



## FitSM Case study: EGI.eu

### About EGI.eu

EGI.eu is a non-profit foundation based in Amsterdam, Netherlands. It coordinates a European infrastructure of distributed computing, storage and data services for research, known as EGI. EGI is a federation of over 350 resource centres across more than 50 countries that collectively serves some 200 user research projects (about 40,000 individual researchers).



### What were the main motivators for considering IT service management (ITSM)?

The concept of distributed computing dates back to the early 2000s. As a result of a number of EU funded projects and national investment that supported the development of the prototype and eventual production infrastructure, EGI was established in 2010 to provide a sustainable infrastructure to ensure that the services in which researchers rely, would be available for decades to come.

This positioning of EGI as a service provider, and the highly distributed nature of many different providers coming together, required us to put in place standard processes, procedures and agreements for managing the infrastructure efficiently and effectively. ITSM was viewed as a potential means for accomplishing this.

### How did you approach the adoption of ITSM?

ITIL was commonly known as a potential approach as well as several members of the EGI community having had some type of ITIL training. EGI.eu held an introductory ITIL course for staff members to get a better understanding of service management and how it could support EGI. We even purchased the 5 ITIL books. However, it was immediately apparent the difficulty in actual implementation and understanding where to get started. The books ended up being reference or support material for some documents and reports being written.

### What were your main reasons for choosing FitSM as your guiding ITSM framework?

EGI.eu had a unique opportunity to participate in the EC funded project called FedSM, which was aimed at helping e-Infrastructures adopt service management best practices. At the time, we were just looking for support to help improve day-to-day activities and never anticipated being a part of what FitSM is today.

In fact, we feel quite proud to have contributed to the development of FitSM as the popularity of the lightweight approach is spreading throughout the community into the national based infrastructures and into the research communities we are working with. The main reason we have continued to invest in FitSM, beyond the life of any project, was the available support material and the pragmatic approach, which is allowing us to move more quickly with implementation than other frameworks.



## What were the main successes you achieved by implementing FitSM?

The biggest impact was with the re-formulation of the EGI service portfolio. This was a result of getting a better understanding of how services are defined. What this led to was a separation between what EGI.eu offers the participant organisations, and what EGI offers collectively as a federation to the individual researchers and research communities. A solutions portfolio was then able to be created offering a powerful marketing tool for EGI to communicate the value being delivered.

From there, we were able to put in place an entire agreement framework comprising clear SLAs and OLAs. This process was made much smoother thanks to the FitSM templates made available. This is just to name a few.

## What would you consider as the main challenges you had to face when trying to implement FitSM?

The first was a culture shift across the academia and research community that operating a sustainable infrastructure was turning organisations into service providers, thus requiring certain organisational changes. The second was similar to many organisations with concerns of having to spend a lot of time, effort and financial resources and needing to completely change the entire system. The complexity of a federation, meant a lot more time than expected was spent on re-formulating the service portfolio.

Finally, having been on the ground floor, much of FitSM was being developed and refined in parallel to implementation. One of the advantages to FitSM is having the templates and samples available to support the various implementation phases.

## Looking back: What worked well? What would you have done differently?



I think we took a very good approach in implementing FitSM incrementally, using it to solve issues step by step. Communication is the key to getting wider support. Within a fast paced environment, implementing service management alongside daily activities can be a challenge. Until everyone is informed why certain things are being done or in a certain way can inhibit progress. Once everything has been explained and understood, changes start to happen or are accepted. However,

this can make things slower than anticipated. Communication is key.

The training and certification scheme is really helping to support this. So far, all non-admin staff at EGI.eu has received at the foundation training, half with the advanced, and another handful to receive the expert level in July. In addition, more than 150 members across the EGI community have received training as well.

## How did your organisation change during the process of implementing FitSM?

Increased clarity. As mentioned, federations can be quite complex. Services are better described making the value of EGI and what it delivers much clearer. Agreements are either in place, or being put into place, that are clarifying expectations between the related organisations and its staff. Decision-making has a clearer flow between organisations and individual teams.

## What are your plans for the future?

EGI is really only at the beginning of implementing FitSM. There is a lot to go, but each step is a constant improvement. As they say "Rome wasn't built in a day".

EGI.eu will continue to support training and certification courses for the community and serve as a consultant for increasing FitSM adoption not just within our participant's organisations, but with research communities in which it is working.

### About FitSM

FitSM is a free and lightweight standards family aimed at facilitating service management in IT service provision, including federated scenarios. It provides a clear, pragmatic, lightweight and achievable standard that allows for effective IT service management (ITSM), while remaining compatible with other major and frameworks,.

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