and means of enhancement. It is therefore necessary to harmonise diagnostic procedures, to be able to present a coherent view of operational results to both user and administrators.

The Task Force will liaise with the Internet2 group in charge of the EDDY suite for this purpose.

6) Federation coordination - *Mikael Linden* (CSC-FUNET)

As there are new national identity management federations coming up, it is necessary to formalise the support of the Task Force to the REFEDS interest group (already backed by TERENA and informally meeting during TF-EMC2 meetings), aimed at collecting, disseminating and (when possible) harmonising the procedures and policies followed by the participating federations

7) Collaboration with the Grid community - *Milan Sova* (CESNET)

It is important to assure that the Task Force will not duplicate work of others and that the results produced are compliant with the standards followed by the scientific community, and more specifically with Grid infrastructures. The Task Force will continue its activity in filling the possible gaps by bringing together the NREN and Grid communities.

Periodic reports about the AA results in the Grid community will be presented during the Task Force meetings. It is envisaged that people active in Grid middleware initiatives will continue attending the Task Force meetings.

New deliverables and work items may be added as the Task Force sees fit.