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Information Society and Media Directorate-General
ICT addressing Societal Challenges
ICT for Health

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Mr Remi Ronchaud (ACGT)
ERCIM
Route des lucioles, 2004
06902 Sophia antipolis
France

REGISTERED MAIL

**Subject: Contract No. IST-2004-026996 Project ACGT
Outcome of the Third Periodic Review held in Homburg, 23-24 April, 2009**

Dear Mr Ronchaud,

I refer to the third periodic review of ACGT project which was held in Homburg on 23-24 April, 2009. The review report, giving in full the findings of the review session, is enclosed. In their report, the reviewers' overall assessment for ACGT is a "Good to excellent" project. Furthermore, the reviewers recommend that the project *should continue without modifications*.

The Commission is in agreement with the recommendation of the review report.

In view of the above, the Commission considers that the consortium is performing satisfactorily and that the project can continue by taking into account the recommendations and comments provided by the reviewers in paragraph 10, as well as throughout the report.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter and inform your partners of its content.

Yours sincerely,


Ragnar Bergström
Project Officer

Enclosure: Review report

c.c.: Mrs Tuula Hyorinen, Mr Gérard Comyn

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Consensus

Project Review Report (FP6) for NoE / IP

Project no	IST-2004-026996
Project acronym	ACGT
Title	Advancing Clinico-Genomic Trials on Cancer: Open Grid Services for Improving Medical Knowledge Discovery
Instrument type	Integrated Project
Thematic Priority	Information Society Technologies – ICT for Health
Start date of project	1 February 2006
Duration of project	48 months
Total Budget	16,747,206€
EC contribution	11,887,000€
Date of review	23-24 April, 2009
Place of review	Homburg, Saarland
Period covered by review	from 1 February 2008 to 31 st January 2009
Coordinator name	Remi Ronchaud
Coordinator organisation	GEIE ERCIM
Name(s) of reviewer(s)	Elena Tsiportkova - Olle Björk – David Ingram
Name of rapporteur	David Ingram

Introduction

The following template should be used by the independent reviewer(s) to draft the review report with the conclusions and recommendations following a project review.

If several reviewers are involved, it is preferable that a consolidated report be prepared by one reviewer chosen as 'rapporteur'.

Questions to be answered by the reviewer(s)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With a short description on what the project is about. Includes key results and overall comments on the project's technical progress, management, and exploitation and whether it should: proceed as is, or proceed with some modifications, or whether remedial action is needed.

The ACGT project aims to deliver the cancer research community an integrated Clinico-Genomic ICT environment, through an integrated workplan. The environment is being validated with three ongoing clinical trials on cancer and evolving partnership with key related international clinical trials organisations. Progress is demonstrated at each review through a series of key exemplar applications that are progressively integrating an innovative approach, deploying a new high level master ontology focused on clinical trials.

This is the third annual review of the program and progress has been demonstrated at each review. The end result of the project will facilitate connection and integration of different clinical research projects. It is a base for a pan-European project or even local or hospital based clinical research. In the past reviews it was discussed that it is important to test the ACGT in realistic clinical environments. It was also discussed that a wider dissemination of the project is necessary to receive information and evaluation from potential end users.

We observe considerable and continuing progress with the key technical issues highlighted in previous reviews: notably in the ontology submission tool and connection to the CRF generation through Obtima, the automatic generation of workflow, and the incorporation of third party services and databases, such as BioMoby. The clinical validation of the oncosimulator using SIOP trial data from actual patients had advanced considerably but the future scientific development of this resource extends well beyond the confines of ACGT. We were pleased to see evidence of good progress with Obtima, allaying many of our concerns from previous reviews but confirming that completion of a viable tool in this area is fundamental to wider uptake of ACGT, generally. We are still concerned about delay in development and validation of training materials.

The momentum of the project remains excellent and a good communication environment has been sustained throughout the consortium, with deliverables delivered mainly on time. In this review period, a range of new clinical test scenarios has been further explored and detailed discussions started with relevant partner organisations that might become involved in the wider evaluation (eg EORTC) and use and dissemination (eg neoBIG and SIOP) of the infrastructure. Strategic engagement with these wider ongoing initiatives is seen as crucial but requires careful alignment with the priority to complete the current workplan of ACGT. Likewise the STaRC initiative aiming to embed ACGT within a reference centre for developing and sustaining the ACGT infrastructure, within Saarland, was well received but will again require careful judgement as to how much is within the project and how much is a new initiative, meeting different requirements.

A comparative evaluation of the ontological foundations of ACGT and CaBIG remains a high priority for completion within this project. We recommend that the project proceeds without change but make some recommendations on areas of future work.

2. ORGANISATION AND LOGISTICS

Comments on the review meeting: Were timing and schedule adequate? Were copies of the slides distributed in advance? Were demonstrations performed well?

Comments on the reports and deliverables received: timely reception, completeness, had the reviewers enough time to study the documentation?

Comments on the partners present at the meeting: were all there? (See list of participants, list of reports and deliverables & agenda (appended to this report)).

Comments:

All aspects of the review meeting were excellently managed. The demonstrations had clearly been a huge team effort and we congratulate the team on these efforts. The attendance at the meeting and related social events by leaders of the local medical faculty, University and regional authority, expressing huge interest in the project and support for its continuation, both locally and as a wider European resource, was much appreciated and a powerful indicator reflecting the outstanding clinical leadership of Norbert Graf in ACGT.

In general, the presentations were too detailed with overemphasis on the important but not easily communicated technical fine detail of the challenges being tackled. A number of detailed recommendations are made below.

There was an extremely good attendance of Partners. The dialogue with reviewers worked well. For the final review we recommend a more interactive programme, engaging all participants more fully.

3. OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

Have the main objectives for the period been achieved?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

There is little time to complete the workplan. The technological framework is more or less complete and must now be communicated to wider audiences, to persuade them that it is credible, usable and sustainable.

Are the project's objectives (a) still relevant and (b) still achievable within the time and resources available to the project?

(a) Yes

No

Partially

(b) Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

The relevance is indisputable but usability remains an issue. In narrowing the scope of future technical innovations, clinical trials and organisational partnerships, it is essential that the master ontology and metadata be reviewed, simplified and validated, as widely as possible.

The full development, dissemination and exploitation of the ACGT infrastructure is clearly a 5-10y endeavour and will require a detailed business and scientific strategy – embracing formal organisational partnerships, commercial activity and participation in open scientific communications. It remains important to make sure that goals are realistically prioritised so that the really important practical outcomes that are looked to from this project are not compromised by spending too much resource on goals that will take longer to achieve. The project needs to leave a solid platform for what comes next and capturing fully the knowledge gained within the consortium is essential for this. A serious focus is required from here on practical issues of training, dissemination and exploitation.

Do you recommend changes in the objectives of the project in order to keep up with current state-of-the-art?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

See above comments

4. PROJECT WORKPLAN AND RESOURCES

A. WORKPLAN

Has the project as a whole been making satisfactory progress, notably in relation to the Description of Work (Annex I to the contract)?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

Substantial progress has been made since the previous annual review.

Is the work planned in each work package (WPs) on schedule for the reporting period?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

Some planned delays reflect the proposed extension of the project by six months. We consider the delay in the training programme to be risky with respect to dissemination of the results of the project.

Have planned milestones and deliverables been achieved for the reporting period?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

See above

Future workplan: Is the work-plan coherent and are the timing of milestones and future activities of the project still valid?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

These are broadly ok, but see comments above re- training.

B. RESOURCES AND EXPENDITURES

Have resources been deployed as foreseen in Annex I, overall and for each participant (see **Table 3 - Budget vs. Actual Costs and Table 4 - Person-months Status Table from the Periodic Management Report**)?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

The resources appeared to have been well managed, with remaining funds well distributed in relation to the work outstanding.

Have expenditures been demonstrated as being economic and necessary for the work performed (Are expenditures consistent with the work achieved? Are the major cost items appropriate?)

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

5. WORKPLAN OF NoEs and IPs

A. WORK CARRIED OUT IN THE PREVIOUS REPORTING PERIOD

Has the overall *Implementation Plan* (IPs) or *Joint Programme of Activity* (NoEs) been adhered to as described in the *Description of Work (Annex I of contract)*?

Yes

No

Uncertain

Comments:

See above

For NoEs: Is there evidence of real integration and restructuring of activities between partners (to be evaluated against Indicators of Integration, e.g. exchanges of personnel, shared infrastructures, joint research and training activities, changes of research orientation of individual partners to better integrate into the NoE, etc).

Yes

No

Partially

Not applicable

Comments:

B. WORK PLANNED FOR THE NEXT 18-MONTH PERIOD

Is the proposed update to the *Implementation Plan* (IPs) or *Joint Programme of Activity* (NoEs) for the next 18-month period satisfactory

a. from scientific/technical point of view

Yes

No

Uncertain

Comments:

This was presented but has not as yet been submitted to the Commission. The Consortium demonstrated a good understanding of the status of the project and the work remaining to be completed.

b. from management point of view including use of resources

Yes

No

Uncertain

Comments:

From the presented information, we conclude that the resources are well managed and allocated.

c. concerning non-scientific activities (dissemination, science-society issues, further integration etc)

Yes

No

Uncertain

Comments:

The consortium has participated very widely in scientific meetings and in published work. No explicit information was presented about the activity of the Advisory Board - see recommendations, below.

6. CONSORTIUM PARTNERSHIP

Is there evidence of meaningful cooperation and integration between all the partners?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

Again, this is a very commendable feature of the Consortium, its partners, leadership and culture.

Have the partners contributed as planned to the project and tasks assigned to them?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

Do you identify any conflicts or evidence of underperforming partners, lack of commitment or change of interest of any partners?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

Do you recommend changes in partnership?

Yes

No

Comments:

The progress towards formal alliances with EORTC and neoBIG are welcomed.

7. MANAGEMENT

Has the technical management performed as required (efficient, effective accomplishment of planned technical management tasks)?

Yes No Partially

Comments:

The project exhibits very strong and effective leadership.

Has the administrative and financial management performed as required (efficient, effective accomplishment of planned tasks, including proper handling of the consortium agreement, intellectual property rights, technical collective responsibility, sub-contracting, competitive calls)?

Yes No Partially

Comments:

These aspects are also excellently managed, as evidenced, still, by an almost complete absence of problems in this area.

Has (electronic) information and communication networks been established as required to support interactive working between the teams involved?

Yes No Partially

Comments:

The website, published material and BSCW server all seem to be good and working well. The web site content has been enhanced and the portal functionalities for accessing ACGT services are now a much improved point of entry for users.

Is the consortium interacting in a satisfactory manner with other related 5th and 6th Framework projects or other R&D programmes addressing aspects of ERA, e.g., EUREKA, eTPs, etc)?

Yes No Partially

Comments:

There is evidence of developing participation with projects, such as ContraCancum, and in new and follow-on proposals in FP7.

8. USE AND DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Does the project have significant exploitation potential?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

As fully discussed in previous reviews.

Is the Plan for the Use and Dissemination of Knowledge [please refer to the Guidance notes on Project Reporting in FP6 (Appendix 1) (see <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/find-doc.htm#reporting>)] developing in a satisfactory manner?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

The scope of the project is extremely ambitious and it is important to communicate about discrete, clear and demonstrable modules of the ACGT infrastructure that can bring specific added value to the wider research community. Fostering of good communication skills with external audiences needs to be a clear focus of the consortium, to guarantee that the results are conveyed in an appropriate manner.

Have the contractors disseminated project results and information as foreseen by the contract and the plan for dissemination and use of knowledge (publications, conferences...)?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

See previous comments

Where relevant, are potential users and other stakeholders in the research being suitably involved in the project?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

It appears to us that the clinical and basic scientific end users are still not sufficiently engaged in shaping and validating the research.

9. OTHER ISSUES

Can you identify any policy-related regulatory issues emanating from the project at this stage?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

This matter was addressed in detail in previous review comments and the project has adequately addressed these.

Has promotion of gender equality been successful?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

See previous review comments

Have the science and society issues related to the topics of the Integrated Project been adequately handled?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

Has the training programme being adhered to as described in the contract?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

Some delay in this aspect, as discussed above.

Is the project fulfilling its contractual commitments, if any, concerning ethics and safety?

Yes

No

Partially

Comments:

See previous comments.

10. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

- Unsatisfactory project (The project has failed to achieve critical objectives and/or is not at all on schedule)
- Acceptable project (The project has achieved most of its objectives and technical goals for the period with relatively minor deviations)
- Good to excellent project (The project has fully achieved its objectives and technical goals for the period and has even exceeded expectations)

Recommendations

- the project should continued without modifications
- the project should continue with the following modifications (technical or administrative):
- the project should be terminated (list main reasons):

Recommendations:

1. The consortium should prioritise the preparation and evaluation of training materials, tools, and plan events for different audiences. We recommend that the plans and initial outputs in this regard be presented at the December review meeting.
2. The role and impact of the Advisory Board should be clarified.
3. Continuous in depth analysis and revision is required of the conceptual design of the Master Ontology reflecting:
 - Simplification of the topology, scaling down the number of defined relations used
 - Validation of the conceptual model of the MO, in collaboration with cancer domain experts.
4. For the next review meetings, we recommend that presentations of the Consortium include a summary of research goals, major achievements and challenges faced, with the necessary detail to support these.
5. Once a complete message has been formulated about what the ACGT project can offer now, wider engagement of clinical research communities should be targeted more actively. We support the further engagement with neoBIG.
6. We recommend that usability issues are seriously considered in further development of the entire software framework. There were marked differences in user friendliness among the components that were demonstrated – *e.g.* Obtima versus ontology submission tool.

Are there other issues you wish bring to the attention of the Consortium and/or the Project Officer?

Yes

No

Comments:

11. VISIBILITY ACTIONS

Please flag characteristics of the project which may be of interest to the Commission's services and visibility actions:

- high visibility/media attractive project
- project with an impact on EU policies
- project with a major role for women
- project with a significant impact on health, safety, environment
- project with ethical issues associated
- substantial breakthrough character
- significant impact on employment
- significant participation from outside EU
- involvement of the top researchers in the field
- involvement of the top economic actors in the field

Comments:

Name(s) and signature(s) of the reviewer(s):

Olle Björk

David Ingram

Elena Tsiporkova

Date: May 14th, 2009

12. 3 APPENDICES

Appendix 1
Status and approval of project reports and deliverables

Deliv. number	Title	Status (submitted/delayed)	Accepted/Rejected/To be modified	Comments	Deadline for (re) submissions
	Third Periodic Activity Report	submitted	accepted		
D2.5 (due month 36)	Report on requirements for an ontology submission system and for the selection of tools, software and data within ACGT	submitted (15/04/09)	accepted	Very exhaustive document. Supplying a graphical user interface in support to ontology change requests will have a crucial contribution to the usability of the submission tool. There is some concern about creating deadlock scenarios in case the ontology engineer does not (partially or fully) accept the submission request.	
D6.4 & D6.5 (due month 36)	The integrated ACGT analysis environment and Demonstrator of analytical services	submitted (01/04/09)	accepted	Visualisation tools supporting microarray data analysis will certainly be essential extension to the analysis environment.	
D9.4 (due month 30)	Semantic Integration in ACGT	submitted (01/04/09)	accepted	Very good introduction and motivation of the choices of architectures and technologies made. Extremely exhaustive overview on semantic technologies and standards. Excellent description of the semantic framework of services and tools in ACGT.	

D10.6.1 (due month 38)	Status report of the international and national empirical survey on patients and parents' perspectives and needs	submitted (31/03/09)	accepted	This work has been approached in a clear and robust way and should produce valuable and informative research outcomes. The Consortium has clearly worked well together to target a range of centres and clinical communities. Ethics approval has been delayed and rapid progress in carrying out the surveys is now urgent, to gain experience and validate the survey designs and then analyse data collected.	
D11.4 (due month 33)	Requirements and guidelines for developing secured ACGT services	delayed (draft available)			
D11.6 (due month 36)	ACGT guide for administrative documentation of ACGT security and VO management	delayed			
D12.7 (due month 30)	Report on the local ACGT trial-specific biobanking activities	cancelled			
D13.2	Intermediate evaluation report (Overview of second integrated demonstrator of the ACGT platform)	delayed (submitted partially December 2008)			
D13.4	April 2009 Demonstrator specifications	submitted (14/04/09)	accepted	The selected demonstration scenarios have been carefully designed and present in a realistic way the major achievements in the development of the ACGT tools and services during the reporting period.	
D14.3 (rejected)	Demonstration and Report of	re-submitted	accepted	Considerable work has been done on	

previously)	training modules	(31/01/09)		<p>this deliverable and progress is clear on design, implementation and portal integration of training materials. There is little evidence of actual use and user feedback in and so these materials must be considered early drafts, which will need continuous review and updating – a challenging and time consuming task. The examples in the early explanatory parts of the deliverable are mainly showing Polish screen shots – indicating reuse from other work, The review report emphasises the urgency of progress in training of new users and training materials required for this have been slow to develop, hitherto. Progress in this area of demonstration is encouraging but formative evaluation by users needs to be a more central part of the development methodology.</p>	
D14.4	Training workshop for end-users on ACGT Technologies & methodologies	delayed			
D15.4	Report on organization of scientific events and participation in conferences	submitted (02/04/09)	accepted	<p>A comprehensive account of dissemination events attended and contributions made. It is a pity that such events have not as yet been used to</p>	

				obtain some level of standardised reporting on potential users' perceptions of ACGT. The literary style is acceptable but proof reading could be improved on in future deliverables from WP15.	
D15.5 (rejected previously)	Revised Dissemination Plan	re-submitted (14/04/09)	accepted	This remains a rather high-level overview and somewhat diffuse. A message comes through of perceived difficulty in coordinating dissemination activity across the Consortium. The emphasis on using user success stories to drive dissemination is important. At this stage of the project, demonstrable success with target users matters more than well explained project rationale.	
D16.4	The ACGT Exploitation Plan Update 3 (2009)	submitted (20/03/09)	accepted	This deliverable is clear and realistic about the challenges the consortium faces in sustaining itself and growing into a widely used infrastructure and service. The range of activities, from those of individual partners through to regional, national and international collaborations is impressive, although the perceived synergy between ACGT and TIF is difficult to believe. The risk to exploitation of ACGT from loss of key	

				consortium players and technological change in service infrastructures is probably underestimated. The importance of documentary support for dissemination activities cannot be overestimated.	
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Appendix 2

List of Participants:

Kuwahara, Micke - University Hokkaido
Stamatakos, Georgios - University Athen
Tsiknakis, Manolis - FORTH
Sfakianakis, Stelios - FORTH
Zacharioudakis, Giorgos - FORTH
Daskalaki, Evangelia - FORTH
Thierry Sengstag - SIB
Bellmann, Robert - University Amsterdam
Melis, Paul - University Amsterdam
Jaques, Nicolas - IRISA
Ronchaud, Remi - ERCIM
Pukacki, Juliusz - PSNC
Rüping, Stefan - FhG IAIS
Lunzer, Aran - Universität Hokkaido
Samuel Keuchkerian - Healthgrid
Nikolaus Forgo - LUH
Persidis, Andreas - Biovista
Buffa, Francesca - Oxford University
Bucur, Anca - Philips
Jasper van Leeuwen - Philips
Gramatovici, Radu - Siveco
Brecht Claerhout - CUSTODIX
Desmedt, Christine - Institut Jules Bordet
Luis Martin - UPM
Alberto Anguita - UPM
Norbert Graf- USAAR
Mathias Brochhausen - IFOMIS
Jochen Rauch - FhG IBMT
Fatima Scherer - FhG IBMT
Alexander Hoppe – USAAR

European Commission Review Delegation

Bergström, Ragnar - European Commission
Olle Björk - Private Expert
Tsiporkova, Elena - Private Expert
Ingram, David - Private Expert

Appendix 3

ACGT

Official Project Review Meeting

23-24 April 2009, Saarbrücken

8:20 Arrival of Participants

Day 1 – Activities and Achievements

8:30 – 9:00 European Commission & Reviewer's private debriefing [Ragnar Bergström]

9:00 – 9:05 Meeting Start

9:05 – 9:15 Round table presentation of participants [Remi Ronchaud]

9:15 – 10:00 WP1 - Project Management [Remi Ronchaud]

- Project Status - Administrative, Financial and Contractual

- Includes 15" Questions

10:00 – 10:30 Project Scientific and Technological Progress [Manolis Tsiknakis]

15" presentation

10" discussion

10:30 – 11:00 Structure and Rational of the Demonstration Session (Based on D13.3)
[Thierry Sengstag]

- Brief description of the overall end-to-end demonstration scenario and its scenes

- Presentation of the "updated ACGT architecture"

- Includes 5-10" Q&A

11:00 – 11:15 Short Break

11:15 -12:30 **Demonstration**

The project will present progress towards its scientific and technological objectives by focusing on a range of integrated demonstrator supported by the ACGT platform.

The demonstrators will be accompanied with focused presentations in an attempt to *reveal the technical and scientific issues addressed* and to discuss project progress since the last review.

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 13:30 Demonstration Session (cont)

Note: For practical reasons the "Oncosimulator" demonstration must be done during the first day

13:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:30 Demonstration Session (cont)

17 :30 – 18:00 Questions and Concluding Discussion

ACGT

Official Project Review Meeting

23-24 April 2009, Saarbrücken

8:45 Arrival of Participants

Day 2 – Demonstrations / New Implementation Plan / Reviewers' deliberation

9:00 – 9:45 The Project's Dissemination Activities and Updated exploitation plan (Y. Legre & A. Persidis)

- Short presentation of the project dissemination activities and links with the community

- Detailed presentation of the exploitation concepts and plans and their current state for implementation

Consensus Project Review Report (FP6) for NoE / IP

- Activities undertaken
- Includes 10" Questions and discussion
- 9:45 – 10:15 Review of the main technological activities of the project (S. Rueping)
- Main issues addressed and resolved
- Open issues
- Includes 10" Questions and discussion
- 10:15 – 10:45 Coffee Break**
- 10:45 – 11:30 Implementation Plan for the period T0+36 – T0+52 [M. Tsiknakis]
- Brief review of achievements and lessons learned
- Main scientific priorities for the last implementation period
- New tasks introduced
- Deliverables & milestones
- Includes 20" Questions and discussion
- 11:30 – 12:30 Reviewers' Deliberation (*restricted to Reviewers*)
- 12:30 – 13:00 Conclusions and Recommendations [Ragnar Bergström]
- 13:00 – 14:30 Lunch**
- 14:30 – 16h30 Reviewer report preparation (*restricted to Reviewers*)
- 16:30 End of meeting



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Outcome of the Third Periodic Review held in Homburg, 24-25 April, 2009

Expéditeur(s) :

BERGSTROM RAGNAR (INFSO-H1)

Destinataire(s) :

RONCHAUD REMI (ERCIMe EUROPEAN RESEARCH CONSORTIUM FOR INFORM

Nombre de Pages : 0

Nombre total de documents déjà attachés : 0

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Imprimé le 23/06/2009 à 10:28 par GONZALEZ CARRO ELENA

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