



eInfrastructure
Assembly



e-Infrastructure requirements for a post-2027 EOSC Governance

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1 Introduction

The e-Infrastructure Assembly is the structured collaboration between five pan-European digital service providers: EGI, EUDAT, GÉANT, OpenAIRE and PRACE. Together, they provide services and connect local, regional, European and thematic research data centres, data repositories, archives and computing centres as well as universities and other organisations.

The e-Infrastructures have many years of experience in providing horizontal, cross-cutting services. Their members provide scalable, federated solutions that support national and international research collaborations, ensuring communities and researchers are seamlessly supported throughout the full research lifecycle.

The services, designed to integrate with national, regional, and European Research Infrastructures (RIs) are:

- Data-communications, compute and storage infrastructure for research and education across dozens of European countries and over 100 countries globally via GÉANT, EGI, PRACE and EUDAT members
- Research Data Management (RDM) Services: Repositories, RDM platforms, metadata management, persistent identifiers (PIDs), Data Management Plans (DMPs), services for publishing, sharing, linking and impact monitoring of research outputs supporting FAIR data and Open Science principles.
- AAI & Security: Federated Authentication and Authorisation Infrastructure (AAI), security frameworks, and trusted access solutions.
- Data Transfer & Sharing: File transfer, sync & share tools, and cross-border data mobility services for collaborative research.
- Training & Capacity Building: Workshops, hands-on training, and online learning resources for researchers and service providers.
- Federated Capabilities & Interoperability: Frameworks and technical support for aligning services with EOSC interoperability requirements.
- Bespoke Development: Collaboratively developed tools or services tailored to researchers, projects or RIs.

e-Infrastructures contribute technical capabilities and expertise for the EOSC implementation:

- Federation-enabling core services (e.g. single sign-on, catalogues, knowledge graph, monitoring, help desk), other horizontal services (e.g. computing, containers,

notebooks, data storage/transfer/sharing, workload management, workflow orchestration).

- Service management processes and tools to run the EOSC Federation as an integrated ecosystem of Nodes, and a framework for onboarding services and enrolling EOSC Nodes.

2 e-Infrastructures and EOSC speed bumps

2.1 Acquiring and delivering services for EOSC

For more than two decades, the European Commission has invested in the horizontal and federating services provided by the e-Infrastructures through successive Framework Programme grants. This long-term support has enabled the establishment of trusted, large-scale capacities that are recognised in all research domains and underpin the EOSC Federation. The RDM facilities by the e-Infrastructures are required irrespective of existing and future European HPC/HTC contributions.

However, EOSC and the Research and Innovation Framework Programmes evolve, and the existing funding model needs to be adapted to new realities. To continue delivering federating services, e-Infrastructures, as the recognised providers of ICT infrastructure and services to EOSC, need the means to recover the marginal costs of transnational and virtual access, taking into account the given policy restrictions of their members that limit or exclude their participation in the delivery of pay-per-use services.

In the interests of both e-Infrastructures and EOSC, the e-Infrastructures should be enabled to continue delivering services to EOSC in the future. This will only be possible with a joint approach involving all stakeholder groups and if there is a mechanism in place to provide a financial backstop. The prevailing assumption that EOSC is 'free at the point of delivery' needs to be countered with a transparent and fair payment model.

2.2 Cross-border services for EOSC

The EOSC business model should provide strong incentives for European e-Infrastructures to participate and sustain their role in the Federation. This requires addressing the long-standing challenge of transnational access, ensuring that services used across borders can be supported without financial or legal barriers for the providers. Furthermore, EOSC

governance should consolidate the role of e-Infrastructures as integrators of services that also build on the capacities and contributions of their members.

To be balanced, the model should also incentivise Member States by linking national funding to national service consumption underpinned by clear and transparent procedures to assess and prioritise funding, so that both funders and providers can plan with confidence and accountability.

For any model to be viable, it must be recognised that e-infrastructures are European organisations that deliver cross-border services. They are therefore not in a position to complement 'national co-funding', as requested in some funding environments. European cross-border activities require full funding, i.e. 100%, in order for the e-infrastructures to provide services. The role of the e-Infrastructures in the allocation and accounting of cross-border use of services must be considered.

2.3 Liabilities of service integration with EOSC

Many service integrators - e-Infrastructures and RIs - aspire to become nodes in the EOSC Federation, delivering cross-node services. The needs of these entities, deriving from their composition, structures and legal forms, should be recognised, and the powers ceded by them, as nodes, to the EOSC Federation should be proportionate to the Federation's mission. The current decision-making capacity of service integrators on behalf of their members should be preserved.

Service integrators should be responsible for delivering services spanning multiple countries. The technical contributions and liability of e-infrastructures and other service integrators should be financially compensated. These responsibilities and liabilities should be defined and underwritten in EOSC Service Level Agreements.

2.4 Role in the EOSC Federation governance

The currently proposed advisory role of Nodes through an EOSC Node Forum or Interim EOSC Node Coordinator Committee seems insufficient and not proportionate to the liability carried by the legal entities representing EOSC Nodes, nor to the investments of the contributors of resources to the Nodes.

Nodes, including e-Infrastructures and RIs, should have decision-making authority for strategic matters, such as technical interoperability (development, operation and technical directions concerning the EOSC Federation), and legal and organisational interoperability (policies and organisation defining the governance of the EOSC Federation) in a future binding agreement establishing the operational EOSC Federation.

The EOSC Federation governance model should be lean and have direct connections from the operational bodies and service providers to the main decision-making body.

Background material / References

[Recommendations for a financially sustainable post-2027 EOSC, Final Report of the Financial Sustainability Task Force of the EOSC Association, April 2024](#)