

# Summary of the Above-the-Net services Roadmap Update Workshop

*8 November 2024*

The workshop aimed to review the state of the wider Above-the-Net Services thematic area and review the 2023 roadmap implementation, looking to identify areas needing further progress beyond the GN5-2 plan.

The invited NREN participants included Cloud Service Delivery Managers, Above-the-net Strategy group members, and CTO-level representatives.

The agenda included a summary of the 2023 CTO workshop and roadmap progress, an overview of broader changes beyond GÉANT, and breakout discussions.

The breakout groups included 15 EOSC member NRENs and associates, along with 7 non-mandated NRENs, totalling 22 organisations. The total number of participants, including GÉANT Cloud Team members from NRENs and other GÉANT staff, was 46.

## Summary of the Breakout Sessions

The breakout discussions focused on identifying roadmap gaps and new Above-the-net priorities, aligning NREN services with EOSC for effective collaboration and impact, and exploring sustainable funding and governance models for community service operations.

### *Roadmap Gaps*

The discussions highlighted key priorities and roadmap gaps. NRENs with a national mandate in EOSC focused on improving integration across network, security, and T&I, addressing AI, secure data, and national regulations. They emphasised AI, SaaS, and eduMEET improvements, with a need for a collective approach to data organisation and challenges in scaling above-the-net services. Some NRENs considered becoming full-stack entities, emphasising their role in data flow, AI services, and expanding GÉANT's role beyond networking. NRENs without strong EOSC ties mainly focused on transitioning to OCRE 2024, advancing cloud services, research data sharing, and compute capabilities.

### *Alignment of Services with EOSC*

For NRENs that are members and associates of EOSC, the discussion focused on varying levels of engagement, with some actively integrating EOSC services, such as fostering OCRE use or focusing on higher education. Efforts include monitoring the impact of the commercial sector on NREN services and enhancing interoperability with Core AAI. Some NRENs, like Belnet, have dedicated staff for EOSC-related activities, while others are exploring participation in EOSC coordination.

For NRENs not mandated in EOSC, the discussion highlighted their limited engagement in collaborative activities but noted the value in sharing knowledge and participating in joint initiatives, especially in information exchange. NRENs like SUNET emphasized the importance of supporting community-driven initiatives and questioned the need to wait for EOSC to lead, as they are already driving innovation and progress within their own services.

### *Sustaining Community Development*

For NRENs as EOSC members and associates, sustaining community development involves using service fees to cover costs, with some allocating a portion of OCRE's cost recovery fee for development. GÉANT's potential role in facilitating cross-border billing was discussed. The importance of using data, particularly from services like eduMEET and GÉANT Core AAI, to inform strategies and drive insights was highlighted, along with the potential for AI in shaping above-the-net services. There is also an emphasis on ensuring services provide a clear return on investment and are attractive to customers. Participants stressed the need for timely delivery of new service concepts, particularly in the GN5-2 project, to avoid missing strategic opportunities. They advocated for reaching a rough consensus on service concepts as soon as possible, enabling planning and implementation to begin without waiting for GN5-3.

For NRENs not mandated in EOSC, funding community service operations is primarily through project-based funding, like GÉANT funds and savings from the OCRE Framework. Effective governance should prioritise resource-sharing and collaboration across NRENs. However, there is uncertainty regarding how to support the central GÉANT service.