

Global Research & Education Network Leaders identify and work on top-challenges

September 14, 2012 – At a retreat in Geneva, Switzerland this week, thirteen leaders of National Research and Education Network (NREN) organizations from around the world met in a historic meeting to discuss global NREN strategy.

The Chief Executive Officers of AARNet (Australia), CANARIE (Canada), CERNET (China), CUDI (Mexico), DFN (Germany), Internet2 (USA), Janet (UK), NORDUnet (European Nordics), REANNZ (New Zealand), RedCLARA (Latin America), RENATER (France), RNP (Brazil), and SURFnet (The Netherlands) spent two days discussing the common strategic challenges they face in delivering advanced ICT services to the Research and Education communities they serve. With Research already a global endeavor and Education becoming increasingly more so, the CEOs recognized an urgent need to prepare a seamless global service delivery for users in the Research and Education community.

Outcomes of the meeting include the identification of four major challenges the CEOs face in delivering a high-performance global cyber-infrastructure (e-infrastructure). The four agreed upon challenges include (in no particular order of priority):

1. Global Network Architecture – A well-defined, inclusive, global architecture for, and a roadmap towards, interconnecting the Research and Education Networks on a global scale, taking into account input from the large science & education projects.
2. Global Federated Identity Management – A global, interworking architecture for, and a roadmap towards, the delivery of federated identity management for the R&E community to fully interoperate, using open standards and enabling global service delivery.
3. Global Realtime Communications Exchange – An interworking system for multi-domain video/audio conferencing systems, with directory systems that interwork based on open standards, using their identity federation & directories, capable of supporting virtual organizations.
4. Global service delivery – A model for global above-the-net service delivery to the NREN's constituencies, leveraging aggregation of supply and demand through scale.

For each of these challenges, the NREN leaders decided that a project owner be made available as soon as possible to drive the creation of an action plan and to deliver results as planned.

The retreat concluded with continued discussion on future methods for strengthening global NREN collaboration to achieve a high-performance global cyber-infrastructure. The gathering adjourned with the CEOs deciding to move forward in what they now call the "Global Research & Education Network CEOs Forum". A next meeting is planned for Spring 2013, with continued high-definition video conferencing meetings planned in the interim.