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PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission)	
RE	Restricted to a group defined by the consortium (including the Commission)	
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Abstract :

This document presents a summary of the updates applied to the EU EECA ICT Competences Platform concerning the proposed new functionalities and the overall statistics and results.

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1. Introduction

The **Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) ICT cluster** is an initiative supported by the European Commission under the Information and Communication Technologies Thematic area of the 7th Framework Programme (FP7-ICT). It aims at enabling:

- the exploration of new opportunities for ICT R&D collaboration among researchers from the EU and the EECA countries; and
- the diffusion of information about research activities under FP7-ICT.

The EECA cluster is the joint effort of 3 complementary FP7-ICT support actions ([ISTOK-SOYUZ](#), SCUBE-ICT and [EXTEND](#)) that share common objectives and deploy a wide range of activities in the entire EECA region. The **targeted countries** are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Since the beginning of 2009 the Cluster partners have implemented a wide range of diversified activities aiming to:

- **Increase awareness** on EU-funded research activities under the FP7-ICT in the EECA region
- **Improve visibility** of ICT R&D organizations and specialists from EECA countries on the European arena and **stimulate collaboration** with their EU counterparts
- **Support the policy dialogue** between the EU and EECA countries, contributing to the setting up of joint initiatives enhancing their ICT R&D collaboration

In order to achieve its objectives and to facilitate the promotion of the EECA organisations' ICT competences, the Cluster partners have updated the ISTOK competence platform. They have done this by further extending it to the 4 additional target countries and by making the platform more visible and accessible.

The current document highlights updates that have been done on the ISTOK-SOYUZ/EECA platform in order to improve its functionalities and enhance the overall usability of the tool.

As described in the Annex 2 of the specifications, improvements “follows the recommendations in the Review Report and extend them” and are separated in two parts:

- a) The first part concerns the general improvements;
- b) The second part concerns new functionalities of the Competence Platform (not originally planned).

1. General improvements

1.1. Extend profiles for experts and organisations

In order to extend profiles, experts and organisations are now allowed to add additional website' links (e.g. link to their personal web site or blog) and keywords describing their work. Experts are getting as well the possibility to upload and attach their CV or any other document (press release, publication, references...) to their profile. All this new information is indexed to improve search results.

Moreover, a few fields have been added to both organisation's and expert's profiles.

The following screenshots shows the upload files functionalities. It is worth noting that each file upload can be marked as public and as a consequence made available to everyone and indexed by the platform search engine, thus improving search results.

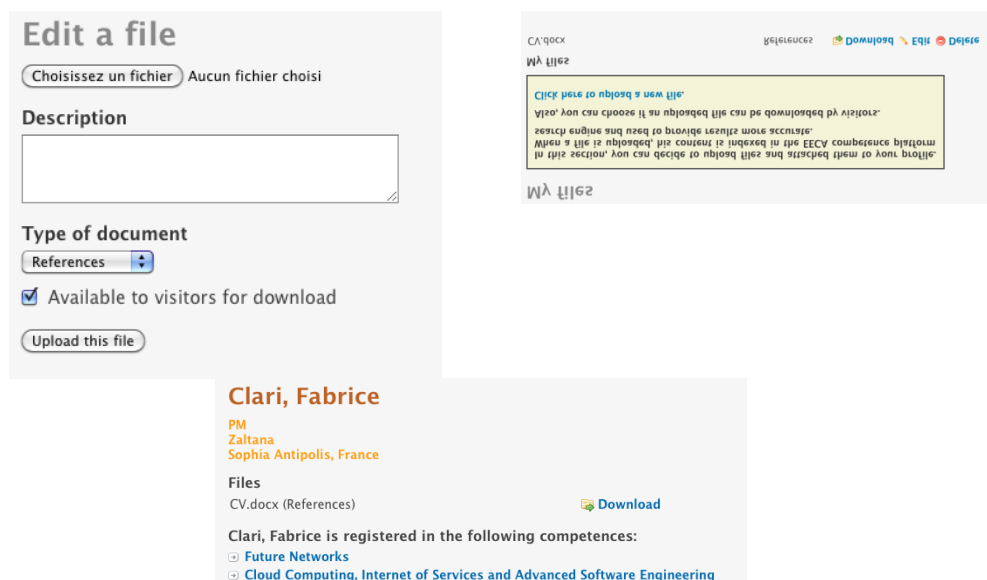


Figure 1 - File upload

1.2. Improved search results list

In the initial competence platform version, expert profiles were either simple (just a few information) or detailed. When displaying search results, the system wasn't making any difference on simple or detailed profiles; as a consequence, before clicking on the profile link the user was not able to make any visual distinction to know if the profile was or not detailed.

Now, as show in the figure below, when rendering search results, a visual distinction is made, thus helping the competence platform user figuring out which profiles are detailed (as the legend indicates it, detailed profiles are shown with a yellow star).

Search results
211 results have been found with the followings keywords: **computer**.
Profiles marked with a star ★ are detailed.

[Switch to the map-based view](#)

« Previous 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 Next »

★ **Catarci, Tiziana**
SAPIENZA -- Universita' di Roma / Dipartimento di Informatica e Sistemistica
Italy
[More](#) [Download profile as PDF file](#) [Add as selected expert](#)

de carolis, berardina
department od computer science – university of bari
bari, Italy
[More](#) [Download profile as PDF file](#) [Add as selected expert](#)

★ **diday, edwin**
syrokko and Dauphine University (Paris)
Paris, France
[More](#) [Download profile as PDF file](#) [Add as selected expert](#)

Edirisinghe, Eran
University of Loughborough, Department of Computer Science
Loughborough, United Kingdom
[More](#) [Download profile as PDF file](#) [Add as selected expert](#)

Figure 2 - Visual difference between simple and detailed profiles

1.3. Improve layout

The overall layout of the web application has been updated to make it more modern and user friendly.

The screenshot displays the updated visual identity of the EECA Competence Platform. The header includes logos for the EU-Eastern Europe and Central Asia Gateway on ICT research and development, ISTOK SOYUZ, EXTEND, and SCUBE ICT. The main content area features a search bar for experts and organisations, search results for 'computer', and a sidebar with navigation links. The search results show profiles for Objelean, Nicolae; Popcova, Olga; and Pozdnyakov, Sergey.

Figure 3 - Updated visual identity

2. Proposed new functionalities of the Competence Platform

2.1. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

The platform has been improved in terms of SEO (search engine optimisation). Indeed, beyond best practises which were already implemented, a few techniques exist to make a website well indexed by search engines. Therefore, as a first task, an audit on the platform has been performed on SEO aspects to get a list of potential improvements to be done. Then, these improvements have been implemented.

2.2. Profiles export

In order to allow user to get profiles (both expert and organisation) as an exportable/printable files, all profiles can be now downloaded as PDF file. For each profile, a “download ad PDF” link is displayed.

Technically speaking, this PDF files generation is done “on the fly”, which means that each PDF version of a profile is built at runtime, e.g. when requested by a user. Thus, PDF contents are always up-to-date.



Figure 4 - Donwload as PDF link

2.3. Suggestions

Based on experts' locations, competences and experience, relations are automatically created between experts. This makes the usage of the platform more user friendly as when browsing a profile, others profiles are suggested. This also improves SEO as each profile page is potentially linked to other expert's pages.



Figure 5 - Profiles suggestion

Moreover, the search engine as been improved to propose suggestions in case of 0 result. This helps mainly when a user makes a typo in a search request. The next screenshot highlights this use case: the user entered “computer” and gets 0 results, but the system suggests to try a new search with “computer”.

The screenshot shows a search interface with two search boxes. The first search box contains the text 'computer'. Below it, there is a section titled 'Search suggestions' which contains the text: 'You can try a new search with the following terms: **computer**.' Below the suggestions, it says 'No results have been found.'

2.4. Maps

A new mode has been added to the search engine, allowing users to switch from the regular view to a map-based results view, showing profiles on a dynamic map.

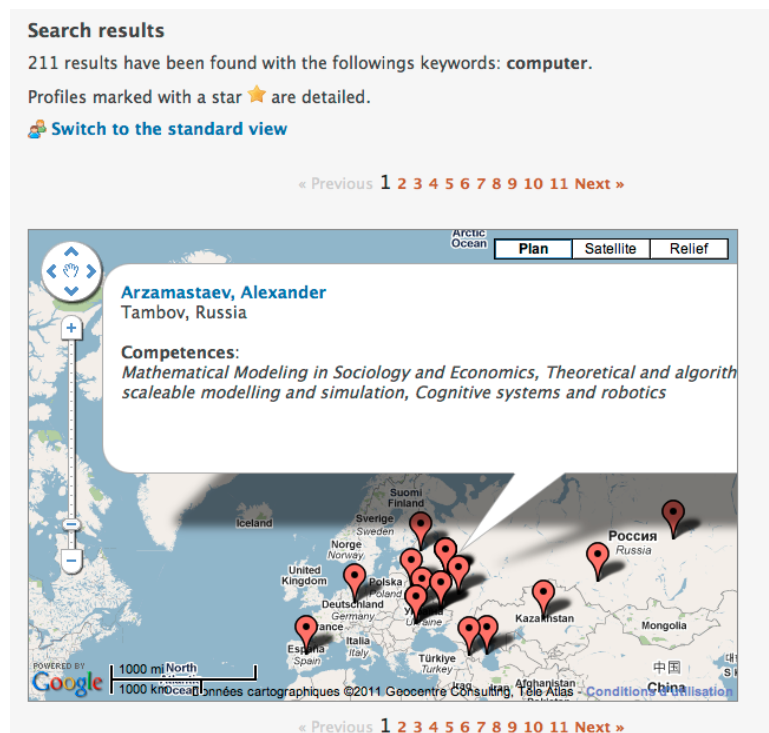


Figure 6 - Map-based search results

2.5. Document repository

As already explained in the first part, users can now upload various files into their profile.

2.6. Admin / status

Various tools have been added to the administrative section (new reporting tables, statistics) and the expert/organisation page has been updated to allow administrators to set status on experts in order, for instance, to get in touch with them. Also, a mini search engine has been added to the administrative section in order to facilitate management of experts and organisations.

Experts

Filter: [Filter](#)

Show only experts with contact needed value set to "Yes" | [Show all](#)

« Previous **1** 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ... 138 139 Next »

Fullname	Visits count	Contact needed		
Hayrapetyan, Arsen	74	No	Edit	Delete
Klimenko, Aleksandr	5	No	Edit	Delete
PRZYLECKI, Wojciech	1	No	Edit	Delete
Terziyan, Vagan	5	No	Edit	Delete
Zargaryan, Tigran	70	No	Edit	Delete

Figure 7 - Experts list in the admin area

2.7. User account

Visitors now have the opportunity to create an account on the platform and can save (e.g. bookmark) interested profiles. It is worth noting that this functionality does not concern experts and organisations but visitors would need to find experts/organisations on the platform: they can save profiles of interest and come back later. Then, based on saved profiles, those users can generate PDF reports on the fly.

As shown on the figure below, profiles can be added into the “profiles of interest” either from a search results list or from an expert/organisation page. From his profile, the user can then easily remove profiles he previously bookmarked.



Figure 8 - Bookmark a profile

2.8. Reports / figures

A new section on the public area has been made available to users in order to show statistics based on the competence platform database. The following figure is extracted from the website and it is worth noting that this component has been developed in a way it is quite simple to add extra figures if needed.

As it has been done for the generation of PDF profiles, figures are also generated “on-the-fly”, thus always providing up-to-date data.

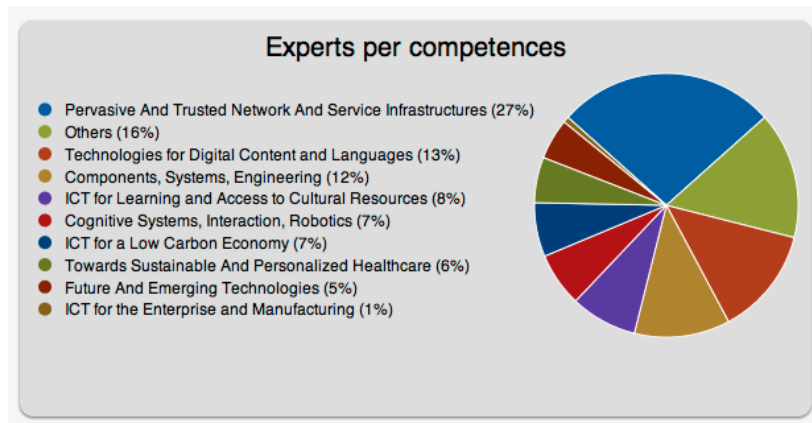


Figure 9 - Example of figure generated on the fly

2.9. Search over external locations

Through his/her profile, an expert is able to add a few websites, such as a blog, his/her company corporate website... In order to take advantage of this data, each time an expert add an external website to his profile, this website content is grabbed and associated to the expert's profile. This helps in providing more accurate search results.

2.10. Utility search links for experts

A few websites of publications (DBLP, CiteSeer) have been integrated on the platform to allow users to search data quite easily on external platforms. This functionality is provided as links to external website. These links are located at the bottom of expert pages.

3. Overall results of the exploitation of the Competences Platform

3.1. Subscribers statistics

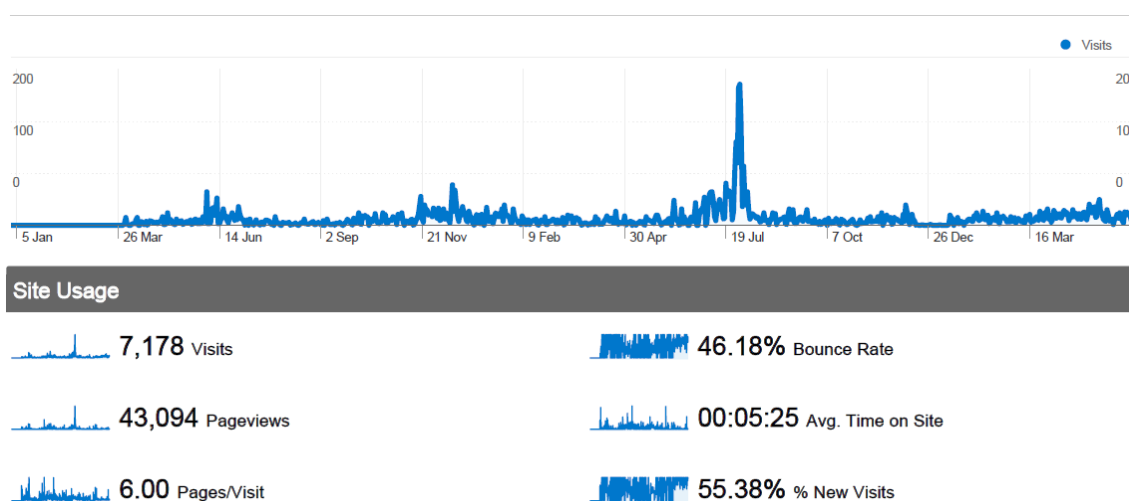
Up to day, the EECA ICT Competences Platform accounts 2777 experts subscribed from both EU and EECA countries and 414 research organisations.

The following table summarises the subscribers' data, related to the 12 EECA countries, covered by the EECA cluster.

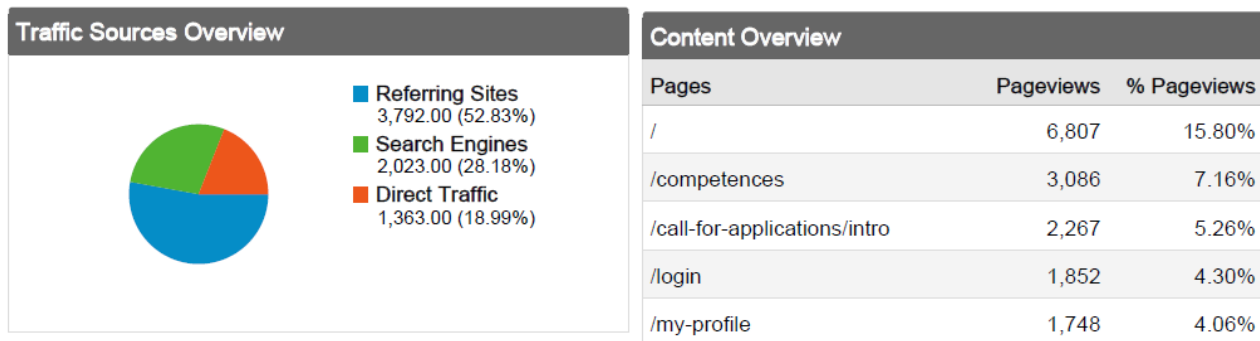
Country	Experts (all)	Experts (detailed profile)	Organisations	Total
Armenia	102	77	56	158
Azerbaijan	7	7	15	22
Belarus	67	50	53	120
Georgia	2	2	23	25
Kazakhstan	27	15	11	38
Kyrgyzstan	4	4	1	5
Moldova	11	10	20	31
Russia	1058	111	64	1122
Tajikistan	1	1	3	4
Turkmenistan	2	2	1	3
Ukraine	118	75	158	276
Uzbekistan	3	3	3	6
Total	1402	357	408	1810

3.2. Exploitation statistics

The following graphic present the visits of the EECA Competences platform since the ISTOK-SOYUZ project start (from 1 January 2009 to 8 June 2011).



Among various indicators shown on the previous figure, it is worth noting that the bounce rate has a good value for such a platform. Indeed, it indicates that 46% of visitors arrived and directly left. It means that more the 50% of visitors stayed and used the platform.



Regarding content overview, 7% of page viewed are under the competences virtual directory. The meaning of this data is that visiting users prefer accessing experts and organisations through the competences rather than from a regular text search.

Moreover, the EECA competence platform enjoyed a large geographical coverage and was visited from 96 countries during the implementation period of the ISTOK-SOYUZ project.

eeeca.istok-soyuz.eu
Map Overlay

1 Jan 2009 - 8 Jun 2011
Comparing to: Site



7,178 visits came from 96 countries/territories