DeCLARA

Editorial

Cathrin Stöver
International Relations Manager, DANTE

Dear friends,

now, as we are approaching the end of the ALICE project, it is time to reflect a little on the last 70 (!) months of Latin American and European collaboration in CAESAR and ALICE.

We all know the results, but I think I can repeat them once more: Thanks to the catalytic effect and the momentum created by CAESAR and ALICE, CLARA today exists as a functioning organisation and community and RedCLARA has proven to be an asset to the Latin American research and education communities. In the past six years, we have spoken about ALICE, CLARA and RedCLARA in about 500 presentations given around the world. Thousands of interested people have visited the ALICE and RedCLARA websites. The project and its network have been immortalised in brochures and maps, in videos and press releases. We have given interviews, have written resolutions and recommendations, have applied for derogations, we have lobbied and fought. We have taken every hurdle in our way. It has been an extremely successful and efficient use of our time.

Why did it work? There are certainly very many factors that played a role, but I believe that an essential point is the fact that Latin America did not hesitate at all and started the process of self-organisation that led to CLARA long before the ALICE contract was even signed. CLARA enabled Latin America to speak with one voice and it created a high level of identification and commitment. On the other side of the Atlantic, the European partners pushed for the continuity from CAESAR to ALICE and when the ALICE project was finally underway, DANTE was able to provide project management and financial administration and - very importantly - a buffer for the serious financial difficulties that the project encountered in the third year of its life. To my mind ALICE worked so well, because two regional organisations could interact directly, while counting on the full support of their respective communities. This is a lesson learnt that at least I will repeat over and over when talking about ALICE.
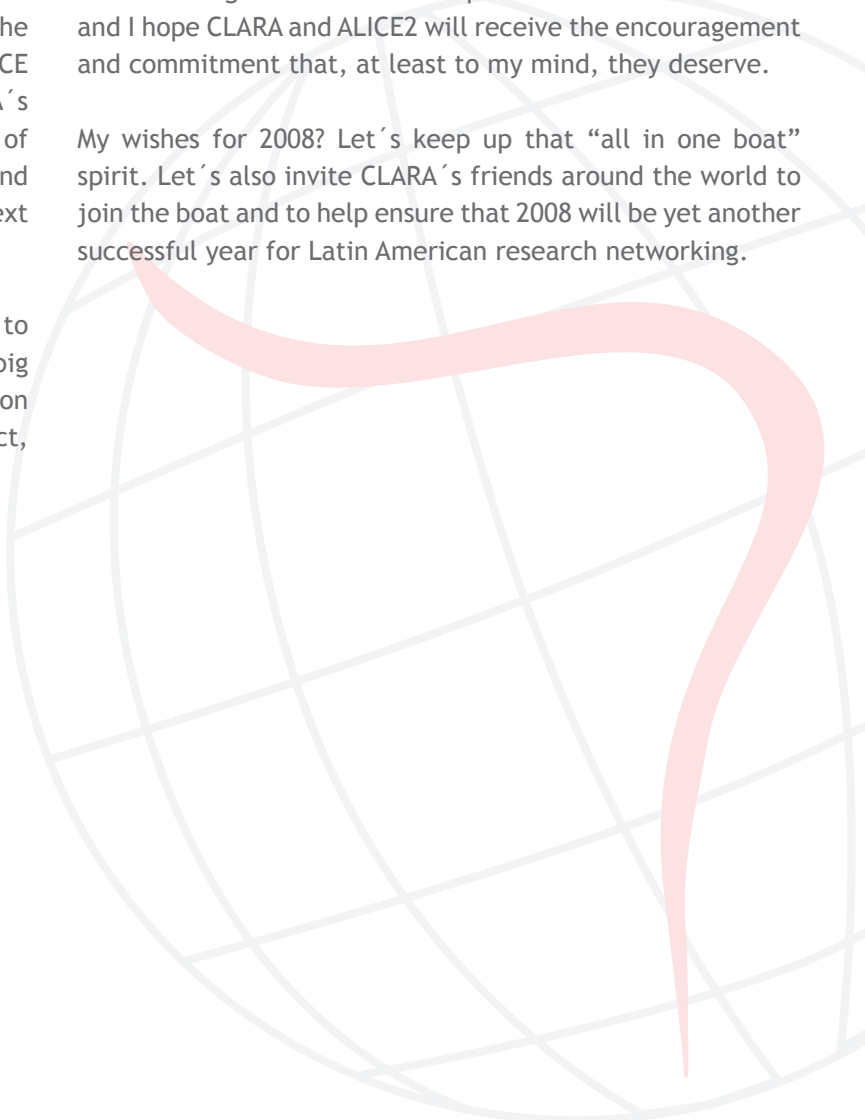
At the same time the CLARA community was created. What I admire most about the CLARA community is the openness of the dialogue and the high level of commitment to the development of RedCLARA. This can be seen in each ALICE and CLARA meeting and also in the meetings of CLARA´s technical community. There really is the general feeling of "all in one boat", a spirit that will ensure that CLARA and RedCLARA will be able to make it through the difficult next year.

Considering ALICE2, what needs to change? I would like to highlight two major points: Surely, it is time for the big change, meaning the handover of the project coordination from DANTE to CLARA itself. Throughout the ALICE project,

CLARA has continuously taken on greater responsibility and it seems clear to me that the next logic step is full responsibility. I am certain that DANTE will remain a steady partner in the project, but our role should be much reduced. From the technical point of view, I believe that RedCLARA will have to mature. Access and backbone capacities will need to be increased. New services, bringing the network closer to the user community will need to be implemented, however, not only in the RedCLARA infrastructure, but also within the connected NREN infrastructures. To that end, I would hope that ALICE2 finds ways of strengthening the Latin American engineering community and that – again - we will be able to count on our European partners when it comes to supporting technical training and development.

A delegation of CLARA will visit DANTE next week to start the preparation of the ALICE2 proposal. By the time of the ALICE2 preparation meeting to be held in Buenos Aires in March a first outline should be ready for discussion with all partners. We will also go and visit the European Commission next week and I hope CLARA and ALICE2 will receive the encouragement and commitment that, at least to my mind, they deserve.

My wishes for 2008? Let´s keep up that "all in one boat" spirit. Let´s also invite CLARA´s friends around the world to join the boat and to help ensure that 2008 will be yet another successful year for Latin American research networking.

ALICE and CLARA:

In full swing in Panamá

All the members of ALICE, CLARA and CLARA-TEC gathered in Panama.

Hosted by the Panamanian network RedCyT at the School of Graduates Centre of the University of Panama, ALICE (Latin America Interconnected with Europe) and CLARA (Latin American Cooperation of Advanced Networks) held six high level meetings between 19 and 23 November 2007, namely: Cyber Infrastructures Workshop (NSF – CLARA), CLARA-TEC Meeting, Technical Training on Optical Networks, CLARA Training on Management (as part of the BID Project), ALICE Project Meeting and CLARA Assembly.

Apart from the strong emphasis put on training and on the discussion around RedCLARA's sustainability, the perfume of nostalgia could be sensed during those five days… and how could this not happen, considering it was the last half-yearly ALICE meeting: thousands of memories, the firm awareness of the transcendental meaning of this project for our Latin America, for our national networks linked to RedCLARA; the certainty of having sailed along the best of routes, and of being near a great port, one which already compels us to think of new courses to face the challenges posed by science, research, technology and innovation. But the date of arrival into port, scheduled for 31 March 2008 (end date of the ALICE Project), will result in the departure of the captain, our dear Cathrin Stöver.

María José López Pourailly

We had anticipated an intense week and it was very intense. It was the third anniversary of the launch of RedCLARA within the context of the 3rd Latin America and the Caribbean – European Union Ministerial Forum on the Information Society, held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) on 22 November 2004. ALICE had to face its last face-to-face meeting with all the project members, and this not only influenced the discussion and decision making agenda aimed at securing RedCLARA's sustainability, it also sealed the farewell of ALICE Manager Cathrin Stöver, a great promoter of the achievements of the network who is already in the post of International Affairs Manager at DANTE. The presence of Kevin Thompson, Head of the US National Science Foundation (NSF) Cyber Infrastructure Programme, at the Cyber Infrastructure Applications in Latin America Workshop organised by CLARA and NSF in preparation for the call of the IRNC (International Research Network Connections), was a great opportunity for researchers and scientists to show the potential of their projects in the most relevant areas of research as well as their need for a greater e-Infrastructure. The technical and management training compelled one to keep concentrated.

Everyday it started raining exactly at noon in the warm Panama City, and during the coffee breaks the corridors of the School of Graduates' Centre at the Technological University of Panama – a member of the Panamanian Scientific and Technological Network (RedCyT) – were used by the thirty technical and executive professionals from the Latin American National Research and Education Networks (NREN) – members of ALICE and CLARA – to discuss RedCLARA's future.

Monday 19th: Cyber Infrastructures Workshop

According to the programme for the week, the activities would start with the Cyber Infrastructure Applications in Latin America Workshop. Prior to this, the Rector of the Technological University of Panama, Engineer Salvador A. Rodríguez G., delivered a welcoming speech where he highlighted the relevance of RedCLARA and the commitment towards technological development in the institutions he is leading. The people present at this ceremony included senior staff from NSF and CLARA, Kevin Thomson, Director of NSF Cyber Infrastructure Programme, Joaquín Guerrero, President of the RedCLARA Board (RAAP, Peru) and Florencio Utreras, Executive Director of CLARA.

The objective of the Workshop organised by CLARA and NSF was to analyse the requirements of those applications for collaboration between Latin America and Europe, which could be very demanding in terms of bandwidth. The activity focused on the next call of the IRNC at NSF. In accordance with the objectives in terms of connection for research networks linking the USA with the rest of the world, in this case with Latin America, the session featured the following presentations (available to be downloaded from CLARA's website):

• Astronomy
Eduardo Unda-Sanzana, Catholic University of the North, Chile
• Oceanography
Francisco Gavidia, Centro American Universidad José Simeón Cañas, El Salvador
• Earth Sciences
Representative from the University of Guadalajara, Mexico
• High Energy Physics
Anibal Gattone, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina
• Climate Change
José Luis Santos, ESPOL, Ecuador
• Pollution
Arturo Zapata, National Engineering University, Peru
• Biodiversity
Dora Canhos, Centre of Reference on Environmental Information - CRIA, Brazil
• Computing Grids
Luis Núñez, University of Los Andes, Venezuela
• WHREN/LILA Infrastructure
Julio Ibarra, Florida International University
• RedCLARA status and projections
Florencio Utreras, Executive Director of CLARA

Considering the relevance of the projects and developments presented at the Workshop and the auspicious relationship and link between RedCLARA and WHREN/LILA (USA), the overall feeling is that after the completion of this activity was a very positive one: the possibilities available for institutions connected to RedCLARA in the next IRNC call are both great and evident.

Kevin Thompson, NSF.

Julio Ibarra, FIU.

Dora Canhos, CRIA.

Florencio Utreras, CLARA Executive Director, and Joaquín Guerrero, President of CLARA, attending the welcome speech given by the Director of the Technological University of Panama, Engineer Salvador A. Rodríguez G.

November 20th and 21st: CLARA-TEC and Management

CLARA-TEC is the forum for technical representatives from the national networks which make up CLARA and is led by the President of CLARA's Technical Commission, Michael Stanton

Attendees during the Cyberinfrastructure Workshop.

• VoIP Work Group
Iván Morales (RAGIE, Guatemala)
• Security Work Group (Animation Audit, GTSEG Commitments 2008, Results of the Audit)
Juan Carlos Guel Lopez (UNAM-CUDI, Mexico)
• Multicast Work Group
Guillermo Cicileo (CLARA, Argentina)
• IPv6 Work Group
Azael Fernández Alcántara (UNAM-CUDI, Mexico)
• Training Work Group
Iara Machado (RNP, Brazil)
• NEG Presentation and Advanced Routing Work Group
Eriko Porto (CLARA, Brazil)
• NOC Presentation and Measurements Work Group
Hans Reyes (CLARA, Mexico)
• Debate on the next CLARA WG for 2008
Iara Machado and Michael Stanton (RNP, Brazil)

(RNP, Brazil). In their meetings they discuss new network technologies as well as the needs and problems of each country in these matters. Still along these lines the Panama meeting served to enhance the work done by the Work Groups (CLARA-WG, led by Training Coordinator, Iara Machado – RNP), which came into existence as part of this forum. They also discuss the strategies that need to be established in order to increase effective participation within the groups.

The agenda covered at the CLARA-TEC meeting was as follows (presentations available to be downloaded from : http://200.130.35.20/indico/conferenceOtherViews.py?view=standard&confId=36):

Tuesday 20th November:

• Words of welcome and reports on the programme for the meeting
Michael Stanton and Iara Machado
• Videoconference Work Group
Daniel Díaz (RAAP, Peru)

Wednesday 21st November :

• Report on the Terena work groups meeting: Federation Peering and Middleware
Iara Machado (RNP, Brazil)
• ARCA Project, federation of multimedia contents–RedIRIS: Project whose main objective is to enhance the dissemination of scientific and educational audiovisual contents developed by universities and research centres (mainly in Spanish). These contents can be direct video, VoD and Podcast.
Via videoconference, José María Fontanillo (RedIRIS, Spain)
• Diagnostic Study of the use of applications in RAU2
Luis Castillo (RAU2 - Uruguay)
• Supercomputing Metropolitan Delta Project
Azael Fernández Alcántara (UNAM-CUDI, Mexico)
• Participation of the CLARA Networks community in the EELA project

CLARA-TEC Meeting.

Ana Lucia Moura (RNP, Brazil)
• RedCyt - Present and Future
• Report on the Art Futura Event, held in Brazil through RedCLARA
Iara Machado (RNP), Eriko Porto (CLARA) and Michael Stanton (RNP)

And while the technicians analysed their networks and the interconnection with RedCLARA, the institutional representatives from the NREN in CLARA analysed the skills that the networks' executive directors must have in order to determine the areas that must be addressed in subsequent training sessions on Management. This was done in the Training Meeting of the BID Project – "Strengthening of Regional Advanced Academic Networks through CLARA as a Regional Public Asset".

November 22nd and 23rd: Technical Training, ALICE Meeting and CLARA Assembly

As can be expected, the Technical Training carried out in Panama was devoted to Optical Networks. The aim was to prepare technicians from the NREN that are members of CLARA – and their partners – in the relevant aspects of the incorporation of optical technologies in academic networks. The issues covered in the training included the potential of these technologies, especially WDM (Wavelength Division Multiplexing), the description of how these technologies integrate with regular technologies, access to optical fibres (by hiring a link or lambdas –optical channels- or by constructing our own cables infrastructure).

The technical training, evaluated as "Good" and "Very good" by the 28 participants, was led by the experts Ricardo Olivares (Technical University Federico Santa María, Chile), Joaquim Fanton (Centre for Research and Development in Telecommunications, Brazil), Eriko Porto (RedCLARA Engineer, Brazil) and Michael Stanton (RNP, Brazil). The presentations featured in the training are available to be downloaded from: http://200.130.35.20/indico/conferenceOtherViews.py?view=standard&confId=36.

And while the technicians enhanced their knowledge in optical networks technology, the members of the ALICE project, together with CLARA's work team, the EuropeAid Officer Simona Misiti and the external consultant sent by the European Commission, Fulvio Casali, were participating in the last schedule meeting –to date – of the ALICE project. As can be expected, the meeting addressed the project's situation as we approach its completion, which is scheduled for 31st March of the present year. The agenda of the meeting focused on the progress made by the Network's Engineering Group, the Network's Operations Centre and by the areas of Management, Projects, Training and Public Relations in CLARA as well as on the state of the national networks that are members of ALICE. They also discussed the budget issue and the future investments, having in mind both the attainment of RedCLARA's sustainability and the onset of the ALICE2 project.

Cathrin Stöver during her symbolic farewell.

It is worth mentioning that as part of the ALICE meeting Nelson Simões, Executive Director of the Brazilian Research Network (RNP), pointed out that thanks to the commitment of his country's Government towards the ALICE project and RedCLARA – which resulted in a considerable financial contribution – RNP will fund during 2008 the organisation of two CLARA meetings in Brazil (both aimed at technicians and Assemble members); the first of these meetings was scheduled for June.

Well, although Simões' announcement, as well as certain good news from DANTE (European institution in charge of ALICE), gladly surprised the audience, the truth is that at the end of the ALICE meeting had a touch of sadness. Sure, because if saying good bye to your friends is hard, saying good bye to Cathrin Stöver was heart-breaking. The fact is that apart from being a great, demanding leader in this project, with strong beliefs and resolution, she was –from the beginnings of that dream called ALICE, which in turn gave birth to RedCLARA- a great teacher who gave us a master class on collaboration, struggle, efficiency and effectiveness. Although they were aware of the fact that the ALICE project's Manager will leave only after its completion and that her departure will not result in a great distance at all, the members of CLARA took the opportunity to show their gratitude and affection [sorry about the frankness] to our dear Cathrin. The meeting room was opened to let in the

technicians in and thus gather the whole of ALICE and CLARA. Joaquín Guerrero and Florencio Utreras asked her to come to the front of the room where, together with all those who shared these two wonderful and, at times difficult, two years they handed her a painting by José Santos Guerra named "Valparaíso". This represents somehow our Latin America.

ALICE meeting.

Emotions were stirred all over the room. Hugs, greetings and good wishes were exchanged, amongst smiles and tears, and with lots of high hopes for the future. Thus, the ALICE meeting ended with all the participants posing for a picture with their arms around each other.

The CLARA Assembly was held in the afternoon of 23 November and there is no need to go discuss this any further into this, since it is clear that the main issue was the future and during the year we will be informing about the news resulting from the discussion.

6th TAGPMA Meeting met all expectations

TAGPMA (The Americas Grid Policy Management Authority) held its 6th meeting in Chile, in the offices of REUNA, the Chilean research and education network. Vinod Rebolledo, President of the Grid Authority, chaired the sessions and talked to CLARA about the attendance of the event, the themes that were discussed, and the difficulties to grant certificates to organisations.

María Paz Mirosevic Albornoz

Between the 6th and 9th November, REUNA (National University Network) hosted the 6th Meeting of the Americas Grid Policy Management Authority, TAGPMA. Three and a half days where collaboration and knowledge exchange among participants were the most important element. According to REUNA's Technical Manager, Sandra Jaque, the meeting was very productive, not only because they managed to cover the entire agenda of previously planned activities, but also because the group worked in a cohesive way, and with the aim of defining the policies which are necessary for the Authority to meet its goal on this part of the world.

The meeting, which was chaired by the President of TAGPMA, Vinod Rebolledo, featured the participation of 13 international representatives: seven from the USA, one from Brazil, one from Mexico, one from Argentina, one from the Czech Republic, one from The Netherlands (David Groep, former President of IGFT – International Grid Trust Federation) and one from the United Kingdom (Jens Jensen, CA Manager of the UK's e-Science Certification Authority - UKCA). The participation of European delegates – a regular feature in this kind of events – represented a contribution not only in terms of the exchange of experiences, but also because the examples of policy establishment and adoption that they presented were clearly taken into account for the establishment of the policies that will rule in America. Four places linked through videoconference closed the circle of participation in this successful activity.

According to Sandra Jaque, apart from being useful for the definition of policies in the area of Grid security, this opportunity was relevant for REUNA in terms of integration and the creation of new bonds: "This gives us the possibility

TAGPMA group.

to relate to other institutions, to explore the integration of communities to work with these Grids, and it also allows REUNA to join the training activities that are taking place".

6th November was devoted to the First Grid Day organised by REUNA. In the event, which was broadcast online, experts from OpenScience Grid, TerraGrid, Texas Internet Grid for Research and Education and TAGPMA, presented information on how these organisations work, explained the services they provide for their associated communities, and discussed about themes such as the incorporation of the commercial sector in Grids, and certainly about security in these environments.

There are two TAGPMA meetings scheduled for 2008: the first will take place in april in the USA, while the second will be held at the end of the year in Venezuela.

The President's Vision

Vinod Rebolledo, President of TAGPMA since 22nd May 2007, talked to CLARA and mentioned the themes discussed at the second meeting he chairs as part of his post. He told us, among other things, that Mexico and Argentina were approved as new Certification Authorities and that in October he was appointed President of the International Grid Trust Federation (IGTF).

Undoubtedly, the goal Rebolledo had in mind in May of "helping TAGPMA's growth not only in terms of the number of members but also in developing policies which boost trust among Grid communities: to provide help in order to promote and encourage accreditation and PKI development – Public Key Infrastructure- in Latin America" is clearly becoming a reality.

Vinod, which topics are you currently discussing in the 6th TAGPMA Meeting here at REUNA?
One of the important topics we are discussing at the meeting is the approval of new CA (Certification Authorities), which is a basically operational task. We have to test the applicants in order to appoint them as CA, thus enabling them to start their operations. At this stage what we do is going over the documents, as in a papers exercise, we discuss on which topics w cannot include in other opportunities. All in all, that is the advantage of face to face meetings. This way we can listen to questions and answer very interesting doubts about the certification documents, what to do in any given case, the full name to be included in the certificate, what information must be included. We put ourselves in hypothetical situations. What happens if...?

What we do basically is to discuss the topics and clarify doubts, and check on requirements. This work in done in teams and you have to work with people. The topic is technology but the CA must work with people and people have different opinions and one is in the middle and has to deal with that: users and those who are going to make use of the certificates. And sometimes users do not agree on the way to obtain a certificate because it takes too long in delivering them. But this is complex because you have to go through several processes in order to issue them: to be sure of whom the users and equipment are, and of course TAGPMA has a lot of members.

Is that the objective of this meeting?
Well, apart from what I mentioned, the objective of TAGPMA meetings is discussing the latest key issues and the

Vinod Rebello.

accreditation process, that is our job. For example, we are now just hours away from accrediting Mexico and Argentina. They are ready and we are going over the last details. Venezuela, which was the region's third candidate, is not yet prepared. We then have other discussions: updating documents and discuss, because we are a group and we have to make sure that the things we say are being done, are actually taken care of. To do this we also rely on the presence of Jens David, who chairs the PMA UK (Policy Management Authority of the United Kingdom) and tells us what they are doing over there and I make suggestions for a more efficient process. We look at what is going on, what seems to be alright and review proposals: why don't we change this name? etc.

Which are the activities specifically being developed in this meeting? Can you tell us?
Well, the documents issue is what we are dealing today. These documents must be approved, and therefore we are going over each one of them, checking that everything is ok. Once checked, we have to send them back to other PMA to be approved and then finally come to us. Then the new

certification authorities will be able to use these documents. This is why it is important to review them carefully until they are completed. Well, basically, this is what we have to do, to encourage discussion and clarify doubts based on the documents.

In preparation for this meeting, on the 6th of November the Grids Open Day was held at REUNA. The event featured three international speakers who represented major American Grid institutions. What is your impression about what happened there?

I think it was a very interesting initiative and I hope researchers in Chile also think it was a good one. I think it is very important to think of Grids under these circumstances, not only in terms of the operations by the Certifying Authorities, because it is necessary to make this kind of publicity in order to be able to show that security in Grids is fundamental and that some processes are bureaucratic for some reason. To know what it means to issue certificates and this kind of activities can help us as a showcase where users understand the processes and are able to have a little patience.

I am aware of the fact that it takes some time to issue certificates, it can be weeks, and people are not used to this, which results in a problem, especially for research providers who are involved in EELA. We are the bottle's neck, because on the one hand we have to issue the certificate for a machine, but then we have to issue it for the owner of that machine and answer the following question: who is the one that operates this machine? This is the bureaucratic thing about it, because lots of actors are involved: universities, those responsible for the machines, the university work groups, etc. I am the one who has to check whether letters are being signed by the proper person, and checking is quite time consuming.

Which are your expectations about this meeting as TAGPMA President?

I expect this to be a good productive meeting, where people who have already attended are satisfied with what we achieved. This is my second meeting as President of this association, but the truth is that I don't do much. There are lots of creative people with more experience than myself in this topic. I just have to control that everything is done on time.

This meeting has been attended by professionals whose contribution is very important, and there are others who participated via videoconferencing. That is the dynamic of these meetings. Discussions never end: during the meeting, at lunchtime, during the dinner, etc.

Why is the 6th TAGPMA Meeting being held in Chile? Is this so because it is one of the newest members?

No, what we try to do is to make it democratic. We try to rotate, once around here, once in the north of Chile, once in the south. This is a convenient thing from the point of view of the travel.

Most of the 20 members are present, except some of those who couldn't make it but who are participating via videoconference. Some European members have also attended something which is a regular practice in this kind of meetings. One of them was David Groep, President of the UK PMA, who in my opinion is the one with the vastest experience in the field. He is even the former president of IGTF (As of October, that position will be my responsibility) and responsible for the delivery of certificates. Jens Jensen from UK e-Science was also present, as well as professionals from the Czech Republic. Greece is also participating via videoconference.

About TAGPMA

TAGPMA is a federation of authentication providers and relatives, commanded by the Policy Management Authority of those responsible for Grid in North and South America. TAGPMA's goal is to encourage trustworthy relationships by means of domains, relationships which require Grid in America and the rest of the world.
http://www.tagpma.org

During the 3rd EELA Conference, the Principal Scientific Officer of the EC DG INFSO, recognized that

EELA is helping to drive the new scientific paradigm shift

The 3rd EELA Conference, actually the last project global face-to-face activity, took place in the Aula Magna of the INFN (National Institute of Nuclear Physic) in the Sicilian city of Catania (Italy), from December 3rd to 5th. With a focus centered in the development and use of grid applications in the most important scientific areas, the event showed that EELA in fact did achieve its main goal: to build a bridge between the consolidated e-Infrastructure initiatives in Europe and those emerging in Latin America, through the creation of a collaborative network sharing an interoperable Grid infrastructure for advanced scientific applications. The bridge was perfectly built and the results are so evident that a new EELA initiative, EELA-2, will demonstrate in the near future the traffic capacity that that bridge can support.

During a videoconference that, during the first day of the Conference, connected the Sicilian island with Brussels, Mario Campolargo, Principal Scientific Officer EC DG INFSO (European Commission, Directorate-General Information Society), highlighted the importance of the EELA Project remarking it's participation in the creation of leading grid-based e-Infrastructures that are strengthening the scientific cooperation between Europe and Latin-America.

María José López Pourailly

At the very beginning of last December the E-infrastructure shared between Europe and Latin America (EELA) project was almost reaching the final days of it's lifetime, and what a better way to end could anyone imagine but the one of presenting all it's achievements through it's final Conference? Yes, EELA is almost ending and the 3rd Conference served as it last global face-to-face activity. And when we say global we really mean it, cause for the first time in two years most of the applications that have been developed over the Grid infrastructure that today -through the RedCLARA network- is strongly linking Europe and Latin America, were presented, and of course all the main EELA achievements had their own space.

In those three days of December EELA demonstrate that it reached it goal and that's why we do not commit perjure when we say that the two well known final words -The End- can be written down in gold.

But it must be clarified, in December 31st at 23:59 EELA did not say good bye and after the countdown the EELA members did not sing the Auld Lang Syne, instead of that they started to prepare themselves to welcome the new phase! How?

Why? Before answering these two questions ask yourself: Who would really like to write The End and close the book of European and Latin-American cooperation after two years of great and strong successes? Of course, the answer is no one. So, not really ending? NO, because the EELA working team is about to start EELA-2 (E-science grid facility for European and Latin American communities), a new phase, a new era, a brand new project and the applications are going to be the key for success.

The Conference

The EELA project had a most than satisfactory final event; the 3rd EELA Conference was more than another grid event, a collaborative space where scientists of the most different and important areas interacted and interchanged experiences and knowledge, driving discussions that will help to define the future of research and e-Science development in Europe and Latin America.

During three days, 42 presentations related to the EELA and related international grid projects –mainly EUChinaGrid, EUIndiaGrid, EGEE, EUMEDGRID- were given to an audience

composed by 55 outstanding scientists and academics of Latin America (LA), Europe, China and the North of Africa. A perfect scenario, a fantastic group of brains, and an absolute compromise with collaboration, were the ingredients that helped this 3rd and final EELA Conference to be a hit, one that has helped to envision the promissory future that the new EELA-2 project will confront.

December 3, 2007, 09:30: Under the direction of Professor Roberto Barbera (INFN – Catania), EELA Technical Coordinator, and with the participation of the main authorities of INFN and EELA: Francesco Porto, Director of Physics and Astronomy of INFN, Angelo Pagano, Director of INF, and Ramón Gavela, EELA Project Coordinator, the Conference was officially launched.
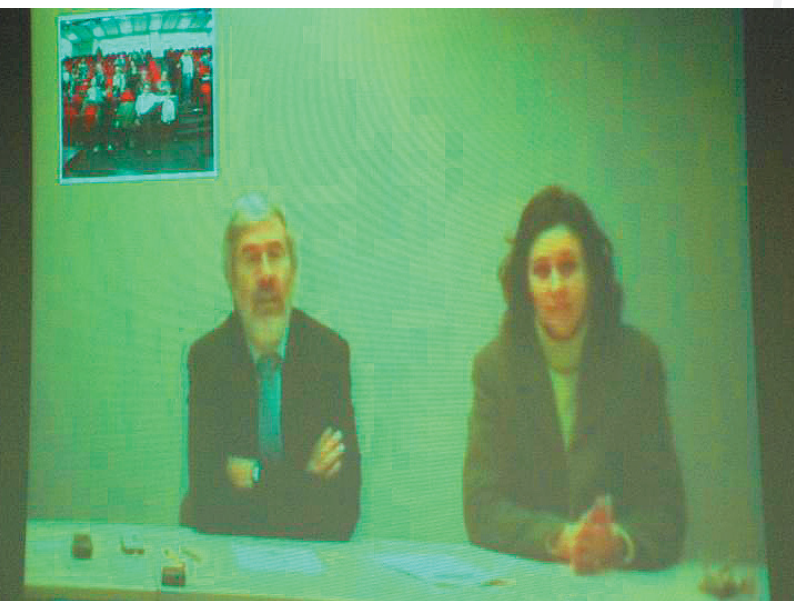
Mario Campolargo stated

From Brussels and via videoconference, the Principal Scientific Officer with the European Commission DG INFSO, Mario Campolargo (who was accompanied by Maria Ramalho, from the Unit of Infrastructure for Research DG INFSO), saluted the EELA Conference attendees and through a presentation highlighted the achievements of the EELA project in the e-Infrastructure arena. Campolargo stated that what the European Commission, through DG INFSO, is doing and the way that they are judging the future is cause "Europe is driving the scientific paradigm shift and we are very proud that Latin-America is participating in that shift. EELA is helping to do this and it is very important for us". The officer highlighted the fact that Latin-America is peering with Europe in creating leading grid-based e-Infrastructures;

Mario Campolargo and María Ramalho, from Brussels.

according to Campolargo, in this scenario "the Seventh Framework Programme [FP7] will be a golden opportunity for strengthening the scientific cooperation between Europe and Latin-America".

And talking about the FP7 and having in mind the three perspectives that the EC Officer pointed as the focus of DG INFSO -1) linking all the facilities at the speed of the light, 3) sharing computers and instruments and applications, 3) share federating scientific data-, regarding the EELA-2 project, he said that "EELA-2 has been appreciated as a good project cause we saw the potential in a global strategy". In words of Campolargo, the EELA-2 project is a big commitment for its partners because it will stress them to be able to make even better contributions -that the ones that EELA has done- in the near future. "The EELA-2 Latin-American countries must be able to build their own National Grid Infrastructures, the establishment of those NGIs will ensure to us the future sustainability and success of the project", declared the officer.

Having in mind that the EELA project -and in the future the EELA-2 project- infrastructure operates over the RedCLARA network, Campolargo took the opportunity to talk about it and about the ALICE2 project, that has been addressed to the FP7 in order to ensure the future sustainability of the Latin-American advanced network that is linking the LA region with Europe via GÉANT2: "Europe has a very powerful consolidated connection [the GÉANT2 Network] that interconnects us with Latin America; a network that is a strong infrastructure for science and for specific virtual communities. Europe is eager to show its attitude and embracing the world scientific communities in order to have a direct connection and collaboration with Latin America, India, Africa, etc. The natural question here is: ALICE and RedCLARA are going to continue? I think that we are in position to say 'Yes', there will be a continuation, but there's going to be a gap in the financing [during 2008]. That gap must be filled by the organization. But we can say that the communities that are most advanced are going to be able to continue in their collaborative work. We very much appreciate the work of our friends in Latin America, CLARA, and in GÉANT. What we are building here is furthermore than supporting project A or B or C, but what we are all doing is establishing a network of solidarity and yes, we are going to be able to continue working together".

At the end of his intervention Campolargo thanked the EELA work team "not just for this meeting but for carrying out this project and succeed. You are taking advantage of the

infrastructure that we have with RedCLARA and its connection to GÉANT, and you are in the right path".

Results and future applications

The presentations given during the first day of the 3rd EELA Conference were related to the EELA achievements and the perspectives of EELA-2. Regarding the achievements, Professor Luis Nuñez from the University of Los Andes in Venezuela was emphatic in highlighting the importance that EELA has had in the Latin-American region, he said: "EELA has changed the way of cooperation in Latin America, the way in which we do science". This same opinion was expressed by María Teresa Dova, academic of the University of La Plata (Argentina) who said that thanks to EELA her country has started to work on an e-Science programme; "we didn't know about Grid infrastructures, and now we are currently participating in very important initiatives, and this has been because of EELA, with EELA we started from scratch and we have been able to succeed", stated Dova.

During the second and third day of the Conference several applications that are currently operating over the EELA Grid infrastructure and some of those that will be benefited from the future infrastructure of EELA-2 were presented. Those presentations were the following (you can download all of them at http://indico.eu-eela.org/conferenceOtherViews.py?view=standard&confId=96):

- A comparison between EELA and EELA-2, Bernard Maréchal (UFRJ/CEDERJ)
- The EELA Project e-Infrastructure update, Diego Carvalho (CEFET-RJ)
- e-Infrastructure: sharing scientific co-operation between Europe and Latin America (videoconference), Mario Campolargo (European Commission)
- EELA infrastructure - a governance case, Rafael Barbastefano (CEFET-RJ)
- EU-ChinaGrid Project presentation, Giuseppe Andronico (INFN)
- BioinfoGRID: Bioinformatics Challenges in Life Science, Luciano Milanesi (CNR)
- EUMEDGrid Project presentation, Federico Ruggieri (INFN)
- EU-IndiaGrid infrastructure at work: applications & results, Stefano Cozzini (INFN)
- e-Science perspectives in Venezuela, Luis Núñez (EELA Member – University of Los Andes - Mérida - Venezuela)
- Progress of Grid technology in Argentina: Lessons learned from EELA, Maria Teresa Dova (National University of La Plata, Argentina)
- Developing a grid infrastructure in Cuba, Daniel López Aldama (CUBAENERGIA)
- Enabling efficient access to ATLAS data for Latin American collaborators, Dario Barberis (CERN & Genoa University/INFN)
- Climate modelling on the GRID - Experiences in the EU-project EELA, Valvanuz Fernandez (University of Cantabria - Spain)
- LEMDist: e-learning and e-science workspace, Jesús Cruz Guzmán (Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, UNAM - Mexico)
- Grid for Mesoamerican Archaeology, Lukas Nellen (ICN-UNAM - Mexico)

Applications, communities and case studies:

- Deployment and Preparation of Metagenomic Analysis on the EELA Grid, Gabriel Aparicio (Universidad Politécnica de Valencia)

Michael Stanton during his presentation.

- GENECODIS-Grid: An online grid-based tool to predict functional information in gene lists, Ruben Nogales (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)
- GrEMBOSS: EMBOSS over the EELA GRID, Cesar Bonavides-Martinez (Center for Genomic Sciences - Mexico)
- Optimizing the configuration of magnetic confinement devices with evolutionary algorithms and grid computing, Antonio Gómez-Iglesias (CIEMAT - Spain)
- The Virtual Institute for Integrative Biology (VIIB), David HOLMES (Center for Bioinformatics and Genome Biology, Fundación Ciencia para la Vida - Chile)
- AQUAGRID: The subsurface hydrology Grid service of the Sardinian regional Grid infrastructure, Fabrizio Murgia (CRS4 - Italy)
- Gridification of the JPEG2000 standard for the compression of Gigabytes satellite images, Sami Khanfir (UTIC - Tunisia)
- Generation Expansion Planning as Particle Swarm Optimization with Gridified SATyrus, Ramón Diacovo (COPPE/UFRJ - Brazil)
- Solving ILP Problems in the EELA infrastructure, Inês Dutra (Universidade do Porto - Portugal)

• How to access databases from EGEE-II grid environment: a comparison of tools and middlewares, Giuliano Taffoni (INAF - Italy)

• Porting of Bio-Informatic Tools for Plant Virology on a Computational Grid, Gaetano Lanzalone (INFN - Italy)

• Events simulation production for the BaBar experiment using the grid approach content, Armando Fella (INFN - Italy)

• Distributed Analysis Experience using Ganga on an ATLAS Tier2 infrastructure, Farida Fassi (IFIC-CSIC-UV - Spain)

• Experience running an ATLAS distributed Tier-2 and an Analysis facility infrastructure Tier-3 for ATLAS experiment at IFIC-Valencia, Santiago Gonzalez de la Hoz (IFIC - Instituto de Fisica Corpuscular Valencia - Spain)

• Experience with Large Scale Simulations on the EGEE Grid for the AUGER collaboration, Jaroslava Schovancova (CESNET – Czech Republic)

• LiveWN: CPU scavenging in the Grid Era, Fotis Georgatos (National Technical University of Athens - Greece), Giannis KOURETIS (National Technical University of Athens)

• VOMS Server replication process in I2G and EELA Project, Bruno Silva (LIP - Portugal)

• Grid monitoring in EUChinaGrid infrastructure, Lanxin Ma (CERN/IHEP)

• Operating a Transatlantic Grid Infrastructure, Alexandre Duarte (CERN/UFCG)

e-Infrastructures case studies:

• Network support for e-Science in Latin America, Michael Stanton (Rede Nacional de Ensino e Pesquisa - Brazil)

• gLibrary/DRI: A grid-based platform to host multiple repositories for digital content, Raul Ramos Pollán (CETA-CIEMAT - Spain)

• Robust and Resilient Services – How to design, build and operate them, Patricia Mendez Lorenzo (CERN)

• Toward a Grid Workflow Formal Composition, Leila Jemni (Faculty of Sciences of Tunis)

• A Worldwide Production Grid Service Built on EGEE and OSG Infrastructures – Lessons Learnt and Long-term Requirements, Patricia Mendez Lorenzo (CERN)

• GENIUS/EnginFrame Grid Portal: VOMS Proxy creation, new features and enhancements, Valeria Ardizzone (INFN - Italy)

• EELA Grid infrastructure MPI support, a success case, Pedro Henrique Rausch Bello (UFRJ - Brazil)

• Interoperability studies between the GTRS and EUMEDGRID e-Infrastructures, Heithem Abbes (UTIC - Tunisia)

• Grid Technology and Quality Assurance, Adriano Rippa (Engineering Ingegneria Informatica S.p.A. - Italy)

Most of the applications presented during this Conference, will have an important place in the EELA-2 project that will have its Kick-off Meeting during April of 2008 in the city of Trujillo in Spain, where the CETA CIEMAT (leader institution) is placed.

Attendees of the 3rd EELA Conference.

5th Global Forum on Traumas Caused by Traffic Accidents was broadcast by RedCLARA

Chile, Brazil, the University of Toronto in Canada, the University of Southern California and the World Bank (from Washington DC) participated in the activity, which was held on 5th December through videoconference. Organised by SICOT (*International Society of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology***), the Forum was broadcast online via video on demand.**

María Paz Mirosevic Albornoz

As a way of achieving a better understanding of the problems in some Latin American countries in relation to overcoming traumas caused by traffic accidents, the International Society of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology, SICOT, organised the 5th Global Forum on Traumas Caused by Traffic Accidents. Through this activity, the idea was also to determine the most important traumatology issues in each of the participant countries, as well as to develop guidelines which provide a solution for such problems.

SICOT intends to create aid programmes for Latin America through the creation of opportunities for collaboration with the American advanced network Internet2, the World Bank's Global Development Learning Network, and the American government agencies which deal with security issues associated with traffic accidents.

The videoconference was chaired by James P. Waddell, MD, Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Toronto and President of the Global Forum on Traumas Caused by Traffic Accidents, who began by presenting the rooms connected in Brazil. The Brazilians expressed their concern about the great number of accidents caused by motorbikes (first cause of accidents in this country), the lack of inspection for drivers under the influence of alcohol, the scarce education of pedestrians and the insufficient public transport infrastructure, which forces citizens to use their cars to move around (only in Sao Paulo there are more than 5 million cars circulating every day), thus increasing the chances for accidents to occur. Besides, the doctors from that country mentioned the lack of resources to treat traumas caused by traffic accidents, which have been on the

increase in recent years, thus becoming, in his opinion, an "epidemic".

The second turn for participation in the event was for Chile. The first to speak was the Head of Management Control and Planning at CONASET (National Commission on Trasport Security), Ignacio Nazif, who talked about the initiatives being developed in this country in order to reduce the number of traffic accidents. Among the prevention programmes, Nazif pointed out to the ones that are being developed by the Ministries of Education, Health and Public Works. He referred to a pilot programme which aims at educating children between the ages of 6 and 15 in order to improve their habits as pedestrians (according to the studies conducted, pedestrians are responsible for the majority of traffic accidents in Chile). He also mentioned the research conducted to determine the causes of accidents, the national initiatives to award private companies with contracts to maintain roads, and other programmes to promote the use of seat belts and special chairs for infants or campaigns to encourage people not to drive if they are drinking alcohol or to tell people to drive with their lights on if they are on a motorway, among others.

Doctor Manuel Gasic represented traumatology doctors from Chile. He highlighted the importance of the Rescue Systems programme, which has been taught in Chile since 1977. This programme gives doctors the guidelines to act in an efficient and effective way in the face of traumas caused by traffic accidents.

Next to this, Professor and MD Leroy Heinrichs from the University of Stanford referred to the great issue of driving and drinking alcohol, which is common at a global level among people between 18 and 26 years old. Then it was the turn of Chadwick F. Smith, President of SICOT – active participant in

the interactive education activities on Orthopaedics at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles – who stated that the medical problems of traumas caused by traffic accidents have alarmingly increased, doubling the number of deaths in the last two years. F. Smith went in depth into the influence that doctors must have when developing policies, remarking on the need to put pressure on the authorities and the population.

From their corresponding perspectives, David Gray, Regional Coordinator of GDLN and Kevin Bialy, Officer of the International Programme for the Western Hemisphere in the USA National Institutes of Health, together with the Chair of the videoconference, motivated participants to send proposals that by showing the needs of each country can serve to develop programmes which offer effective and positive results for problems related to traffic accidents.

The event ended with the presentation by a group of researchers from the University of Stanford, headed by Dr Parvati Dev. They have developed a digital programme aimed at teaching Anatomy. Digital Anatomy features CD ROMs, online presentations and high resolution images – among other things. Considering the lack of corpses for study in several universities, this was appreciated by the participants as an excellent tool which should be included in the Medicine curriculum. More information on this programme and on the access to some of its free of charge applications can be found on the website of the American advanced network Internet2 (http://www.internet2.edu/health/anatomyBOF.html).

The invitation to participate in future global forums on Traumas Caused by Traffic Accidents is open to all those who are interested. The dates of these events will be regularly and timely published on CLARA's website.

More information:

Video of the 5th Global Forum on Traumas Caused by Traffic Accidents:
http://sg60.oar.net/eHealth_Archive/?page=2#archive (go to end of the page).
SICOT: http://www.sicot.org
GDLN: http://www.gdln.org/
NIH: http://www.nih.gov/

Regional collaboration:

ALFA III Programme announces it will launch its call for proposals

ALFA III, the collaboration programme between Higher Education Institutions (IES in Spanish) from the European Union and Latin America, invites all the countries participating in the programme to submit their applications.

María Paz Mirosevic Albornoz

The call fro proposals is scheduled to be launched at the end of January 2008 under the general objective stated by ALFA III, which is "to contribute to the development of the Higher Education sector in Latin America, through the collaboration between the European Union and Latin American countries, thus contributing to the region's economic and social development in general, and to a more balanced and equal global development for the Latin American society in particular". The Programme, depending on the European Commission's EuropeAid Collaboration Office, summons the participation of the networks from higher education institutions (IES), and other relevant networks from the collaboration sector, to prepare applications for this grant which will be allocated as part of the collaboration programme for higher education in Latin America.

The Programme will be developed around the following priorities defined by EuropeAid:
- "Reform and modernisation of Higher Education institutions and systems in the beneficiary countries";
- "Quality, access and relevance of Higher Education in the beneficiary countries";
- "Framework in which qualified human resources are developed in the region, particularly taking into account the less favoured or vulnerable groups, as well as the poorest countries in the region";
- "To support Higher Education Institutions and other relevant actors in order to move forward in the creation of a common Higher education area in Latin America";
- "To promote collaboration and the establishment of sustainable networks and relations between Higher Education institutions in both regions";

The Programme is divided into three different components (lots), which are complementary and will be implemented in parallel. Each component will respond to specific sectors or priority themes and will be executed through the different actions or projects established by the networks from the selected institutions. The identified components are: I. Joint Projects, II. Structural Projects and III. Associated Measures. To access the call for proposals please visit: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/funding-opportunities/awp2008/latin-america_en.htm

Submission of proposals is open to: EU member states and the following 18 Latin American countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The indicative budget for the Call for Proposals will be €19.340.000 EUROS

The ALFA Programme

The ALFA Programme started out in 1994 with the objective of strengthening collaboration in the field of higher education. The programme co-funds projects aimed at improving the capacity of Latin American higher education institutions (universities and other organisations) and promoting academic collaboration between both regions.

The first phase, ALFA I, with an EC contribution of € 31 million, was developed until 1999 and involved 1064 institutions working on 846 micro-projects.

The second phase, ALFA II (2000-2006), with a total of 10 rounds of selection, featured an EC contribution of €54.6 million, distributed in 225 approved projects, which were implemented by 770 institutions distributed in three networks made up of an average of 9 institutions from Latin America and the European Union.

Conversations after the ICFA International Workshop:

Undoubtedly, collaboration structures are required

During four days, scientists, academics, and representatives from networks and projects worldwide gathered in Mexico for the ICFA International Workshop in order to present the state of networks in both developed and developing countries with the intention of joining efforts to achieve the realisation of collaborative and integral work in the area of High Energy Physics. But beyond the actual results of this event, the participation of representatives from CLARA and its member networks created the opportunity to start a discussion that we believe will determine the future development guidelines in both RedCLARA as well as the countries connected to it: we are talking about the development of e-Infrastructures and computing Grids.

María Paz Mirosevic Albornoz

The Iberoamerican University in Mexico City was the venue for the ICFA International Workshop on issues related to Digital Divide for Global e-Science, which was held between 24th and 27th October 2007. It is important to point out that the stated mission of ICFA_SCIC (International Committee on Future Accelerators – Standing Committee on Interregional Connectivity) is to monitor and review the interregional connectivity and High Energy Physics requirements, and make recommendations for networks improvements.

In accordance with the foundational guidelines of the summoning institution, the event's main objective was to review network and Grids developments carried out in the different regions among the High Energy Physics groups in developed areas and in the laboratories where they conduct their experiments, as well as their collaborations with other nations, in order to identify the key problems and discuss the means to develop effective solutions and try to solve the Digital Divide problem.

This objective has become a crucial requirement for physics from developed regions, who need substantial improvements in their national and international networks connections since, without this, they cannot make significant contributions in their experiments. This is the reason why the ICFA Workshop has become a fundamental opportunity, both for developed and developing countries; the first must support the latter and vice versa in order to achieve concrete results and thus make progress possible.

The results of the event demonstrated that collaborative work is the most important thing in this field, explained

REUNA's (Chilean NREN) Project Manager, Marcela Larenas, who attended as guest and as representative from her institution. According to Larenas, it is in this kind of events where collaboration structures for integration come into being, and this is precisely the concern and problem for professionals involved in these topics, "this concern could be seen in the workshop, I would say that it was an evident declaration of conviction, that is to say, there is no doubt that work must be collaborative and integral".

The attendance of researchers and representatives from networks and projects round the world is an accurate reflection of the interest existing everywhere to work in collaboration, specifically in this field. The event was attended by Joaquín Guerrero, President of CLARA and member of RAAP (Peruvian NREN), Michael Stanton, Representative from RNP (Brazilian NREN) and member of CLARA's Technical Commission, Carlos Casasus, Executive Director of CUDI (Mexican NREN) and Vice-President of CLARA, Marcela

Marcela Larenas, Project Manager of REUNA.

Larenas, Project Manager at REUNA, Cathrin Stöver, ALICE Project Manager and International Relations Manager at DANTE, as well as other representatives from networks and scientists from Korea, the USA, from the EELA and EGEE

projects, and from other projects in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

The Latin American Presence

The attendance of representatives from Latin American networks, such as the ones in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru, served as an opportunity to show what is being done in each of those countries in terms of Infrastructure for High Energy Physics work.

Michael Stanton, Brazilian NREN (RNP) representative and member of the CLARA Technical Commission.

The importance of RedCLARA in order to improve the connectivity situation within the region and with Europe and the USA was discussed at the event. According to Marcela Larenas, this opportunity served to collect information on the current state of networks and of collaboration in the development of e-Infrastructures.

Michael Stanton, in turn, recognises the existence and participation in the Grid computing activities and in projects between the different regions participating at the event. However, he states that most Latin American countries have clear limitations in their connectivity access. According to Stanton, Cuba is an example. It is completely isolated, which makes it practically impossible for this country to take part in international collaborations. Along these lines, Stanton highlights the work done as part of the EELA project, which has succeeded in introducing Grid technology in many countries in the region, including Cuba.

Michael, how can we improve, in the future, scientific collaboration between Europe and Latin America?
I hope the networks in our region continue to improve their connectivity and their capacity.

On the other hand, serious scientific collaboration, based on intensive computing, will continue being affected by the great differenced in the network infrastructures.

CLARA represents the hope that some of these differences can be counterbalanced by actively looking for partners for the construction of optical network infrastructures, thus providing great capacity associated to reasonable costs. In the particular case of Chile and Argentina, the presence of world class astronomical observatories will make them become leaders in the improvement of network infrastructure. This is what happens with the demand that arises from the users in global development.

In any case, RedCLARA's role will be fundamental in order to achieve better network infrastructures and improve connections for universities and research centres, and thus develop e-Science activities in our region.

The future of connectivity in America

The President of CLARA, Joaquín Guerrero, also referred to what happened at the Workshop and, specifically to the role of the Latin American Cooperation on Advanced Networks and its importance within the region in terms of connectivity and collaboration.

Joaquín, how did you see CLARA, in terms of its participation at the ICFA International Workshop?
The Workshop provided a space for the analysis of the so-called digital divide in Latin America, showing how High Energy Physics and other scientific disciplines can favour the region's development and, undoubtedly, CLARA was presented as a strategic tool for the achievement of collaborative work with and between researchers in the region, as demanded by the scientists attending the event. The amount of data that must be managed in High Energy Physics research is huge. This is why it is necessary to make use of distributed systems like the Grid and Cluster outlines, which require high performance networks such as advanced networks.

Joaquín Guerrero, President of CLARA.

Regarding what happened in Mexico, are Latin American networks sufficiently incorporated in Grid technology?
Within the context of the analysis of digital divide in the region, the situation of the Latin American networks was addressed at the meeting in Mexico. We saw that among the various exclusion divides affecting the majority of our countries, the most outstanding is the digital divide existing between the countries within the very same region, and even within some of these countries, for instance, in terms of research. Regional research, except in a few countries with significant indexes, is incipient, very

poor and is limited to one or two areas of development which are regarded as transcendental for the country, and whose studies are generally carried out thanks to the initiative of a few scientists who obtained their PhD in highly developed countries.

As for the specific question, except in a few countries, we cannot say that Latin American national networks are incorporated in the Grid technology. To back up this statement we just need to look at the bandwidths available in the networks, which are insufficient to actively and efficiently participate in scientific research based on collaboration through Grids work.

How do you see the future of Latin American networks regarding scientific collaboration and Grids and e-infrastructures development?
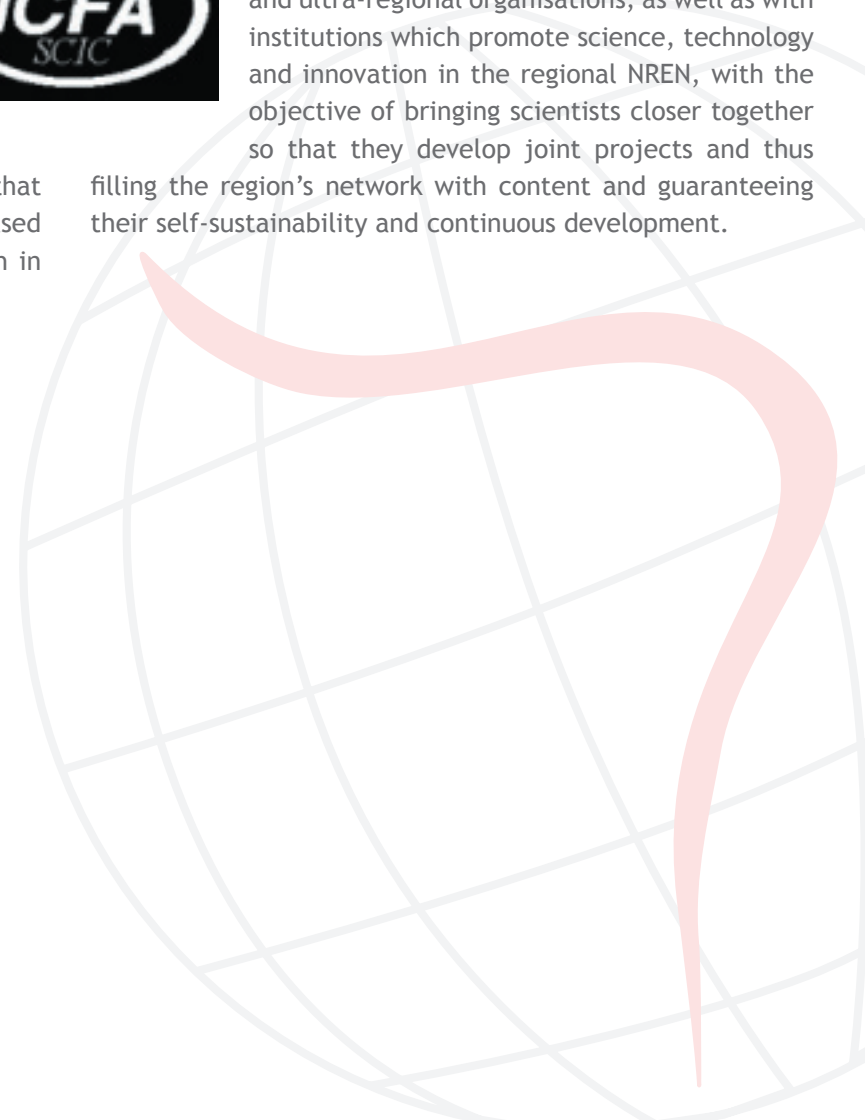Those of us who have directly or indirectly worked in the development of science and technology must always see the future with optimism. But after seeing the interest in taking measures to support science development in Latin America, as showed by the scientists participating in the Mexico meeting – I mention Harvey Newman, Professor of Physics at Caltech, as an example -, I believe that optimism has a real lifeline. This expectation is increased by the attention showed by CLARA to promote research in

areas which require advanced networks; projects developed with BID and some presented to the OAS, aim at bringing scientists within the region closer together and carrying out joint initiatives based on Grid technology. CLARA's second stage aims at the growth of RedCLARA's capacity, as well as that of the NREN which make up the regional network. We expect that in 2008 these will result in the e-Infrastructure required by our academics and scientists.

What are the challenger for CLARA in relation to advances in infrastructure and scientific collaboration?
Although CLARA's main objective is the development of an advanced network infrastructure for Latin America which satisfies the needs of academics and researchers in the region, our organisation must not forget to foster collaborative research through RedCLARA. In this sense, as I said when answering the previous question, CLARA is developing projects along these lines. We have to work together, with regional, Pan-American and ultra-regional organisations, as well as with institutions which promote science, technology and innovation in the regional NREN, with the objective of bringing scientists closer together so that they develop joint projects and thus filling the region's network with content and guaranteeing their self-sustainability and continuous development.

APEC TEL held its 36th Meeting in Chile

The thirty-sixth meeting of the APEC TEL Work Group started on Sunday 21st October at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Santiago de Chile and lasted until the 26th of the same month. The event, which gave origin to a lot of expectations after eleven years since the last time it was held in this country, was developed through structured meetings focusing on three specific groups – Liberalisation, ICT Development and Security and Advancement – plus a plenary session with all of them gathered together.

María Paz Mirosevic Albornoz

Santiago de Chile hosted the 36th Meeting of the APEC's (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Telecommunications Workshop. Chile's Deputy Minister of Telecommunications, Pablo Bello, said he was glad that Chile hosted such event, since this country shares the objectives of TEL (Telecommunications and Information Work Group) in terms of making improvements in telecommunications and information infrastructure in the region, so as to facilitate effective collaboration, free trade agreements and investment, as well as sustainable development.

The Telecommunications and Information Work Group, which started out in 1990, is committed to improving telecommunications and infrastructure in the whole Asia-Pacific region. The work currently done by the TEL is reflected in three groups, whose objective is to implement and monitor projects and activities. Each group addresses issues in the areas of: Liberalisation, ICT Development and Security and Advancement. The 35th APEC TEL meeting was held in the city of Quezon in Manila, Philippines, between 22nd and 27th April 2007 and all the documents presented in that opportunity are now published in the APEC TEL website.

According to Bello, this meeting raised lots of expectations since the last time that Chile hosted the APEC TEL was in 1996. The representative from the Chilean government in technology development issues said that Chile positively receives the progress made by TEL in terms of the liberalisation of the telecommunications market, the mutual recognition of the telecommunications teams, the development of broadband, e-Government, e-Commerce, interconnection, internet traffic, models for promoting great ICT developments, the

construction of human capacity, cyber security and other topics.

Apart from the meetings and sessions already mentioned, the activity also featured the Task Force MRA Practical Course, the Investment and Competitiveness Workshop, the Cyber Security Workshop, Universal Strategy Services and the Industry Round Table.

All the presentations from the 36th APEC TEL are available to be downloaded online from the URL: https://www.apectel36.cl/prontus_apectel/site/edic/base/port/home.html.

Learning and teaching with new tools:

Results of the Second LACLO Conference in Chile

Between the 22nd and 25th October 2007, Santiago de Chile became the Latin American capital of Learning Objects. In this article we refer to what happened during those three days and analyse the state of development of Learning Objects in the Latin American region.

María Paz Mirosevic Albornoz

Santiago de Chile hosted the 2nd Latin American Conference on Learning Objects, organised by the Faculty of Physic and Mathematical Sciences of the University of Chile, the Latin American Community for Learning Objects (LACLO), the APROA Programme, the Austral University of Chile, the Higher Polytechnic School of the Coast (ESPOL) in Ecuador and the Latin American Cooperation of Advanced Networks (CLARA). It was sponsored by the Virtual University and Santander Universities, and was under the aegis of REUNA (Chile's National University Network), the ARIADNE Foundation and CONICYT (National Commission for Research, Science and Technology, Chile).

The focus of this second meeting was on the Learning Objects (Los) technology. As already known, these have emerges as an alternative to create, store and retrieve information, thus enriching the possibilities of both teachers and students through the access to distributed resources banks distributed in repositories located in different parts of the globe. This new possibility for knowledge transmission and reception has been revolutionary and its potential is unthinkable. However, Latin America had to deal with a great issue: the scarceness of contents in Spanish, which has made it impossible for institutions to effectively address and make use of the tool.

LACLO 2007 was officially opened on 23rd October, in a ceremony headed by the Academic Vice-Chancellor of the University of Chile, Iñigo Díaz, the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematical Sciences, Patricio Aceituno, the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Agronomical Sciences, Fernando Santibañez, and Xavier Ochoa, Coordinator of the LACLO Network in Guayaquil (Ecuador). Dr Santibáñez highlighted the fact that this second version of LACLO "will help enormously to understand, discuss and exchange knowledge in relation to Learning Objects, which will contribute towards the understanding of education supported by their equipment.

The Academic Vice Chancellor of the institution that hosted LACL2007 referred to the new stage of Chilean education, which – he said – "is marked by great challenges in terms of working with information technologies". Along these lines, Díaz highlighted the commitment of his institution: "The University of Chile took over the commitment to work towards the strengthening of capacities in the field of education, and this is a real and concrete opportunity to develop the Learning Objects topic as support for technology-based education".

The guest speakers in this meeting were; Baltasar Fernández Manjón, Director of the e-Learning Research Group and member of the Spanish Committee for e-Learning Standardisation of the Complutense University in Madrid, and Eric Duval, Co-President of the ARIADNE Foundation, Technical Editor of Learning Objects Metadata (LOM) and professor of the Hypermedia and Data Base Research Unit at the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium). The knowledge that both speakers provided through the presentation of their experiences, was an excellent example of what the best practices are in developed countries in terms of the use of technological tools for teaching and learning processes.

Complutense University in Madrid, an example to be followed

Baltasar Fernñandez encouraged those present at the Presentation called "Critical View of Educational Standards", in which he put special emphasis on the importance of finding methodological strategies to achieve good quality education. These guidelines – which become needs when establishing a strategic plan within the Learning Objects topic – perfectly complement thanks to standards, which are basically guidelines to implement the creation, use and delivery of contents.

Based on the experience of the Complutense University in Madrid (UCM), specifically on the Virtual Campus created four years ago by this institution, the speaker explained that today they have a total of 85 thousand students and more than three thousand teachers who deliver their lessons through the Learning Objects modality. A concrete example of the impact that the Virtual Campus has had on UCM is the fact that the School of Law is delivering – for the second consecutive year – the career of Law absolutely through the e-Learning modality.

As a result, there is a greater validation of time and work, both the students' and the teachers'. "We must understand technology as a tool to help teachers. It is their responsibility [the teachers'] to put into practice the greatest amount of tools, such as Learning Objects, in order to deliver top-quality knowledge and contents to students", explained Fernández.

As for the application standards to achieve quality platforms, such the one implemented at UCM, the expert pointed out that these standards must have certain characteristics which make them appropriate for a better contents concentration: they must be tools that re useful for teachers; they must involve the least possible amount of effort (developing user friendly platforms and instruments); they have to be attractive to students and finally, they must be easily interchangeable between the various technological programmes.

In order to achieve this, Baltasar Fernández put special emphasis on the standardisation of protocols, so as to get a good course structure and content packing: "Contents must be structured like the table of contents in a book, all of them united so that the objectives offered by this educational resource are of excellent quality and help the process of acquiring knowledge".

Snowflake Effect

The second expert who shared his experience at LACLO was Eric Duval, who made a presentation on the "Snowflake Effect". Duval insisted on the importance of teaching in a better way so that students learn in a better way, since according to his thesis this is the key to solve the great problems of today's world. Based on this objective, he explained the importance of approaching the students' particular needs, which has to do with the teachers getting closer to them. This is where the concept of snowflake was born. This – according to Duval – is based on the fact that each snowflake is unique, which is the same that happens with students.

The snowflake effect consists in delivering the right content to the right person at the right moment, based on a context and with a clear path, which must not be confused with perfection, according to Duval. We must understand that today's students live in a completely different way compared to the way their teachers lived, and they have grown up with snowflake; for them everything is personalised, their music and television channels, access to Internet and many other activities which make them feel as if their days were longer than 24 hours. For this reason, teaching must focus on treating students in an unconventional way.

In order to demonstrate what he explained, the expert showed a serried of examples that he uses in his university. In practical terms, in order to achieve this new way of teaching it is necessary to create platforms where to make available for students all the information on their classes, teachers, assignments and all related material, so that they are able to use tools according to their own reality. Besides, this platform can be used by teachers to contact each other and thus access the best formulae and tools.

Duval acknowledged the importance of LACLO and the good reception that this community has had in Latin America. He remarked that it is crucial to continue helping the dissemination of Learning Objects technology advances and benefits. He also summoned all teachers to help in the creation of this e-Infrastructure, where there must be a great level of participation and a great deal of contents, so as to achieve the snowflake. If there are so many applications

LACLO 2007
2da. Conferencia Latinoamericana de Objetos de Aprendizaje

Santiago de Chile, 22-25 Octubre 2007

for other sciences, why should this not be he same for teachers?, asked Duval at the end of his talk.

The slow but safe progress of Latin America

Although the issue of accessing resources banks distributed in repositories located in different parts of the world is, for Latin American countries, the greatest hurdle on their way, it is a fact that this region is making progress, even if with little visibility, as explained by Carmen Gloria Labbé, Training and Knowledge Management Manager at CLARA. This progress has to do with the existence of LACLO, which has allowed us to get to know about very interesting and valuable experiences in many countries. Labbé highlights the cases of Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, Chile, Ecuador and Brazil, and now she says that the challenge is to be able to structure the projects in these countries in order to become involved in initiatives abroad and thus establish synergies and optimise resources.

Carmen Gloria, what incentives does Latin America lack in the area of Learning Objects?
The articulation between research groups is an issue that certainly makes it possible to create and transfer knowledge in a significant way. It is also important that Learning Objects technology is better known, as well as its potential as an educational resource and its use. On the other hand, since the development of Objects implies significant resources, it is fundamental that, besides articulation between different initiatives, there are incentives or support programmes at governmental and regional level, both for the production of Objects as well as to conduct research on this matter. The case of Colombia is outstanding. In that country there is a national repository which is part of a strategy of the Ministry of Education.

Which projects do you think are an example and could be worth highlighting for the community?
We can see the Venezuelan case. The presentation is on the LACLO website: www.laclo.org. It is a high level case, with nothing to envy from European projects. We can also highlight LACLO as an initiative that aims at federating the biggest possible amount of repositories within the region, as well as federating them with the rest of the world. This is very important since, as I already said, it is expensive to develop these Objects and sharing makes it possible to make the most out the reutilisation advantages. From the point of view of the field of studies, the relevant topics have to do with quality (how to ensure Objects quality), interoperability (although this has almost been solved) and pedagogical use.

How is this issue evolving for this region and for the rest of the world?
Learning Objects were marked by the technological issue, all the emphasis was put on this. In fact, the first standards aimed only at this, at packaging to make Objects interoperable and reusable. Today, the issue has evolved and the idea is to find out how we can use them in the best possible way in a distance learning or partly-taught system.

In this sense the standards we work with nowadays, the Learning Design IMS, aim not at the Objects themselves (since they are regarded as resources), but at creating different Learning scenarios depending on the objectives you want to achieve. In this context, the Object is only a Learning resource which is used according to the scenario. We could say that this is the direction in which we are moving at present.

Carmen Gloria Labbe.

F U N D S   A N D   G R A N T S

IRSES – The new Marie Curie Action

IRSES is the new action which will provide support fro "Organisations" devoted to conducting research for the establishment and enhancement of alliances. It will be executed within the context of the Marie Curie actions of the PERSONAS Programme of the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development.

The first call for proposals of IRSES was published on 30th November 2007, and the deadline for submitting proposals expires on 28th March 2008.
URL with application guidelines:
http://sg60.oar.net/eHealth_Archive/?page=2#archive (go to end of the page).

ALFA III Programme announces it will launch its call for proposals in January 2008

ALFA III, the programme for collaboration between Higher education Institutions (HEIs) from the European Union and Latin America, invites participant countries to prepare their applications.

The actions include joint projects from European and Latin American institutions, as well as projects for the implementation of structural measures related to the reform of higher education systems in Latin America. A third component has to do with projects which will develop associated measures for the promotion of the visibility and the results of the approved projects.

To access the call for proposals please visit: http://www.redclara.net/news/doc/alfa3.pdf

MAEC - AECI Grants Programme launches its 2008 calls for proposals

Each of the different MAEC-AECI Grants Programmes, grouped by Chapters, has a concrete profile which describes who it is aimed at, its economic contribution, its specific requirements, etc. This must be carefully consulted by those who might be interested.

Applicants must be foreign and Spanish citizens, adults (under 35) with a university degree (and in some programmes, university students in their last year) or people with a renown career in certain activities, depending on the concrete grant programme you apply for.

The deadlines for submitting proposals range from 8th January 2008 and 29th February 2008, depending on the chosen programme.
To download the call fro proposals please visit: http://www.redclara.net/news/doc/becas_mae.pdf

A G E N D A

J A N U A R Y

Workshop on possible Grid Applications
30th January in Louisiana, USA
http://www.sura.org/programs/it_workshop.htm

Mardi Gras Conference 2008
From 31st January to 2nd February 2008, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA
http://www.mardigrasconference.org/

Campus Grids and Scientific Applications Workshop
From 31st January to 1st February 2008, in Wien, Austria
http://barbakus.ani.univie.ac.at/events/ Workshop2008/index.htm

F E B R U A R Y

Internet2 & New World Symphony Performance and Master Class Production Workshop
From 11th to 13th February in Florida, USA
http://events.internet2.edu/2008/nws/

Third EGEE Users Forum
From 11th to 14th February in Clermont-Ferrand, France
http://www.eu-egee.org/egee_events/userforum/3-user-forum/_

6ta International Conference and Workshops on Community Based Environments
From 12th to 16th February in Antigua, Guatemala
http://ges.galileo.edu/conf2008/es:feb2008

2ª International Conference on Integral e-Education
13th February in Guatemala City, Guatemala
http://ges.galileo.edu/conf2008/elearning

Marie Curie Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways Conference
14th February in Brussels, Belgium
http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/ docs/iapp-2008.doc

2nd International Workshop on e-learning and Virtual and Remote Laboratories 2008
From 14th to 15th February in Hasso-Plattner at the Potsdam Institute, Germany
http://www.dcl.hpi.uni-potsdam.de/vlab08

M A R C H

9th Latin American Congress on Educational Informatics
From 6th to 8th May in Caracas, Venezuela
http://ares.unimet.edu.ve/ribie/ribie.htm

8th IEEE Symposium International on Cluster Computing and the Grid
From 18th to 22nd March in Lyon, France
http://ccgrid2008.ens-lyon.fr