A PROPOSAL FOR THE 2nd POSITION PAPER ON THE ECHEMTEST^{+} PROJECT

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The Virtual Education Community (VEC) Standing Committee (SC) activities of the year 2015 have designed the ground on which the sustainability of the ECHEMTEST^{+} project (the evolution of the present EChemTest®) can be achieved.

FROM KRAKOW AC DELIBERATES (2014) TO THE 2015 BUSINESS PLAN (BP): Following the discussion held in Krakow (Sept 2014) on the 2015 position paper concerned with following items:

1) ECHEMTEST^{+} procedures and sustainability
2) ECHEMTEST^{+} technologies and materials
3) ECHEMTEST^{+} side activities (Editorial, Teleconferencing, Virtual environments)

the VEC SC BP was approved by the AC in Brussels (February 2015). The EChemTest® asset is estimated to be worth about 1.8 Meur to a large extent based on voluntary work of the participating of the operating infrastructure of ECHEMTEST^{+}. These consist of the VEC SC, the NTCs (National Test Centres) and the Accredited Test Sites (ATS) running at present several hundred Self Evaluation Session (SES). The BP will also include private investments (for example by the DRAG cluster that is a group of 5 SMEs operating under the umbrella of ECTN) especially for products' and technology evolution.

ACCREDITATION AND TRAINING: A fundamental step towards the implementation of EChemTest® services in ECHEMTEST^{+} is provided by training and accreditation. The purpose of a training event is to provide trainees with the technical skills needed to carry out and manage EChemTest® SES, regulate an Intellectual Property preserving use of EChemtest®, synchronize the technical procedures with the various sites, coordinate the management, update and translation of the different libraries in the new MoU regulated context. At the training event information is also given on the use and development of support materials (like Chemistry related Learning Objects (LO) implemented on distributed shared repositories, open source e-test management software EOL (that will be used for the release of individual certificates and the porting of the libraries)). At the end of a positive training period, accreditation as ATS and NTC will be awarded to the trainee's Institution after the signature of the related Memorandum of Understanding. Training and Accreditation can be accessed by Institutions being already (or having submitted an application) members of ECTN.

THE FIRST ACCREDITATION AND TRAINING EVENT (Sept 2015): The first Accreditation and Training event has been already held in Perugia (sponsored by the EC2E2N2 ECTN project) from Monday September 14 to Tuesday September 15, 2015 at the Department of Mathematics and Informatics of the University of Perugia.
The participants were: Natasa Brower (Amsterdam), Michele Ceotto (Milan), Peter Gartner and Heinz Krebs (Vienna), Elena Koliarmou and Ioannis Kozaris (Thessaloniki), Alfredo Lainez (Madrid), Fabio Mavelli (Bari), Marina Rui (Genoa), Krzysztof Szczeponek (Krakow), Roberta Selvaggi (Perugia), Riccardo Tesser (Naples), Bulat Vagapov (Kazan), Kristiina Wahala (Helsinki).

SEPTEMBER 2015 VEC OPEN SESSION AND RELATED ECHEMTEST^{+} ROADMAP: A session of the VEC SC (Monday 14/9 18:30 start - 22:30 end) open to the training event attendees was held during dinner. The initial roadmap of the ECHEMTEST^{+} discussed and unanimously approved was following:
- 15/09/2016 VEC SC should issue Attendance and Accreditation certificates
- 30/09/2016 VEC SC should circulate a template for the Letter of commitment to establish an ATS and/or an NTC by the attending Institutions (for Institutions not yet ECTN members the commitment should be concerned also with the submission to ECTN of the application for membership)
- 1/10-30/11/2016 Applicants should submit either a signed MoU (for NTC and/or ATS) or the contract (for Agency) regulating academic and non academic use of EChemTest®
- 1/11/2016 Participants should submit contributions to the special issue of the VIRT&L-COMM e-magazine
- January 2016 VEC SC should submit to the ECTN AC the tentative VEC SC balance.
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THE "VEC MEETS DRAG" EVENT (Nov 2015)

On November 21 on the 2015 budget the VEC SC has organized a meeting with the DRAG cluster of SMEs established during the EC2E2N2 project (WP3) and acting under the umbrella activity of the VEC SC on behalf of ECTN.

AGENDA
  A - How to strengthen the collaboration among the DRAG partners and between DRAG and ECTN
  B - Schools (Sustainable entrepreneurship 2015, distributed computing 2017, ..)
  C - DRAG services to ECTN (EOL and ECHEMTEST^{+}, e-learning and computer services, EUCHEMS)
  D - DRAG in H2020 (EGI.eu pay x use service, technological support, PROGEO, …)

RESULTS
A1-DRAG may act on behalf the group of member SMEs in bids concerned with distributed computing, educational activities, financial support, investments, ..

A2-DRAG members may act as local agency of ECTN and/or of the other members,

A3-DRAG members may manage shared communication tools (WEB, VIRT&L-COMM, Newsletter, ..),

A4-ECTN may offer to DRAG its facilities (eg the use of Brussel's office), the utilization of its articulated Europe-wide academic and market oriented education based network (by exploiting also the links to EUCHEMS, Departments and Universities, e-learning operators and web service providers), the support of the thematic expertise of its working groups,

B1- DRAG members may offer their expertise in entrepreneurship and technological schools

C1- DRAG members may offer their ICT skills to design, develop and adopt tools (eg EOL and GLOREP) and contents (eg MOOCs, Learning Objects) for educational activities (eg ECTN schools), for innovation (eg ITN Joint PhD activities, distributed compute platforms, distributed repositories, distributed environment tools, workflows, training events, coordinated SME proposals like fortissimo, distributed applications, etc.), and multimedia services to vocational societies (eg EUCHEMS)

C2 DRAG members may offer longer term runs for loans, investment and financial plans.

D1 DRAG may get involved in a EUREKA and/or EGI.eu proposal for SMEs operating in the field of distributed computing for providing/utilizing Grid and Cloud compute services for innovative technologies of EGI.eu and pay per use activities as well as in a proposal for funding the establishing of new virtual communities: the molecular science one. The steering committee of this proposal has been set at the EUCO CC 10 Conference (G. Terstyanszky (Westminster, UK), S. Herres-Pawlis (Aachen, DE), S. Evangelisti (Toulouse, FR), C. Coletti (Chieti, IT), E. Garcia (Vitoria, ES)). The proposal aims at establishing a competitive-collaborative service-based virtual research environment (compute intensive data production, data storage, cloud services, Quality of use based credit system, …). DRAG is also going to get involved in some chemistry and computation based industrial initiatives being undertaken by other consortia (eg PROGEO (production CH_4 from CO_2))