



Governance of Large Scale Research Infrastructures: Tailoring Infrastructures to Fit the Research Needs

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The legal and governance structures of a pan-European large scale research infrastructure (RI) are critical. They shape the very operation of the undertaking - decision making processes, allocation of tasks and resources, and the relationships amongst the various interested parties – and its eventual success is crucially dependent on choosing these structures wisely.

The experience of several examples is used to illustrate how legal and governance schemes for pan-European Research Infrastructures can be used as vehicles to tailor the infrastructure according to its scientific objectives. Indeed, the chosen model can:

- 1) foster multi-disciplinary research by having representatives of different communities deciding on joint programs;
- 2) better coordinate scattered communities, both geographically and thematically, increasing their cooperation;
- 3) implement an innovative Research organization;
- 4) leverage additional funding;
- 5) develop a strong identity and elevate international visibility for the communities served;
- 6) clarify responsibilities, accountability and authority.

The ESFRI roadmap has extended the “classical” concept of single-sited RIs (as exemplified in the field of physics by facilities such as CERN) to that of distributed and virtual infrastructures but these raise new issues, especially regarding data exchange and management. As this concept of infrastructure at a European level is relatively new to the major part of the science community, it is especially important that governance models are thoroughly discussed and carefully adapted to fit the specific needs of each of these new distributed facilities.

Alongside the legal frameworks which have previously been used for existing infrastructures, the European Commission has established a new legal vehicle, the European Research Infrastructure Consortium or “ERIC”, to meet the requirements of the pan-European facilities. It will be shown that this flexible model can be used in a “customized” way to meet the varying demands of different projects.