GRANT CONTRACT

- EXTERNAL ACTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION -

ENI/2019/407-452

(the 'contract')

The European Union, represented by the European Commission , (the 'contracting authority')

of the one part,

and

GÉANT Vereniging

Association
Registration number: 40535155
6B, Nieuw Amsterdam, Hoekenrode 3, 1102BR Amsterdam, The Netherlands
VAT number: NL007981752B01

hereinafter the 'coordinator'

and

Georgian Research and Educational Networking Association (GRENA)

Not-for-Profit Organisation
Registration number: 5/9-182
10 Chovelidze Street, 0108, Tbilisi, Georgia
VAT number: GE204931654

Research and Educational Networking Association of Moldova (RENAM)

Not-for-Profit Organisation
Registration number: 1089
168 Stefan cel Mare Avenue, Office 314, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
VAT number: MD1939501

United Institute of Informatics Problems of National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (UIIP NASB)

Not-for-Profit Organisation
Registration number: 190365895
6 Surganova Street, 220012, Minsk, Belarus
VAT number: 190365895

Users Association of Ukrainian Research and Academic Network (URAN Association)

Not-for-Profit Organisation
Registration number: 34662584
37 Peremogy Avenue, Building 2, Kiev, Ukraine
VAT number: UA346625826581

Institute for Informatics and Automation Problems of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (IIAP NAS RA)

Not-for-Profit Organisation
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BS

1 P. Sevak Street, 0014, Yerevan, Armenia
VAT number: AM00008698

Institute of Information Technology of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (IIT)

Not-for-Profit Organisation
Registration number: D-2233
9 B. Vahabzade Street, AZ1141, Baku, Azerbaijan
VAT number: AZ1300308241

Verein Zur Förderung Eines Deutschen Forschungsnetzes DFN Verein E.V. (DFN)

Not-for-Profit Organisation
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1 Alexanderpatz, 10178, Berlin, Germany
VAT number: DE1366/23822

Instytut Chemi bioorganiczej Polskiej Akademii Nauk (PSNC)

Not-for-Profit Organisation
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12/14 Noskowskiego, 61-704 Poznań, Poland
VAT number: 7770002062

Kaunas University of Technology (KTU)

Not-for-Profit Organisation
Registration number: 111950581
73 K. Donelaicio Str., LT44249, Kaunas, Lithuania
VAT number: LT119505811

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Not-for-Profit Organisation
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48 Moreelsepark, 3511EP, Utrecht, The Netherlands
VAT number: NL008960173B01

Consortium GARR

Not-for-Profit Organisation
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6 Via dei Tizii, 00185, Rome, Italy
VAT number: 075771141000

Agentia pentru Administrare a Retelei Nationale de Informatica pentru Educatie si Cercetare (AARNIEC /RoEduNet)

Not-for-Profit Organisation
Registration number: 24930183
21-25 D. Mendeleev Str., 010362, Bucharest, Romania
VAT number: RO24930183

National Infrastructures for Research and Technology (GRNET) SA
Registration number: 4121801B98389
7, Kifisias Av., Athens, GR11523, Greece
VAT number: EL094536469

Hariduse Infotehnologia Suhttasutus/ Information Technlogy Foundation for Education (HITSA)

BS

Non-for-profit Organisation
Registration number: 9005872
Akadeemia Tee 21/2, 12618 Tallinn, Estonia
VAT number: EE100816783

who have conferred powers of attorney for the purposes of the signature of the agreement to the coordinator[1], collectively referred to as 'beneficiary(ies)' where a provision applies without distinction to the coordinator and the co-beneficiary(ies)

of the other part,

(the 'parties')

have agreed as follows:

[1] Model mandate provided in Annex A to the guidelines for applicants.

BS

Special conditions

Article 1 — Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this contract is the award of a grant by the contracting authority to finance the implementation of the action entitled: "EU4Digital: Connecting Research and Education communities (EaPConnect)" (the 'action') described in Annex I.

1.2 The beneficiary(ies) shall be awarded the grant on the terms and conditions set out in this contract, which consists of these special conditions (the 'special conditions') and the annexes, which the beneficiary(ies) hereby declares it has noted and accepted.

1.3 The beneficiary(ies) accepts the grant and undertakes to be responsible for carrying out the action.

Article 2 — Implementation period of the action

2.1 This contract shall enter into force on the date when the second of the two parties signs.

2.2 Implementation of the action shall begin on: 1 July 2020.

2.3 The implementation period of the action, as laid down in Annex I, is 60 months.

2.4 The execution period of this contract shall end when the payment of the balance is made by the contracting authority and, in any event, at the latest 18 months after the end of the implementation period as stipulated in Article 2.3 unless postponed in accordance with Article 12.5 of Annex II.

Article 3 — Financing the action[2]

3.1 The total eligible costs are estimated at 10 526 316 EUR, as set out in Annex III.

3.2 The contracting authority undertakes to finance a maximum amount of 10 000 000 EUR.

The grant is further limited to 95% of the total eligible cost of the action specified in paragraph 1.

The final amount of the contracting authority's contribution shall be determined in accordance with Articles 14 and 17 of Annex II.

3.3 Pursuant to Article 14.8 of Annex II, 7% of the final amount of direct eligible costs of the Action established in accordance with Articles 14 and 17 of Annex II, may be claimed as indirect costs.

Article 4 — Reporting and payment arrangements

4.1 Payments shall be made in accordance with Article 15 of Annex II option no. 2 as set out in Article 15.1.

Initial pre-financing payment: 3 860 130 EUR.

Further pre-financing payments(s): 5 139 870 EUR (subject to the provisions of Annex II).

Balance of the final amount of the grant: (subject to the provisions of Annex II): 1 000 000 EUR

4.2 An electronic system will be used by the contracting authority and the beneficiary(ies) for all stages of implementation including, inter alia, management of the contract (amendments and notifications), reporting (including reporting on results) and payments. The beneficiary(ies) will be required to register in and use the appropriate electronic exchange system to allow for the e-management of the contract. With regard to interim and final reports, the beneficiary(ies) will be expected to use the forms in the electronic system for encoding and submitting the reports.

The electronic management of the contract through the aforementioned system may commence on the date on which implementation of the contract starts, as described in Article 2 above, or at a later date. In the latter case, the contracting authority will inform the beneficiary(ies) in writing that he/they will

[2] In case of action grants, note that the amount awarded and percentages stated in this article shall also be updated in Annex III Budget of the action, in the worksheet 'Expected sources of funding and summary of estimated costs'.

BS

be required to use the electronic system for all communications within a maximum period of 3 months.

Article 5 — Contact addresses

5.1 Any communication relating to this contract shall be in writing, state the number and title of the action and be sent to the following addresses:

For the contracting authority

Payment requests and attached reports, including requests for changes to bank account arrangements shall be sent to:

European Commission
Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

For the attention of:

Head of Unit R4 (Contracts and Finance - ENI)
Office J-54 05/205
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

Copies of the documents referred to above, and correspondence of any other nature, shall be sent to:

European Commission
Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

For the attention of:

Head of Unit R4 (Contracts and Finance - ENI)
Office J-54 05/205
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

A copy of the reports referred to in Article 4.1 shall be sent to the concerned service of the European Commission, at the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

For the attention of:

Head of Unit C1 (Georgia, Moldova & Neighbourhood Cross-Border Cooperation)
Office L-15 04/058
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

For the coordinator

GÉANT Vereniging
6B, Nieuw Amsterdam, Hoekenrode 3
1102BR Amsterdam
The Netherlands

5.2 The expenditure verification(s) referred to in Article 15.7 of Annex II will be carried out by:

Ernst & Young
Compass House
80 Newmarket Road
Cambridge CB5 8DZ
United Kingdom

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Article 6 — Annexes

6.1 The following documents are annexed to these special conditions and form an integral part of the contract:

Annex I:	Description of the action (including the logical framework of the project and the concept note)
Annex II:	General conditions applicable to European Union-financed grant contracts for external actions
Annex III:	Budget for the action (worksheets 1, 2 and 3)
Annex IV:	Procurement rules for beneficiary(ies)
Annex V:	Standard request for payment and financial identification form
Annex VI:	Model narrative and financial report
Annex VII:	Terms of reference for an expenditure verification of a European Union financed grant contract for external actions and model report of factual findings
Annex IX:	Standard template for Transfer of Asset Ownership
Annex X:	Communication and Visibility Plan

6.2 In the event of a conflict between the provisions of the present special conditions and any annex thereto, the special conditions shall take precedence. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of Annex II and those of the other annexes, those of Annex II shall take precedence.

Article 7 — Other specific conditions applying to the action

7.1 The general conditions in Annex II are supplemented by the following:

7.1.1 Article 14.11 d of Annex II shall be supplemented as follows:

Costs related to the acquisition of infrastructures, including where relevant purchase of land and/or building(s), providing connectivity to the beneficiary countries and incurred during the implementation period of the Action shall be eligible. The ownership of such infrastructures can be kept by GÉANT or transferred to the beneficiary countries at the end of the Action. Purchase of land and/or building(s) is subject to the prior written authorisation of the Contracting Authority upon duly justified request by the Coordinator.

7.2 The following derogations from Annex II shall apply:

7.2.1 By derogation to sections 2.1 and 2.2 of Annex IV and in accordance with section 2.3, the rules of nationality and origin shall not apply to the procurement of goods, works and services under budget items 6.1 ("Connectivity") and 6.2 ("Equipment and Software") of Annex III.

7.3 The entity acting as a data controller as provided for in Article 1.3 and 1.4 of the general conditions is:

European Commission
Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

Unit R2 (Legal Issues)
Office L-15 06/090
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

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Done in English in three originals, two originals being for the European Commission and one original being for the beneficiary(ies).

For the beneficiary(ies) [3]

Name ERIK HUIZER

Title CEO

Signature

Date 17-12-2019

For the contracting authority

Name: Mathieu Bousquet

Title Head of Unit NEAR.C1 Georgia, Moldova & Neighbourhood Cross-Border Cooperation

Signature

Date

4 December 2019.

[3] In accordance with the mandate conferred on the coordinator, (see application form), the coordinator signs this contract also on behalf of the other beneficiaries, who, therefore, do not need to individually sign this contract to become parties to it.

ANNEX I

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

Title of the Action:	EU4Digital: Connecting Research and Education communities (EaPConnect2)
Grant Agreement No:	ENI/2019/407-452
Locations of the Action:	Ukraine, Belarus, Republic of Moldova[1], Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia (Eastern Partnership countries)
Name of the Coordinator:	GÉANT Association
Total Duration of the Action:	60 months
Budget:	EUR 10.526.000 (95% EU contribution)
Partner(s):	The project will be managed by GÉANT Association. The organisations representing the National Research and Education Networks of the participating EaP countries are Beneficiaries of the Action.
Target Group(s):	Research organisations/Researchers; Educational organisations (schools, universities); Students of the Eastern Partnership countries
Final Beneficiaries:	The general population of Eastern Partnership countries

[1] Hereinafter referred to as Moldova.

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List of Acronyms

CERT	Computer Emergency Response Team
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EaPEC	Eastern Partnership E-infrastructure Conference
EC	European Commission
EDI	European Data Infrastructure
EOSC	European Open Science Cloud
ERA	European Research Area
EU	European Union
EYR	Enlighten Your Research
FAIR	Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (data principles)
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDI	ICT Development Index
IdP	Identity Provider
IRU	Indefeasible Right of Use
LOLA	LOw LAtency audio visual streaming system
NREN	National Research and Education Network
OpenAIRE	Open Access Infrastructure for Research in Europe
PoP	Point of Presence – the point at which two or more different networks or communication devices build a connection with each other
R&E	Research and Education
RTD	Research and Technological Development
SCM	Steering Committee Meeting
SP	Service Provider
ToR	Terms of Reference

1 Description

1.1 Summary

The “Eastern Partnership Connect” (“EaPConnect”) project was first launched by the European Union (EU) in 2015 to improve EaP intra-regional connectivity and facilitate participation of local scientists, students and academics in EU and global Research and Education (R&E) collaborations.

Thanks to EaPConnect, the national R&E networks (NRENs) in the six EaP countries are now interconnected and largely integrated into the pan-European GÉANT network, which is a fundamental component of Europe's e-infrastructure ecosystem for the promotion of scientific excellence, research, education and innovation. In collaboration with it its National Research and Education Network (NREN) partners across Europe, GÉANT also provides an integrated catalogue of connectivity, collaboration and identity services, giving users in the Research and Education community unmatched, highly reliable and very fast access to data all over the world.

Through seamless and secure connectivity with similar network infrastructures in all continents, reaching over 50 million users in 10,000 R&E institutions across Europe and in more than 100 countries in the rest of the world, the GÉANT Partnership helps ensure that Europe remains at the forefront of research worldwide.

Through its Procurement activities, since its beginning EaPConnect has succeeded in lowering the prices for connectivity by 80% while at the same time improving the resilience, security and speed of Internet connections in the South Caucasus region. The money thus saved by the EaPConnect partners can be invested in the development of services and skills such as virtualised computing resources, national cloud infrastructure or dedicated applications in the field of identity management that strengthen their national research and education networks (NRENs), better supporting their countries’ research and education communities and their ability to collaborate with peers in Europe and other world regions.

At the same time, Wi-Fi coverage for students and researchers in the region has increased by 640% (from 38 to 244 service locations). To date around one million scientists, academics and students at over 420 institutions across the region have benefited from this connectivity boost.

The present Action will build on the work done by EaPConnect and enhance the use of the newly established connectivity, targeting a broader user base and fostering the sustainability of EaP NRENs, supporting them to move towards full integration as full rights members of the GÉANT organisation based on GÉANT’s cost sharing model. This will empower R&E institutions in the EaP countries to participate as beneficiaries in a wider range of H2020 or Horizon Europe projects.

More concretely, network coverage for students, lecturers and researchers in the EaP countries will be increased by up to 70-80 %. The use of existing NREN services (eduroam, eduGAIN, cloud, cyber-security, LOLA, etc.) will be increased by 100% and new services will be implemented based on a pipeline of priorities (digitisation of cultural heritage, e-health, artificial intelligence, big data processing, IT education). This will boost the exchange of information and cooperation between the Research and Education communities in the EaP region and Europe.

1.2 Objectives of the Action

The overall objective of the Action is to bring together the research and education communities in Europe and the EaP region and bridge the digital divide.

The demand for digital services to support collaboration in research and education in the target region is no less than that of EU countries. All countries in the Eastern Partnership region have a large number of young and talented women and men whose future depends heavily on the speedy development of the information society, and without which their societies are likely to continue experiencing a significant brain drain. Their education, cultural and scientific sectors are promising, with several centres of excellence, but these face severe limitations at the level of international collaboration with respect to their counterparts in the European Union and other world regions.

Moreover, the persistent gender inequality and lack of women in higher positions in academia in the EaP region must be noted. This imbalance needs to be addressed in the pursuit of equal opportunities as well as of quality higher education and innovative science.

Indeed, National Research and Education Networks (NRENs), the communication layer of e-Infrastructures, are still far from being fully developed in the Eastern Partnership region, although those in the Eastern European region are better connected then those in the South Caucasus region, thanks to their geographical location and a more advanced telecommunications market with a stronger history of cooperation with the Romanian and Polish NRENs.

The Action will strive to diminish the digital divide by enhancing access for these NRENs to high-speed and highly reliable connectivity via the pan-European network for research and education GÉANT as well as by supporting the development of compatible infrastructure and of human capacities and skills in the region to foster its integration into the European Research Area (ERA).

The specific objectives of the Action are:

- **SO1**: Extend network infrastructure (digital highways) to scale-up scientific exchange across borders.
- **SO2**: Increase the use of services implemented under EaPConnect and offer new services to enhance international cooperation in R&E.
- **SO3**: Strengthen EaP NRENs' position in the national R&E ecosystems.

1.3 Relevance of the Action

As stated in the "Digital4Development" Staff Working Document[2] outlining the European Commission's approach to mainstreaming digital technologies into EU development policy:

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[2] https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/swd-digital4development_part1_v3.pdf.

"Digital technologies (alias information and communication technologies - ICT) and services are proven enablers of sustainable development and inclusive growth. They can be key to improving lives even in the poorest countries, in particular by empowering women and girls, enhancing democratic governance and transparency, and boosting productivity and job creation. Nevertheless, connectivity and affordability remain a problem both across and within regions, since there are large variations between high- and lower income countries and between cities and rural areas."

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which highlights the importance of information and communication technologies. Reference to ICT can be found explicitly as a target under Sustainable Development Goal 9 *"Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation"*[3], while ICT is also referenced in the targets related to climate change, gender equality and women's empowerment, private sector development, education and health. Also Goal 4.3 *"By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university"* and Goal 5.5 *Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life* will be addressed in this programme. While the 2030 Agenda sets out a comprehensive vision of what needs to be achieved to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development, EU development policy is a critical part of the overall EU response to that Agenda.

Sustainable economic and social development and support to transformation processes are at the heart of the EU's contribution to stabilising the neighbourhood. Digital economy is a top priority for EU cooperation with the EaP countries, as underlined in the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy[3] (Nov. 2015): "support for the digital economy should be stepped up, to harmonise the digital environments between the EU and its neighbours. This will create jobs, growth and innovation, particularly benefiting the young in terms of opportunities for education and employment, locally or at a distance, and for starting up low initial capital businesses". In addition to underpinning macroeconomic stability through sound economic policies, EaP countries need to face the challenge of driving their economic transition process forward with a view to creating an attractive environment and a level playing-field for investments and business, as well as to improving their capacity to take advantage of trade opportunities with the EU and with each other.

The modernisation of economies is another important priority. In particular, the digital economy is an area with yet untapped potential for both the EU and the EaP partner countries for social and economic development, as well as for the creation of growth and jobs.

This objective is also in line with deliverable no.7 "Harmonisation of Digital Markets" under priority I "Economic Development and Market Opportunities" of the adopted Joint Staff Working Document "Eastern partnership – Focusing on key priorities and deliverables"[4]. This

[3] http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/documents/2015/151118_joint-communication_review-of-the-enp_en.pdf

[4] https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/near-eeas_joint_swd_2016467_0.pdf

establishes an ambitious set of deliverables by 2020 on digital harmonisation, ranging from the reduction of roaming charges to cyber security with the overall aim being "to eliminate existing obstacles and barriers to the provision of pan-European online services for citizens, public administrations and businesses. This will result in better services, at better prices and more choice; it will attract investments and boost trade and employment. Existing companies will be able to grow faster and start-ups will be created more easily. The brain drain will be reversed."

Seen as a means to drive economic growth and create jobs, Horizon 2020 (H2020) is the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme ever, with nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020) – in addition to the private investment that this money will attract.

The pan-European data network for the research and education community GÉANT is part of the H2020 framework. It interconnects national research and education networks (NRENs) across Europe, enabling collaboration on projects ranging from biological science, to earth observation, to arts and culture. GÉANT combines a high-bandwidth, high-capacity 50,000 km network with a growing range of services. It provides the best digital infrastructure to ensure that Europe remains at the forefront of research and has a vital role in ensuring H2020 project participants are fully able to collaborate, share and access data, discuss and learn together, and test their innovations across the network unimpeded.

The EaPConnect project has extended GÉANT's network and services to the EaP countries, providing them with direct links to a pan-European network and allowing their participation in regional and international research programmes such as H2020. Thanks to EaPConnect, users in the EaP countries are now able to collaborate with their counterparts at more than 10,000 research and education establishments in Europe.

Problem Analysis

The main issue addressed by this Action is the digital divide that is causing delays in the development of the education and research sector in the EaP countries. Access to information and exchanges with the outside world is one of most important attributes of a successful education system. With the fast development of ICT, access to global information sources has become a crucial element towards the competitiveness of a country and its underdevelopment is a major factor in causing some economies to lag behind.

In the countries of the EaP region, access to R&E networks, exchange of information between scientific groups and knowledge exchange are still limited. As a result, a large segment of the population are being excluded from the benefits that access to high-speed, reliable R&E networks would provide. The sectors most affected by these limitations are education and research where access to up-to-date information is a pre-condition for quality.

However, since 2015 the EaPConnect project has strongly promoted the use of information technologies in the region. It has contributed to the modernisation of education systems and progress in research by facilitating access by highly skilled scientists, researchers and students to information and increasing their exchanges with the rest of the world.

One of the main achievements of EaPConnect is the establishment of a data link to the GÉANT network in the EaP countries. By the end of 2018, all six beneficiary countries were connected through the project-funded internet links.

Country/ Connectivity	2015 (prior to project start)	2016	2017	2018	2019
Georgia	0.3Gbps	1Gbps	2.5Gbps	3Gbps	5Gbps
Armenia	0.3Gbps	1Gbps	1.5Gbps	1.5Gbps	3Gbps
Azerbaijan	0.3Gbps	1Gbps	1.5Gbps	1.5Gbps	4Gbps
Moldova	1Gbps	1Gbps	1Gbps	10Gbps	10Gbps
Belarus	1Gbps	5Gbps	10Gbps	10Gbps	10Gbps
Ukraine	1Gbps	1Gbps	15Gbps	15Gbps	15Gbps

Table 1: Connectivity capacity developments in EaPConnect

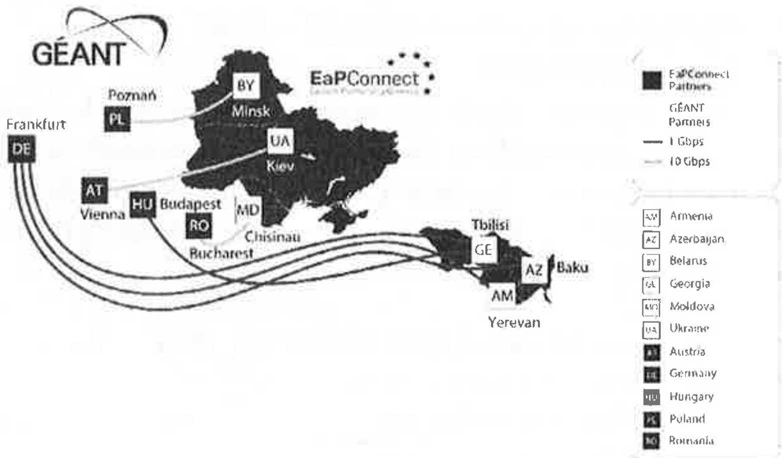

Figure 1: Overview of EaP region links to the pan-European GÉANT network, end of 2018.

Having established the physical network connections, new services for the research and education community were developed and the usage of the existing services was increased. The following section gives an overview of the core services that were made available to the partners under EaPConnect:

1. *eduroam* – Wi-Fi education roaming, is a secure, world-wide roaming access service developed for the research and education community. The service was deployed successfully in all six beneficiary partner countries. The number of service locations

increased as well as the number of national and international users of the service. In 2018 eduroam coverage increased by 136 % overall in the region (from 179 to 244 service locations).

2. *eduGAIN* – interconnects identity federations around the world, simplifying access to content, services and resources for the global research and education community. There are 27 federated entities (IdPs and SPs) deployed in the EaP region.
3. *perfSONAR* – a network monitoring service across multiple domains that provides information about the network's connectivity and problems on the links that could impact the successful delivery of the data being exchanged. Equipment was deployed in five of the six EaP countries (excluding Azerbaijan). The number of deployed nodes in the region increased by 60% from 16 to 27 during 2018.
4. *IaaS* – Infrastructure as a Service (a form of cloud computing that provides virtualised computing resources over the internet) deployed independently using local computational resources by NREN organisations enabling the service for the scientific and education community.
5. *Cloud* – all six EaP countries are designing and implementing national cloud infrastructures as well as investigating opportunities to use the GÉANT Clouds Framework Agreement.
6. *Filesender* – allows R&E users to securely and easily send arbitrarily large files to other users.
7. LOLA – LOw LAtency audio visual streaming system. High quality video/audio connection between two different geographical locations.
8. *Digitisation of Cultural Heritage* – three pilot projects were selected in Armenia, Belarus and Ukraine.
9. *Cyber-security* – work is in progress on the development of cyber-security services. Georgia and Moldova have security and incident response teams (CERTs) that are members of the European cyber-security community Trusted Introducer TI. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus are providing consultation and support on cyber-security issues via network operation centre staff.

Thanks to EaPConnect, as of 2019 around one million scientists, academics and students at over 420 institutions across the region benefit from this connectivity boost. The EaPConnect project has proved successful and strategic towards helping bring EaP and EU countries together.

Another area of concern in the region addressed by the Action is that of gender disparity in research and higher education institutions, which are seen to reproduce social values leading to gender bias/discrimination. Women and men tend to concentrate in certain scientific fields (horizontal segregation). The stereotypical subject choices of students are a real concern and in addition top positions are more frequently occupied by men.

The comparison of the gender ratio of academic staff by position in the EaP region shows that women may be well represented in lower faculty positions, whereas there is a sharp downturn of women's number in higher positions such as full professors in department staff, chairs of departments, deans, vice-rectors and rectors. Women are also underrepresented in the governing boards and scientific councils. For instance, the share of women at high-level positions in Georgia and Belarus are at 20% while Azerbaijan, Armenia and Moldova have 10% of women at the helm of universities.[5] Moreover, research and teaching often seem to disregard the importance of having a gender dimension in their approach, content and analysis. The result is that the viewpoints, experiences and needs of half the population risk being overlooked or dismissed. This in turn leads to products, services and policies that are less than optimal because they are targeted at and serve only a portion of society.[6]

Therefore, this action will particularly emphasise the need to ensure an equal balance of women and men in all its activities and give particular attention to supporting research that can have a positive impact on gender equality. This will contribute to further development and modernisation in the region, and support democracy building.

Target Groups

The target group of the EaPConnect2 project will be research and educational institutions in the Eastern Partnership countries. Universities and research centres, being financed through public budgets, often lack the resources to provide access to a high speed, reliable R&E network linking to R&E organisations in Europe and worldwide. To meet the specialised needs of research and educational institutions, the NRENs of EaP countries will be the primary beneficiaries of the project, as they are serving to provide high-speed connectivity and information technology services to the students, lecturers and researchers.

Final Beneficiaries

The final beneficiaries of EaPConnect2 network will be the citizens of the Eastern Partnership countries that would benefit by extension from their institutions having access to new information technologies and high-quality scientific content. This would on the one hand result in improved education and research possibilities, and on the other in the emerging use of information technologies in other sectors such as medicine, meteorology and earth science. Broadening the use of information technologies could improve the quality of these public services, increase openness towards global developments, prevent brain drain and contribute to the economic growth in the region.

The final beneficiary groups may range for example from university students enabled to engage in more sophisticated research collaboration, to patients at a hospital or remote health centre that can be operated by a national surgeon to cure a complex or rare medical condition that requires the help of a doctor or surgeon from another part of the world.

1.4 Expected Outcomes

The main activity of EaPConnect2 will be to extend network infrastructure (digital highways) in the region and towards GÉANT and increase the use of services implemented under EaPConnect, and in addition offer new services to enhance international cooperation in

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[5] Women in Power and Decision-Making in the Eastern Partnership Countries, 2015– HiQSTEP

[6] A publication by the European Institute for Gender Equality: Gender equality in academia and research, (2016)

R&E. Another area of focus will be strengthening EaP NRENs' position in the national R&E ecosystems.

The outputs and expected results of the Action include:

- **Output 1**: Network infrastructure is further developed and better fulfils the needs of research and education communities.
- **Output 2:** Additional services are provided and existing services are further promoted.
- **Output 3:** Adequate technical capacity is built within education and research communities.
- **Output 4:** EaP NRENs' financial sustainability conditions are improved.

The present Action will continue bringing together the research and education communities in Europe and the EaP region by enabling unrestricted scientific exchange across borders and enhancing international cooperation in education.

In addition, it is proposed to procure long-term (10-15 years) leases, with the upfront costs claimed from the project, for the communication channels (Indefeasible Right of Use IRU), provided IRUs are effectively proven to be the most cost-effective solution for the long-term sustainability of communication infrastructure for the region.
The project will be built on three main components:

1. Purchase of network infrastructure (or Indefeasible Right of Use of networks) to ensure access to digital highways (Output 1);
2. Development of information technology services to enhance international cooperation in education and research (Output 2);
3. Human capacity building and knowledge transfer to ensure sustainability (Outputs 3 and 4).

2 Work Plan

2.1 Description of Activities

The project comprises six work packages, including four that reflect the Outputs of the Action and two supporting ones. The work packages and their activities are described below.

WP0 – Project Management and Reporting

This work package provides the overall coordination and administration of the project and contributes to the achievement of all Action outputs. It includes the following activities:

1. Project management:
   - Facilitating the daily administration of the project.
   - Establishing the Consortium Agreement with project partners.

   - Setting up the project Technical Committee and facilitating its face-to-face meetings (twice per year).
   - Establishing Collaboration Agreements with the EU NRENs.
2. Financial management:
   - Managing the project budget and cashflow.
   - Administering the project cost share.
   - Financial reporting.
   - Project audits.
3. Reporting and monitoring:
   - Fulfilling contractual reporting obligations e.g. Interim Narrative Report.
   - Collection of required data for reporting on logframe indicators and monitoring the project's progress.
4. Internal communication:
   - Updating all partners on project developments and achievements via a regular newsletter.

WP0 Manpower requirements:

- Project Manager
- Technical project Manager
- Project Accountant
- Accountant Assistant
- EaP NRENs

The project Technical Committee will consist of the EaP NREN representatives and a subset of the representatives of the EU NRENs selected amongst those that are Co-beneficiaries in the Grant Agreement. The Terms of References (ToR) of the Technical Committee will be defined at the start of the project. Meetings shall take place three times per year, including two technical meetings held alongside the GÉANT General Assemblies, in June and November respectively, and one Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) held in March and led by the European Commission, to which relevant stakeholders will be invited.

The results of the project will be reviewed at the annual SMC led by the EC, which will guide the way forward with the main stakeholders (including GÉANT, EaP and EU project partners, relevant Ministries, EU4Digital project team members, etc.).

Other EC services (such as DG CNECT, RTD, the European External Action Service, and the relevant EU Delegations) will be closely associated with the project. Furthermore, technical meetings with the EC and regular updates with EU Delegations will take place throughout the year in between the annual steering committees (and during the inception phase, with a view in particular to finding synergies and possible overlaps with bilateral projects).

The project will be implemented under the responsibility of GÉANT Association, who will allocate one project manager to coordinate the actions, ensure progress is made and report to the European Commission both through regular contact and when milestones are reached or exceptions identified. The project manager will mobilise human resources from GÉANT (notably for the procurement and operation of the network) as well as experts from European NRENs and local NRENs as appropriate. The European Commission will review and approve reports.

WP0 Milestones:

- M1.1 Cost-sharing model to be defined and signed by all EaP NRENs.

WP1 – Connectivity and Network Management

This work package corresponds to Output 1: Network infrastructure is further developed and fulfils the needs of the research and education communities.

The Performance Indicators for this work package are:

1. Amount of data exchanged between the R&E communities in the EaP region and Europe (in Peta Bytes per year – 25 PB/y by Year 5).
2. Number of R&E institutions integrated in GÉANT network and using the established infrastructure – 640.
3. Number of countries using international Indefeasible Rights of Use (IRUs) – at least 4.
4. Number of network users (gender disaggregated) – 1.5 million of which at least 40% women.

This work package aims to further develop connectivity, both international (between an EaP countries and GÉANT) and internal (within the EaP countries), as well as manage network infrastructure and its reliable operation in the EaP countries, and will be led by a Technical Project Manager. The EaPConnect project has made excellent progress in reducing international connectivity costs in the region. Fig. 1 shows the monthly prices per Mbps (Megabit per second) for the EaP countries, which have recorded a significant decrease in connectivity prices obtained through the tenders conducted as part of the project. During a three-year period, international connectivity prices decreased by 2.7 times in Armenia, 14 times in Azerbaijan, 4.7 times in Georgia and 2.3 times in Belarus.

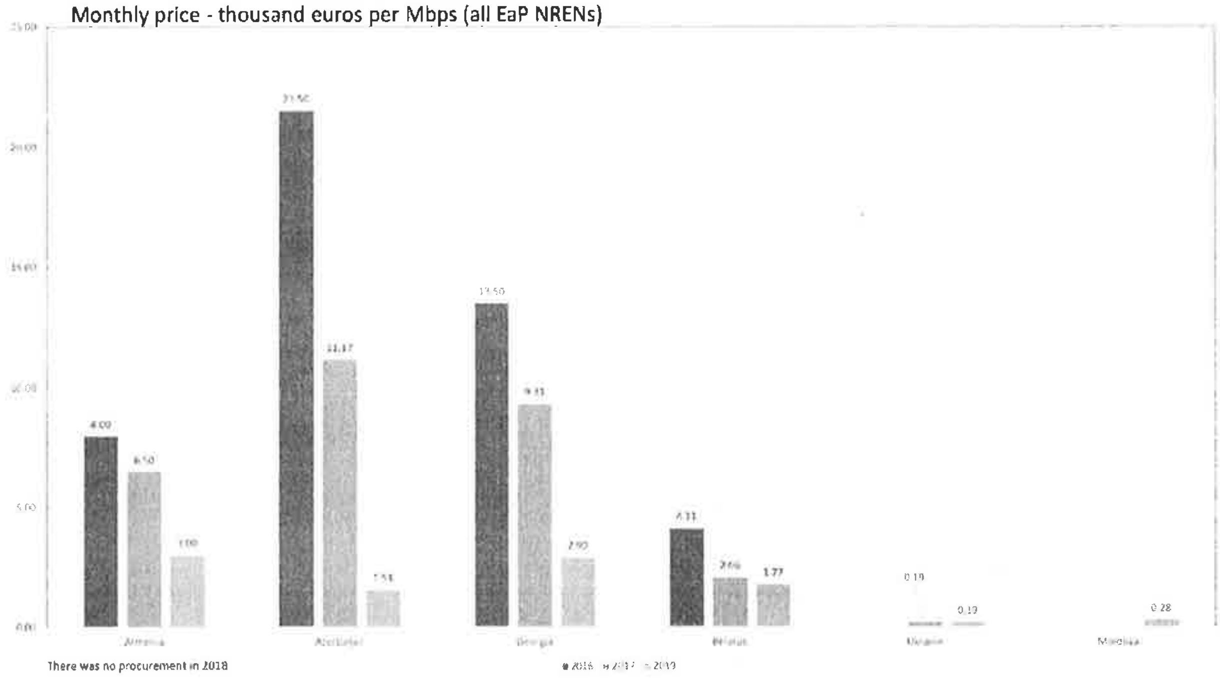

Figure 1: Connectivity prices for EaP countries

Work will continue to build on the results achieved by the EaPConnect project. The main strategy will be to procure long-term (10-15 years) IRU for needed communication channels for the region. This approach will be used both for international and internal connectivity, however, priority will be given to international channels. The IRU approach is considered more cost efficient compared to the standard scheme of leasing channels for one or a few years, and also ensures the sustainability and reliability of the established infrastructure. This is in line with the objectives of a number of related EC-funded projects, including GN4-3N, the 100% IRU-funded project by DG CNECT for the update of the European R&E network infrastructure, BELLA-S, also funded by DG CNECT, and the AfricaConnect and BELLA-T projects funded by DG DEVCO.

It is planned that by the end of the project at least four EaP countries should be using IRU connectivity. Where IRU is not feasible for regulatory or financial reasons, leasing communication channels for the period of the duration of the project will be considered and implemented where possible.

A study for a possible network topology for the region and its integration into the European network infrastructure was started during the EaPConnect project. Information about existing communication line systems was collected and analysed at the Network Architecture workshop that took place on 29-30 January 2019 in Kiev, Ukraine. The following main points were agreed upon by the technical representatives from EaP NRENs and GÉANT at the workshop:

- The proposal to create GÉANT network access Points of Presence (PoPs) in each of the EaP countries to manage routing and aggregation of international traffic was generally accepted as a good way forward. The purpose of these PoPs is twofold: to aggregate traffic from multiple NRENs; and to allow regional meshing. It was also recognised that creating a GÉANT PoP in EaP countries is a logical step on the way to fully integrating EaP NRENs into the GÉANT network's European topology.

- The initial possible GÉANT PoP locations to be investigated are Kiev, Chisinau and Tbilisi, with future potential extensions to Yerevan and Baku (Figure 2). Minsk is also a desirable location but currently not accessible due to local regulations.

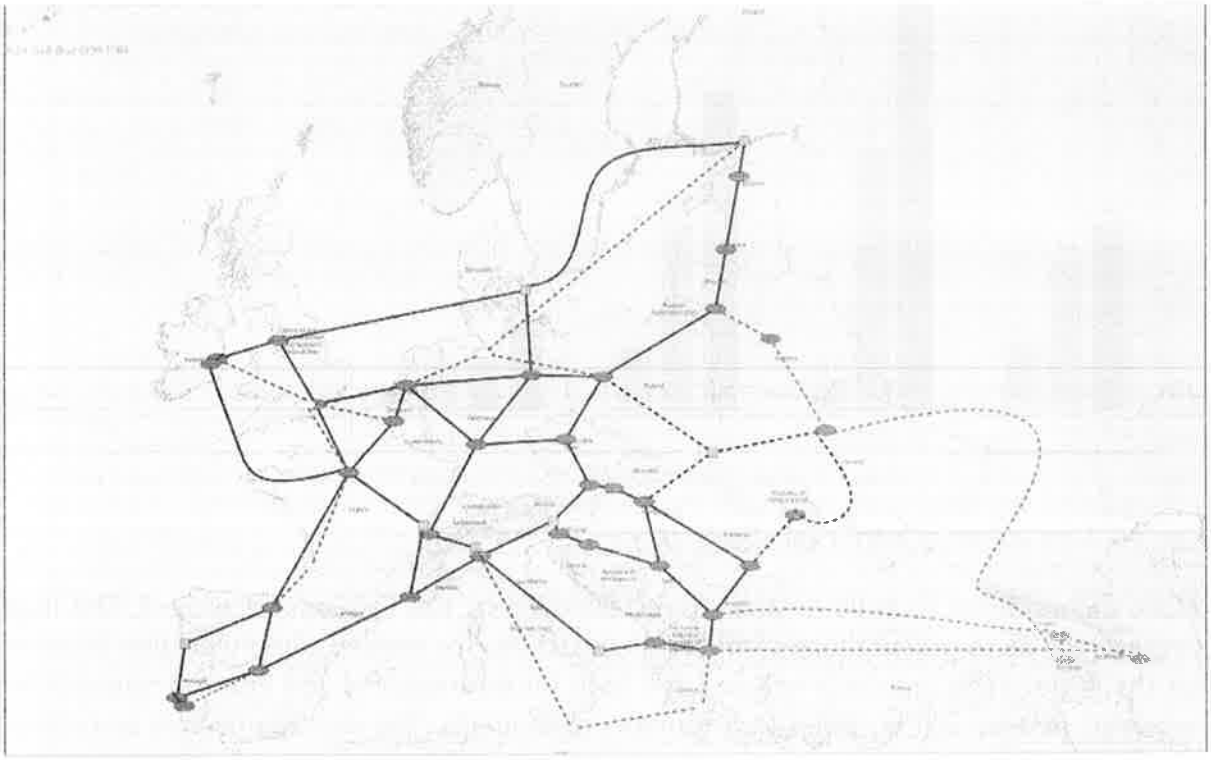

Figure 2: Preliminary plans for EaP network integration into the GÉANT backbone

The final network topology for international connectivity will reflect the objectives of the DG CNECT-funded GN3-4N project and will be defined in close cooperation between the EaP NREN and GÉANT network operations teams. Two connections out of each country will be set up to ensure redundancy and higher reliability of the network.

Currently 420 R&E institutions in EaP countries are connected to the GÉANT network. The project aims to connect 220 new institutions to achieve a 75% network coverage of research and education institutions in EaP countries. Hence, for internal connectivity cities with a significant number of students, lecturers and researchers, and with large research facilities and datacentres will be considered. All EaP NRENs will prepare detailed plans for internal connectivity development taking into account available financial resources and sustainability. The plans developed will be discussed and agreed with the project Steering Committee. The plans will include connection to the EU4Innovation higher education initiatives financed by EU such as the EU Tumo Convergence Center in Yerevan. A full list of complementary initiatives will be developed at the beginning of the Action in collaboration with the EU Delegations in the six EaP countries. It is foreseen that the amount of data exchanged between the R&E communities in the EaP region and Europe (in Peta Byte per year) will increase approximately by 50% and will reach 25 PB/y in the fifth year of the project.

Work Package 1 is dedicated to ensuring that the EaP NRENs have the same connectivity services as their EU counterparts. It covers all design, procurement, deployment, and operation activities for these connectivity services, including:

- Design, procurement and deployment of optical infrastructure and networking equipment for international connectivity. This activity will cover development and approval of international connectivity topology for EaP countries, as well as procurement and deployment of IRU links and their integration into the GÉANT topology. If IRU solutions are not feasible, re-tendering of existing links will be performed in order to reduce connectivity costs.
- Design, procurement and deployment of optical infrastructure and networking equipment for connectivity within the countries. At the initial stage, internal connectivity plans for each NREN will be developed and approved by the project Steering Committee. Procurement of internal links (IRUs or leased lines) will be performed according to the approved plan.
- Provision of a network management service by the GÉANT Network Operations Centre for international links and by the appropriate NRENs' NOC for internal links.
- Addressing specific connectivity needs for the research centres in the region. Some organisations with dedicated connectivity needs have already been identified (high energy physics centres, astrophysical observatories, datacentres, etc.). Their requirements will be considered during development and implementation of internal connectivity plans.

WP1 Milestones:

- M 2.1 International connectivity topology for EaP countries that will serve as a basis for procurement activities.

WP1 Manpower requirements:

- Technical staff of EaP NRENs
- Technical Project Manager (GÉANT)
- Procurement Specialist (GÉANT)
- GÉANT Operations Centre
- Technical Advisers from EU NRENs

WP2 – Services and cooperation with EU e-infrastructures

This work package corresponds to Output 2: Additional services are provided, and existing services are further promoted.

The Performance Indicators for this work package are:

- Number of Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects with an EaP NREN partner enabled thanks to the connection to GÉANT network – 35.
- Number of services provided – 15.
- Services penetration rate (usage) broken down by:

- Number of authorisation of EaP eduroam users abroad – 430.000/year;
- Number of eduGAIN federated entities (IdPs and SPs) – 89;
- Number of Cloud user organisations – 290.

Work Package 2 will work to increase access to services of value to the R&E community in the region. Specifically, it will establish a national or centralised framework of services for R&E institutions in the EaP region to enable seamless management of the identity of their users, and integration with the global trust, identity, and security frameworks. In this way, university students, researchers, and staff will benefit from a global open and secure scientific information environment. Along with connectivity, this action is key to enabling the full integration of the scientific and research communities of EaP countries with their European and global counterparts.

EaPConnect has already added value to each EaP NREN's service portfolio (Fig.3), attracting further user engagement.

NREN/Service	eduroam	EduGAIN	perfSONAR	Clouds	Filesender	LOLA	Digitisation of Cultural Heritage	Cyber-security
ASNET-AM	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
AzScienceNet	V			V		V		V
UIIP NASB	V	V	V	V		V	V	V
GRENA	V	V	V	V				V
RENAM	V	V	V	V	V			V
URAN	V	V	V	V	V		V	V

Table 2: Services enabled during the first phase of EaPConnect

The second phase will build on these achievements and thus allow NRENs to fully benefit from global R&E networking opportunities. The following activities are covered in this work package:

- Promotional activities in the form of workshops and presentations and technical support to increase the number of users of services implemented under EaPConnect. This work will be performed with the support of WP3 and WP5.
- Identify and enable new services (such as digitisation of cultural heritage, audio visual streaming systems, e-health, artificial intelligence, big data processing, IT education, etc.), based on a pipeline of priorities defined according to the needs of user communities. In addition, new network services that are under development at GÉANT (e.g. Multi-Domain VPN, Firewall on Demand, network service orchestration and automation, etc.) will be considered for implementation. This will be done in close cooperation with GN4-3 WP3 T1 Partner Relations and Engagement and WP1 T6 Global Partnerships activities and will ensure increased interaction and knowledge sharing with European partners.
- Incubator for new services – This activity should facilitate implementing any new and unforeseen services for the R&E communities in the region. This facilitation should include dedicating infrastructure resources and environments suitable for proofing

concepts and testing new services. By the end of the project, the aim is to increase the number of services provided by EaP NRENs to 15.

- Enable the integration of the national facilities of the EaP countries (telescopes, synchrotrons, etc.) and datasets (climate, life science, earth science, agriculture, cultural heritage, etc.) into pan-European user communities to support cooperation with European research communities. This will be done in synergy with the GN4-3 WP3 T2 Research Engagement activity.
- Establish cooperation within European e-infrastructure initiatives, including the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), the European Data Infrastructure (EDI) and other EC-led flagships to further enhance cooperation with EU R&E counterparts, although it should be mentioned that the NRENs of Armenia, Georgia and Moldova are already participating in some EOSC activities. It is planned to increase involvement of EaP NRENs in EU e-infrastructure initiatives and in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe Programmes by participation in 35 projects during the project lifetime.

WP2 will support and promote the application of Open Science principles in the region, the development of Open Access repositories and the provision of national directories integrated into global Open Access directories, including those developed by the OpenAIRE project. The following steps will be taken to support these activities:

- Selection and implementation of relevant technologies and platforms, and provision of the necessary technical, organisational and legal guidelines, tools, mechanisms and schemes to support their implementation in a harmonised and coordinated fashion.
- Adoption of FAIR guidelines (to make research data Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) in regional and local contexts by ensuring the FAIRness of data repositories in a standardised and interoperable fashion.
- Support the integration of national repositories ensuring the FAIRness of their operation.

These activities will facilitate introduction of the Open Science principles, the FAIRness of the research data repositories in the region and eventually their inclusion in the EOSC service catalogue and the OpenAIRE ecosystem. There is already both an understanding of and demand for open research data sharing in the EaP region, i.e. to enable publication of their research results and have access to Open repositories. By moving towards Open Science, the project will fulfil users' real requirements as well as align with the Open Science vision of national governments. Additionally, the project will financially support open access for publications that relate to the EaP NRENs' activities.

<u>WP2 Manpower requirements:</u>

- Technical staff of EaP NRENs
- Technical Advisers from EU NRENs
- Project Manager (GÉANT)
- Procurement Specialist (GÉANT)

WP3 – Capacity Building

This work package corresponds to Output 3: Adequate technical capacity is built within education and research communities.

The Performance Indicators for this work package are as follows:

- Number of users trained per year on services offered by EaP NRENs (gender disaggregated) – 270 (of which 40% women).
- Number of trainings organised for EaP NREN staff – up to 10.
- Number of conferences, workshops, trainings and events offered per year (including gender disaggregated data on the participants) – 14 (for 500 participants of which at least 40% women).

Activities will focus on building adequate technical skills within the NRENs and the user communities for the purpose of raising awareness amongst NREN staff and users of the most advanced technologies available in the R&E Networking environment and to maximise the benefit of using them. Additionally, the work package will cover attendance at relevant external conferences as well as GÉANT Community events. It will also be the goal of the activities to increase women's participation and training within the EaP R&E communities.

Overall, WP3's activity will be complementary to the developments and initiatives in WPs 2 and 4, and will include two main sub-activities:

1. Workshops and trainings:

- Identification of capacity building needs for each EaP NREN's staff and their users at the start and midway through the project.
- Provision of coordinated trainings and workshops for all EaP NRENs.
- Targeted training activities for NRENs to address individual specific needs.
- Trainings and workshops for user communities to ensure uptake and full utilisation of the services.
- Partnership Scheme between EaP and EU NRENs – The Partnership Scheme will facilitate the further exchange of experiences between EaP and EU NRENs through a mentoring programme. A more formal overview of the scheme will be defined at the start of the Action.
- A dedicated activity aimed at the empowerment of women in the R&E environment. The activity will be defined as part of the assessment of the capacity building needs which will be performed at the start of and midway through the Action.

Workshop and training activities in WP3 will be carried out with the support of the EU NRENs who are best placed to share their expertise and help the EaP NRENs improve their knowledge and build communities around them. It is foreseen that the trainings and workshops will take place in both the EaP and EU countries. The choice of where to hold events typically depends on a number of factors such as location of the experts, co-location with other relevant events, and cost of organising and travelling to the location. Overall, around 270 users will be trained by NRENs through 14 events annually. Additionally, up to

10 activities of various types will be organised for NREN staff to strengthen their overall capacity.

2. Attendance at R&E Networking events

- Largest European R&E networking conference, TNC.
- GÉANT Community events (SIGs, TFs, etc.).
- Global R&E Networking related events (Internet2 Global Summit, TechEx, NORDUnet Conference, ICT, etc.).

By facilitating the attendance of the NRENs at European and global R&E networking events, the project will improve the global community awareness of the EaP region, their NRENs and their users and maximise networking and learning opportunities for EaP NREN staff. This is essential if EaP NRENs are to be successful in becoming national focal points for their user communities as well as gateways to other large e-infrastructures. Experience shows that EaP NRENs are more likely to become partners in other relevant projects e.g. Horizon Europe funded projects if they are part of the human network, are known to the big stakeholders and have had a chance to collaborate previously. It is planned that at least 14 different events will be attended by 500 participants from six EaP NRENs.

Where feasible, all activities within WP3 will strive to include as many female participants as possible with an overall goal of at least 40%. Additionally, the project will organise two dedicated activities for further sensitisation towards women's participation in R&E networking-related activities. The activities will be defined following assessment of capacity building needs conducted at the start of and midway through the Action.

WP3 Milestones:

- M3.1 – Assessment of capacity building needs for each EaP NREN's staff and users at the start of and midway through the Action.
- M3.2 – Creation of the Project Capacity Building Plan.

WP3 manpower required:

- Project Manager (GÉANT)
- Capacity Building coordinator
- EU NRENs
- EaP NRENs

WP4 – Sustainability and Stakeholder Engagement

This work package corresponds to Output 4: EaP NRENs' financial sustainability conditions are improved.

The Performance Indicators for this work package are:

- Number of NREN events organised and attended by policy makers, politicians and other decision-making bodies (per year) – 25.

- Number of EaP NRENs fully paying GÉANT cost-sharing fee – at least 4.
- Number of NREN financial sustainability strategies in line with similar EU strategies – 6.
- Number of participants at the EaPEC annual Conference – minimum 200 per conference.

The work package's activity will focus on improving EaP NRENs' position in their respective countries and within the European NREN community by tackling their financial sustainability, raising awareness of their value with various stakeholders and further integrating them into the GÉANT Community. There will be five main components to the activity:

1. Financial sustainability:

- Assessment of the current financial sustainability plans for each NREN through a SWOT analysis.
- Individual work with each NREN on identifying areas for improvement and subsequent work on implementing the necessary changes.

Individual work will be done with each of the NRENs to review and build on their Business Models. Work will be done with the help of the EU NRENs who are best placed to share their experience and provide adequate expertise. This is to ensure that the NRENs have sufficient financial and organisational stability prior to joining the GÉANT cost-sharing model. The outcomes of this activity will be essential for achieving the overall goal of Output 4. By the end of the project, each of the NRENs will present a Financial Sustainability Strategy.

2. Integration into the GÉANT cost-sharing model:

- Creation of the Roadmap defining a staged entry for each NREN into the GÉANT cost-sharing model.
- Implementation of the Roadmap.

This work will be focused on the creation of the roadmap in collaboration with the NRENs, the Technical Committee and the GÉANT Cost-Sharing Committee with the aim of having at least four EaP NRENs enabled to fully join the cost-sharing model by the end of the project.

3. Stakeholder engagement:

- Integration of EaP countries into other EU e-infrastructures.
- Regular engagements with DG NEAR and EU Delegations on securing and maintaining governmental endorsements and recognition of NRENs.
- Advocacy and Public Affairs activities.

This activity includes engagement with the stakeholders, including national and international funding authorities, to ensure the sustainability of EaP NRENs after the end of the Action.

4. Regional conference:

- Organisation of the EaPEC conference.

The project will build on the success of the annual Eastern Partnership E-infrastructure Conference (EaPEC) organised within the framework of EaPConnect. The event has grown from 120 attendees in Tbilisi in 2016 to 180 attendees in Chisinau in 2018. With a target audience of 200 participants, the conference brings together those who wish to learn about research and education networks and other e-infrastructures and services that can benefit Eastern Partnership research and education communities and bring them collaboration opportunities. The high-level opening session is generally attended by senior ministerial officials, representatives from the EC delegation in the host country and representatives of the National Academy of Science as well as major research and education institutes. This is followed by a two-day conference filled with thematic panels and workshops, and a Lightning Talks session.

Following on from EaPConnect, the conference will be tailored to the hosting NREN's stakeholder engagement needs. In this respect, some NRENs benefit from increasing further awareness within particular user communities or senior figures from the government and academia. A conference Programme Committee will be coordinated by a designated conference organiser and will closely work with the hosting NREN to ensure both the conference programme and co-located events are of great value and interest to the local user communities.

The first project conference will be held in Baku in Autumn 2020. This will also serve as the project kick-off event.

It is foreseen that the project will organise a conference every two years, with the second one held in Kiev in Autumn 2022.

WP4 Milestones:

- M4.1. – Financial Sustainability Strategy is created for each EaP NREN
- M4.2. – Roadmap for integration of EaP NRENs into the GÉANT cost-sharing

WP4 manpower required:

- Project Manager (GÉANT)
- EaP NRENs CEOs
- EU NRENs
- Business and Advocacy Consultants
- User Engagement Team (GÉANT)
- Conference Programme Committee members
- Conference Organiser

WP5 – Communications and Visibility

This work package's activity will be focused on ensuring the transparency, visibility, and impact of the Action and supporting the component Work Packages.

Overall, the activity will comprise four main sub-activities, as detailed below.

1. Planning and reporting

This work will be carried out in close cooperation with WP0 and will include:

- Development and annual reviews of the strategic plan for communications, outreach and visibility i.e. the Communications Plan.
- Monitoring impact and engagement.
- Reporting in the annual interim narrative report.
- Ensuring the project's and partners' activities comply with EU visibility requirements.

2. Marketing Communications

Marketing communications activities will involve:

- Planning, producing, managing and disseminating content, messaging and materials, including:
  - Developing narrative targeting citizens and policy makers, explaining how the project supports the integration of EaP countries in EU research and education areas through the provision of digital highways, opening doors to exchanges of data, knowledge and ideas (a leaflet, short video and maps supporting this narrative will be developed);
  - Promoting project and partner events, trainings, programmes, NREN services etc. (in collaboration with WP2, WP3 and WP4);
  - News about progress, achievements, key decisions, events, etc. (in collaboration with all other WPs);
  - Highlighting impacts & benefits, users, thought leaders & personalities, successful (female) role models, how high-level EaP goals are being supported, etc.;
  - Advocating NRENs, R&E networks, e-infrastructures, closer EaP-EU integration in research and education etc.
- Managing and using project platforms and channels, including:
  - Web presence – project and conference websites, social media channels, mailshots etc.;
  - Print materials – posters, pull-ups, leaflets etc.;
  - Multimedia – e.g. videos etc.;
  - Presentation slide sets etc.;
  - Development of maps and visual material.
- Seeking to disseminate content and messaging across external channels managed by partners, GÉANT, the EC and relevant EC-funded initiatives (EU4Digital in particular), other e-Infrastructures, media organisations etc., as appropriate.

The Action shall use the common branding regarding EU support, in particular the name "EU for [Country]" (i.e. "EU4Georgia") shall be used for all activities implemented in the Country, both in English and in the official local language. The Action shall also use common branding regarding all EU support to Digital in the Eastern Partnership, in particular, the name EU for Digital (EU4Digital) shall be used for all relevant activities both in English and in the official languages of the countries.

3. Team development and coordination

The project marketing communications team consists of one or two representatives per partner NREN and is coordinated by GÉANT. These representatives are developing skills and understanding that they can use to the benefit of the project communications and visibility activities, as well as of their own NRENs in terms of business development and capacity building for long-term sustainability. This activity will take place in collaboration with WP3, and involves:

- Coordinating team activities and outputs.
- Providing troubleshooting, mentorship and coaching, as well as editorial and planning support.
- Coordinating with and supporting WP3 and WP4 goals and activities by:
  - Identifying team members' skills and knowledge gaps to be addressed;
  - Organising occasional face-to-face training events;
  - Supporting participation in the GÉANT SIG-Marcomms community group.

4. Outreach

Supporting WP4 and WP2 goals and activities, this task helps reach out to potential new users of NREN services, raise awareness of the project's offer and benefits, and raise engagement with research communities through targeted actions such as the Enlighten Your Research (EYR) programme.

WP5 Milestones:

M5.1 – Creation of the Communications Plan.

WP5 manpower required:

1. Project Marketing Communications Officer (GÉANT)
2. EaP NRENs Marcomms staff
3. Project Manager (GÉANT)

2.2 Methodology

A common methodology will be applied drawing on GÉANT's experience of coordinating EaPConnect and other R&E networking projects in other world regions. The project will build on the successes of EaPConnect and further enhance R&E networks and services availability.

Connectivity will be tendered using Competitive Dialog as well as Negotiated Procedure, wherever most appropriate, to give maximum scope for negotiation with suppliers and flexibility in determining the scale and topology of the infrastructure. There are two reasons to use the Competitive Dialogue and the Negotiated procedure. Firstly, it is impossible, in advance of knowing the detail of potential offers, to produce a sufficiently precise specification of requirements. In addition, European experience has shown that successful solutions very often involve more than one potential provider and the interconnection between different offers can only be effectively managed using Negotiated Procedure.

Secondly, the precise capacity to be committed will, to a very significant extent, be dependent upon the overall cost of implementation. This means that there is necessarily some process of convergence between the offers received in terms of cost and volume and the commitments to be made. It is, therefore, not possible to be certain of appropriate pricing and this makes it very hard for both the providers proposing solutions and the contracting parties to make a commitment without dialogue and negotiation. The support of the EaP NREN partners will be sought to inform potential connectivity providers about the non-commercial and strategic nature of the EaPConnect project in order to achieve maximum cost effectiveness of the connectivity. Where possible and economically advantageous, the EaPConnect project will aim to purchase IRUs.

GÉANT will act as co-ordinating partner for the Action, establishing contracts with suppliers, service providers and with each of the EaP NREN Partners. Technical support, synergies and collaborations will be sought through GÉANT and various other partners in the Action, drawing on their experience and expertise in developing and operating successful national and transnational research and education networks.

Network management services for international connectivity will be provided by GÉANT in line with the aim of fully integrating EaP NRENs into the GÉANT Association operational model.

To achieve the goal of fostering cooperation between the research and education communities in the EaP region and towards Europe, significant effort will be focused on the promotion of the network amongst the end users and development of applications enabling research cooperation. These activities will focus on the opportunities for high capacity applications and collaborations with the user communities in Europe and other world regions.

The project also intends to liaise with other NREN organisations, projects and other European e-infrastructures which are providing research and education networking to share experience and best practise and develop links with their user communities.

Finally, the project will closely work with the GÉANT Cost-sharing Committee on developing and implementing the integration roadmap for a staged entry of the NRENs into the cost-share model.

2.3 Lessons Learnt

This Action is the second phase of a project (EaPConnect) which started in 2015 with the objective of connecting scientists and researchers from EaP countries with their peers in

Europe by enabling their countries' NRENs to deliver world-class services and by providing them with access to the GÉANT high-speed network.

For more than 400 higher education and research institutions, which are connected to those six NRENs, the Action represents increased opportunities to collaborate with peers across the world and helps them in retaining local talent.

As pointed out also by a Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) exercise conducted in 2017, the first phase of the project has proved to be highly relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries. The project has proved to be efficient and its implementation mechanisms conducive towards achieving the expected results. The cost-efficiency of the connectivity achieved is the best possible given the existing constraints in the region and improved in 2017 as a result of a re-procurement exercise. Overall, the expected results of the Action have partially been achieved and are likely to be fully achieved at the end of the project.

Following the ROM analysis, discussions with the project team, the beneficiaries, and the relevant EC stakeholders, and in line with the approach followed in other regions, the following recommendations should be taken into account for a second phase of the project:

- **Need for a stronger strategic approach for connectivity deployment**: A need to deploy connectivity based on a long-term access to high capacity that can accommodate the needs of the growing communities in the region as well as any strategic decisions to aggregate traffic in the region.
- **Need to highlight the added value of NRENs**: the mission of EaP NRENs is significantly hampered by the general lack of understanding of their role and of their differences compared to commercial internet providers. In this respect, the provision of dedicated services to the education and research communities is critical to underline NRENs' added value. In order to build and consolidate their reputation, NRENs should promote a well-selected range of services visible for the end users.
- **Capacity building activities should cover both technical and governance aspects**: capacity building activities delivered by NRENs fill a critical gap for highly specialised training that is not delivered by any other stakeholder in the region. At the technical level, training is critical to ensure a smooth implementation and delivery of the services to the users. At the institutional level, capacity building is needed to strengthen NRENs' capacities in leading complex procurement processes or in developing business plans and advocacy strategies in view of achieving sustainability, including financial sustainability.
- **Importance of a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform**: raising awareness on the importance of digital tools for education and research is key to securing political and financial support but it requires NRENs to be able to transcend technical arguments to promote a clear "Digital4Development"[7] vision.
- **Need to include stronger impact indicators:** while EaPConnect mainly focused on indicators relating to infrastructure deployment, impact indicators should be included in the future programme in order to measure the impact of provision of

[7] https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/swd-digital4development_part1_v3.pdf

connectivity, services and capacity building on skills retention, job employment rates, productivity levels, reduction in job inequality, innovation, etc.

- **Need to have a flexible approach to reflect local realities:** while this action pursues an approach valid for the complete region of the Eastern European Partnership, EaPConnect experienced varied basic conditions depending on the level of maturity of the NRENs, the political environment, the regulatory frameworks or the costs of internet access in different countries. The conclusion that can be drawn from such observations is the need to allow for some flexibility to adopt solutions adapted to local realities.
- **Need to reinforce the communication toward EaP citizens through easily digestible information.**

Procedures for follow-up and internal/external evaluation

The EaPConnect2 project's progress will be reviewed by the EaP NREN partners at the project Technical Committee meetings which are expected to be held twice a year, and ongoing communication will be supported by teleconferencing (audio and video).

An annual Steering Committee meeting will additionally be held led by DG NEAR to review the results of the Action and guide the way forward with the main stakeholders (including GÉANT, EaP and EU project partners, relevant Ministries, EU4Digital project team members, etc.). Other EC services (such as DG CNECT, RTD), the European External Action Service, and the relevant EU Delegations) will be closely associated with the project. Furthermore, technical meetings with DG NEAR and regular updates with the EU Delegations will take place throughout the year in between the annual review meetings (and during the inception phase, with a view in particular to finding synergies and possible overlaps with bilateral projects).

The EaPConnect project will be regularly audited, funded out of the project budget.

Role and participation in the Action of the various actors

The project will be implemented under the responsibility of GÉANT Association as a coordinating partner. GÉANT will allocate a project manager to coordinate the actions, ensure progress is made and report to the European Commission both through regular contact and when milestones are reached, or exceptions identified. The project manager will mobilise human resources as appropriate both from GÉANT (notably for the procurement and operation of the network) and in the form of contributions from experts from European and EaP NRENs.

The EaP NRENs will take responsibility for the development of research and education networks and services within their countries, including building relationships with and supporting their user communities and providing the primary interface between the project and national stakeholders including government, users and other national interests, as well as ensuring that participants' obligations to the project are met. The EaP NRENs' staff will work closely with GÉANT staff and other collaborators in the project to deliver the various work packages and enable deeper human-capacity building and knowledge transfer to the EaP region.

The project will involve EU NRENs as co-beneficiaries. Those partners will provide support to the activities relating to technical support, training and user-community building, drawing on their experience and expertise in developing and operating successful national research and education networks and in the development of new, innovative services. Additionally, they are best placed to advise on best practices for NREN sustainability models.

2.4 Duration and Indicative Action Plan for Implementing the Action

The action plan below considers a period of 60 months which is the planned duration of the Action.

Year 1													
	Half-year 1						**Half-year 2**						
Activity	**Month 1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**Implementing body**
Agree project cost-share model													GÉANT
Set up project Consortium Agreement													GÉANT
Set Collaboration Agreements with the Co-Beneficiaries													GÉANT
Set up Technical Committee													GÉANT
Finalise the project International Topology plans													GÉANT, EaP NRENs, EU NRENs
Launch connectivity procurement													GÉANT, EaP NRENs
Procurement activities													GÉANT, EaP NRENs
Internal connectivity plans concluded													GÉANT, EaP NRENs, EU NRENs
International network management													GÉANT
Promotion and technical support of the existing services													GÉANT, EaP NRENs, EU NRENs
Identification of new services													GÉANT, EaP NRENs, EU NRENs
Launch capacity													GÉANT, EaP

Year 1													
	Half-year 1						Half-year 2						
Activity	**Month 1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**Implementing body**
building needs analysis													NRENs, EU NRENs
Stakeholder engagement													GÉANT, EaP NRENs
Preparations for the EaPEC Conference and a project kick-off meeting													GÉANT, EaP NRENs, EU NRENs
EaPEC Conference and a project kick-off meeting													GÉANT, EaP NRENs, EU NRENs
Launch Communication channels development													GÉANT
Create project Communication Plan													GÉANT
Marketing Communications activities													GÉANT

Table 3: Description of Activities for Year 1

Activity	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**	**Implementing body**
Project Management and Administration					GÉANT
Procurement of connectivity					GÉANT, EaP NRENs
Procurement of equipment (both for services and connectivity					GÉANT, EaP NRENs
Adoption and promotion of services					GÉANT, EaP NRENs, EU NRENs
Capacity building activities					GÉANT, EaP NRENs, EU NRENs

Activity	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Implementing body
Stakeholder engagement					GÉANT, EaP NRENs, EU NRENs
Financial sustainability					GÉANT, EaP NRENs, EU NRENs
Integration into the GÉANT cost-share					GÉANT, EaP NRENs
EaPEC Conference					GÉANT, EaP NRENs, EU NRENs
Communications					GÉANT, EaP NRENs, EU NRENs

Table 4: Description of Activities for Years 2-5

2.5 Sustainability of the Action

Dissemination Plan

A Project Communication Plan, which will cover a range of activities to support all project WPs, will be developed in Q1 of Year 1 by WP5. The activities will be carried out to ensure the transparency, visibility, and impact of the Action. Specifically, the focus will be on planning and reporting on the project's activities. This will be done through the annual and final narrative reports for DG NEAR. The main part of the work will consist in providing marketing communications that will involve production and dissemination of project content such as successes, key activities and events as well as management and use of various project platforms.

The EaPConnect project website will be improved and adapted to EaPConnect2's needs while ensuring the continuity of branding is maintained. The website together with the project brochure will serve as the main sources of project information for external stakeholders.

The EaPConnect2 project kick-off meeting is planned to take place alongside the Eastern Partnership E-infrastructure Conference (EaPEC) in Baku in Autumn 2020. This event aims to bring together not only the representatives of the national research networks from the EaP region, but also user group representatives and the representatives of the relevant national funding bodies and governmental institutions. The project plans to organise conferences in Year 1, 3 and 5 in order to maximise the awareness of its activities with key stakeholders and players and to position NRENs in the heart of R&E national ecosystems.

Sustainability Plan

The project recognises the importance of implementation of the sustainability plan to ensure the reliable operation and future development of established infrastructure and services beyond the lifetime of the Action. Dedicated Work Package 4 is devoted to this activity. Three main components are foreseen in the Action to improve sustainability of the EaP NRENs:

- To improve institutional and financial sustainability by developing a new sustainability plan with the support of GÉANT and EU experts. This plan will leverage the fact that 75% of students, lecturers and researchers of the EaP country are connected and using services from NRENs and hence the NRENs' role as a national provider of IT services is well recognised.
- Full integration into the pan-European research and education network by developing and implementing a roadmap for adoption of the GÉANT cost-sharing model.
- Stakeholder engagement by integration in EU and national government e-infrastructures initiatives.

There are several key areas of development:

1. Provision of IRUs for international and internal connectivity.

   Purchasing of IRUs is recognised to be more cost effective and sustainable as it brings bigger capacity to the countries at a cheaper rate per Gbps. It is also considered to be an investment that provides both agility of network use and assurance for the user communities for many years to come.

2. Integration into the GÉANT cost-share model:

   GEANT cost sharing will encourage equal participation of EaP NRENs in global NREN communities as well as the use of the GÉANT network by increasing involvement of research communities of the region in European research and innovation programmes, and thus enhance international cooperation in education. The model will significantly boost development and operation of a cost-effective network infrastructure in EaP by providing unlimited access to local, regional, and global computational and data facilities. Specifically, this includes:

   - Sharing of the capacities and increase of the resiliency and redundancy;
   - Efficient and reliable support of users in global research collaborations to the highest standard;
   - Minimising or removing data-transport-related costs by using the facilities over NREN and GÉANT infrastructures
   - Providing low-cost transit traffic over the GÉANT network to access global resources;
   - Minimising infrastructure costs through sharing expensive networking devices;
   - Providing cost-effective and collaborative services such as Firewall on Demand or eduroam;
   - Being part of a community that works together by sharing knowledge and experiences.

3. Integration into the GÉANT Association operational model:

Particular recognition should be given to the fact that GÉANT does not only serve as a project coordinator but is a membership organisation acting with and for its members to further research and education networking in Europe and globally, with all six EaP countries being members of the Association. GÉANT serves the research and education networking community in Europe, helping it deliver innovative networks, technologies and services for research and education. In the case of EaP, it is also essential that networking activities funded through the project can be seamlessly transferred to the GÉANT operational model which is defined and approved by the GÉANT General Assembly, which all EaP NRENs are part of. EaP NRENs should also be able to transfer ownership of connectivity contracts and associated networking equipment to GÉANT if that means better financial sustainability and positioning in the GÉANT cost-share.

Logical Framework (see Appendix)

Appendix – Indicative Logframe Matrix [8]

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baseline (2018)	Target (end of project)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact (Overall Objective)	To bring together the research and education communities in Europe and the EaP region and bridge the digital divide between them	• Participations of EaP countries in Horizon 2020[9] projects (number of participations) • ICT development index (IDI) in the EaP region (average IDI value)	• 355 • 6.3 (2017 latest data available)	• 500 • 8.3	EC H2020 statistics, GÉANT and NREN statistics, United Nations Agency for Information and Communication Technologies	*Not applicable*
Outcome(s) (Specific Objective(s))	SO1: Extend network infrastructure (digital highways) to scale-up scientific exchange across borders SO2: Increase the use of services implemented under EaPConnect and offer new services to	• Fraction of students, lecturers and researchers using network infrastructure • Amount of data exchanged between the R&E communities in the EaP region and Europe (in Peta Bite per year) • Number of H2020[10] projects with an EaP NREN partner enabled thanks to the connection to GÉANT network	• 55% (1.1 million) • 17 PB/y • 22 • 20 • 0	• 75% (1.5 million) • 25 PB/y • 35 • 25 • At least 4	GÉANT statistics, NRENs statistics, project reports	• Political stability in the EaP countries allows for NRENs' activities • EaP partners remain committed to

[8] Mark indicators aligned with the relevant programming document with '*' and indicators aligned to the EU Results Framework with '**'.

[9] And its successor Horizon Europe.

[10] Same as above.

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baseline (2018)	Target (end of project)	Sources of data	Assumptions
	enhance international cooperation in R&E SO3: Strengthen EaP NRENs' position in the national R&E ecosystems.	• Number of NREN events organised and attended by policy makers, politicians and other decision-making bodies (per year) • Number of EaP NRENs paying fully GÉANT Cost-sharing fee				supporting digital skills development
Outputs	Output 1: Network infrastructure is further developed and fulfils the needs of the research and education communities	• Number of R&E institutions integrated in GÉANT network and using the established infrastructure • Number of countries using IRUs • Number of network users (sex disaggregated)	• 420 • 0 • 1.1 million (sex-disaggregation tbd at the start of the project)	• 640 • At least 4 • 2 million of which at least 40% women	GÉANT statistics, NRENs statistics, project reports	
	Output 2: Additional services are provided and existing services are further promoted	• Number of (new) services provided • Services penetration rate (usage) broken down by: - Number of authorisation of EaP eduroam users abroad - Number of eduGAIN federated entities (IdPs and SPs) in EaP countries - Number of EaP NRENs Cloud user organisations	• 9 - Indicatively 360.000/year - 27 - 108	• 15 - 430.000/year - 89 - 290		
	Output 3: Adequate	• Number of users trained per	• 270 (of which	• 270 (of		

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baseline (2018)	Target (end of project)	Sources of data	Assumptions
	technical capacity is built within education and research communities	year on services offered by EaP NRENs (sex disaggregated) • Number of trainings organised for EaP NREN staff • Number of conferences, workshops, trainings and events offered per year (including sex disaggregated data on the participants)	25% women) • 6 • 14 (for 450 participants of which 30% women)	which at least 40% women) • Up to 10 • 14 (for 500 participants of which at least 40% women)		
	Output 4: EaP NRENs' financial sustainability conditions are improved	• Number of NRENs financial sustainability strategies in line with similar EU strategies • Number of participants to the EaPEC annual Conference	• 0 • 180	• 6 • 200 min./year		

ANNEX II
General conditions applicable to European Union-financed grant contracts for external actions

CONTENTS

Explanations of the terms used throughout these general conditions may be found in the 'Glossary of terms', Annex A1a to the practical guide.

In case of operating grants, the term 'action' should be understood as 'work programme'.

The term 'coordinator' refers to the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in the special conditions.

The term 'beneficiary(ies)' refers collectively to all beneficiaries, including the coordinator, of the action. When there is only one beneficiary of the action, the terms beneficiary(ies) and coordinator should both be understood as referring to the only beneficiary of the action.

The term 'party(ies) to this contract' refers to the party signatory of this contract (i.e. the beneficiary(ies) and the contracting authority).

All references to 'days' in this contract are to calendar days, unless otherwise specified.

Table of content

GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 1 - GENERAL PROVISIONS

General principles

1.1. The beneficiary(ies) and the contracting authority are the only parties to this contract. Where the European Commission is not the contracting authority, it is not party to this contract, which confers on the European Commission only the rights and obligations explicitly mentioned in this contract.

1.2. This contract and the payments attached to it may not be assigned to a third party in any manner whatsoever without the prior written consent of the contracting authority.

Processing of personal data by the Commission

1.3. Any personal data included in the grant contract must be processed by the Commission in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725.

Such data must be processed by the data controller identified in the special conditions solely for implementing, managing and monitoring the grant contract or to protect the financial interests of the EU, including checks, audits and investigations in accordance with Article 16 of these general conditions.

The beneficiaries have the right to access, rectify or erase their own personal data and the right to restrict the processing of their personal data or, where applicable, the right to data portability or the right to object to data processing in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725. For this purpose, they must send any queries about the processing of their personal data to the data controller identified in the special conditions.

The beneficiaries may have recourse at any time to the European Data Protection Supervisor.

Processing of personal data by the beneficiaries

1.4. The beneficiaries must process personal data under the Agreement in compliance with applicable EU and national law on data protection (including authorisations or notification requirements).

The beneficiaries may grant their personnel access only to data that is strictly necessary for implementing, managing and monitoring the grant contract. The beneficiary must ensure that the personnel authorised to process personal data has committed itself to confidentiality or is under appropriate statutory obligation of confidentiality.

The beneficiaries must adopt appropriate technical and organisational security measures having regard to the risks inherent in the processing and to the nature, scope, context and purposes of processing of the personal data concerned. This is in order to ensure, as appropriate:

(a) the pseudonymisation and encryption of personal data;

(b) the ability to ensure the ongoing confidentiality, integrity, availability and resilience of processing systems and services;

(c) the ability to restore the availability and access to personal data in a timely manner in the event of a physical or technical incident;

(d) a process for regularly testing, assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of technical and organisational measures for ensuring the security of the processing;

(e) measures to protect personal data from accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of or access to personal data transmitted, stored or otherwise processed.

Role of the beneficiary(ies)

1.5. The beneficiary(ies) shall:

a) carry out the action jointly and severally vis-a-vis the contracting authority taking all necessary and reasonable measures to ensure that the action is carried out in accordance with the description of the action in Annex I and the terms and conditions of this contract.

   To this purpose, the beneficiary(ies) shall implement the action with the requisite care, efficiency, transparency and diligence, in line with the principle of sound financial management and with the best practices in the field.

b) be responsible for complying with any obligation incumbent on them from this contract jointly or individually;

c) forward to the coordinator the data needed to draw up the reports, financial statements and other information or documents required by this contract and the annexes thereto, as well as any information needed in the event of audits, checks, monitoring or evaluations, as described in Article 16;

d) ensure that all information to be provided and requests made to the contracting authority are sent via the coordinator;

e) agree upon appropriate internal arrangements for the internal coordination and representation of the beneficiary(ies) vis-a-vis the contracting authority for any matter concerning this contract, consistent with the provisions of this contract and in compliance with the applicable legislation(s).

1.5 bis. Grant beneficiaries and contractors must ensure that there is no detection of subcontractors, natural persons, including participants to workshops and/or trainings and recipients of financial support to third parties, in the lists of EU restrictive measures.

Role of the coordinator

1.6. The coordinator shall:

a) monitor that the action is implemented in accordance with this contract and ensure coordination with all beneficiary(ies) in the implementation of the action;

b) be the intermediary for all communications between the beneficiary(ies) and the contracting authority;

c) be responsible for supplying all documents and information to the contracting authority which may be required under this contract, in particular in relation to the narrative reports and the requests for payment. Where information from the beneficiary(ies) is required, the coordinator shall be responsible for obtaining, verifying and consolidating this information before passing it on to the contracting authority.

   Any information given, as well as any request made by the coordinator to the contracting authority, shall be deemed to have been given in agreement with all beneficiary(ies);

d) inform the contracting authority of any event likely to affect or delay the implementation of the action;

e) inform the contracting authority of any change in the legal, financial, technical, organisational or ownership situation of any of the beneficiary(ies), as well as, of any change in the name, address or legal representative of any of the beneficiary(ies);

f) be responsible in the event of audits, checks, monitoring or evaluations, as described in Article 16 for providing all the necessary documents, including the accounts of the beneficiary(ies), copies of the most relevant supporting documents and signed copies of any contract concluded according to Article 10;

g) have full financial responsibility for ensuring that the action is implemented in accordance with this contract;

h) make the appropriate arrangements for providing the financial guarantee, when requested, under the provisions of Article 4.1 of the special conditions;

i) establish the payment requests in accordance with the contract;

j) be the sole recipient, on behalf of all of the beneficiary(ies), of the payments of the contracting authority. The coordinator shall ensure that the appropriate payments are then made to the beneficiary(ies) without unjustified delay;

k) not delegate or subcontract any, or part of, these tasks to the beneficiary(ies) or other entities.

ARTICLE 2 - OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL AND NARRATIVE REPORTS

2.1. The beneficiary(ies) shall provide the contracting authority with all required information on the implementation of the action. The report shall describe the implementation of the action according to the activities envisaged , difficulties encountered and measures taken to overcome problems, eventual changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (impact, outcomes or outputs) as measured by corresponding indicators. The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the objective(s), the means envisaged or employed and the budget details for the action. The level of detail in any report should match that of the description of the action and of the budget for the action. The coordinator shall collect all the necessary information and draw up consolidated interim and final reports. These reports shall:

a) cover the action as a whole, regardless of which part of it is financed by the contracting authority;

b) consist of a narrative and a financial report drafted using the templates provided in Annex VI;

c) provide a full account of all aspects of the action's implementation for the period covered, including in case of simplified cost options the qualitative and quantitative information needed to demonstrate the fulfilment of the conditions for reimbursement established in this contract;

d) include the current results within an updated table based on the logical framework matrix including the results achieved by the action (impact, outcomes or outputs) as measured by their corresponding indicators; agreed baselines and targets, and relevant sources of verification;

e) determine if the intervention logic is still valid and propose any relevant modification including regarding the logical framework matrix;

f) be drafted in the currency and language of this contract;

g) include any update on the communication plan as provided by Article 6.2;

h) include any relevant reports, publications, press releases and updates related to the action.

2.2. Additionally the final report shall:

a) cover any period not covered by the previous reports;

b) include the proofs of the transfers of ownership as referred to in Article 7.6.

2.3. The special conditions may set out additional reporting requirements.

2.4. The contracting authority may request additional information at any time. The coordinator shall provide this information within 30 days of the request, in the language of the contract.

2.5. Reports shall be submitted with the payment requests, according to Article 15. If the coordinator fails to provide any report or fails to provide any additional information requested by the contracting authority within the set deadline without an acceptable and written explanation of the reasons, the contracting authority may terminate this contract according to Article 12.2 (a) and (f).

ARTICLE 3 - LIABILITY

3.1. The contracting authority cannot under any circumstances or for any reason whatsoever be held liable for damage or injury sustained by the staff or property of the beneficiary(ies) while the action is being carried out or as a consequence of the action. The contracting authority cannot, therefore, accept any claim for compensation or increases in payment in connection with such damage or injury.

3.2. The beneficiary(ies) shall assume sole liability towards third parties, including liability for damage or injury of any kind sustained by them while the action is being carried out or as a consequence of the action. The beneficiary(ies) shall discharge the contracting authority of all liability arising from any claim or action brought as a result of an infringement of rules or regulations by the beneficiary(ies) or the beneficiary(ies)'s employees or individuals for whom those employees are responsible, or as a result of violation of a third party's rights. For the purpose of this Article 3 employees of the beneficiary(ies) shall be considered third parties.

ARTICLE 4 - CONFLICT OF INTERESTS AND CODE OF CONDUCT

4.1. The beneficiary(ies) shall take all necessary measures to prevent or end any situation that could compromise the impartial and objective performance of this contract. Such conflict of interests may arise in particular as a result of economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties, or any other relevant connection or shared interest.

4.2. Any conflict of interests which may arise during performance of this contract must be notified in writing to the contracting authority without delay. In the event of such conflict, the coordinator shall immediately take all necessary steps to resolve it.

4.3. The contracting authority reserves the right to verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken if necessary.

4.4. The beneficiary(ies) shall ensure that its staff, including its management, is not placed in a situation which could give rise to conflict of interests. Without prejudice to its obligation under this contract, the beneficiary(ies) shall replace, immediately and without compensation from the contracting authority, any member of its staff in such a situation.

4.5. The beneficiary (ies) shall at all-time act impartially and as a faithful adviser in accordance with the code of conduct of its profession as well as with appropriate discretion. It shall refrain from making any public statements concerning the action or the services without the prior approval of the contracting authority. It shall not commit the contracting authority in any way whatsoever without its prior consent, and shall make this obligation clear to third parties.

4.6. Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited. The beneficiary (ies) shall also inform the contracting authority of any breach of ethical standards or code of conduct as set in the present Article. In case the beneficiary (ies) is aware of any violations of the abovementioned standards it shall report in writing within 30 days to the contracting authority

4.7. The beneficiary(ies) and its/their staff shall respect human rights, applicable data protection rules and environmental legislation applicable in the country(ies) where the action is taking place and internationally agreed core labour standards, e.g. the ILO core labour standards, conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining, elimination of forced and compulsory labour, elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, and the abolition of child labour.

4.8. The beneficiary(ies) or any related person shall not abuse of its entrusted power for private gain. The beneficiary(ies) or any of its subcontractors, agents or staff shall not receive or agree to receive from any person or offer or agree to give to any person or procure for any person, gift, gratuity, commission or consideration of any kind as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from performing any act relating to the performance of the contract or for showing favour or disfavour to any person in relation to the contract. The beneficiary(ies) shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption.

4.9. The payments to the beneficiary(ies) under the contract shall constitute the only income or benefit it may derive in connection with the contract, with the exception of revenue generating activities. The beneficiary(ies) and its/their staff must not exercise any activity or receive any advantage inconsistent with their obligations under the contract.

4.10. The execution of the contract shall not give rise to unusual commercial expenses. Unusual commercial expenses are commissions not mentioned in the contract or not stemming from a properly concluded contract referring to the contract, commissions not paid in return for any actual and legitimate service, commissions remitted to a tax haven, commissions paid to a recipient who is not clearly identified or commission paid to a company which has every appearance of being a front company. The contracting authority and the European Commission may carry out documentary or on-the-spot checks they deem necessary to find evidence in case of suspected unusual commercial expenses

4.11. The respect of the code of conduct set out in the present Article constitutes a contractual obligation. Failure to comply with the code of conduct is always deemed to be a breach of the contract under Article 12 of the General Conditions. In addition, failure to comply with the provision set out in the present Article can be qualified as grave professional misconduct that may lead either to suspension or termination of the contract, without prejudice to the application of administrative sanctions, including exclusion from participation in future contract award procedures.

ARTICLE 5 - CONFIDENTIALITY

5.1. Subject to Article 16, the contracting authority and the beneficiary(ies) undertake to preserve the confidentiality of any information, notwithstanding its form, disclosed in writing or orally in relation to the implementation of this contract and identified in writing as confidential until at least 5 years after the payment of the balance.

5.2. The beneficiary(ies) shall not use confidential information for any aim other than fulfilling their obligations under this contract unless otherwise agreed with the contracting authority.

5.3. Where the European Commission is not the contracting authority it shall still have access to all documents communicated to the contracting authority and shall maintain the same level of confidentiality.

ARTICLE 6 - VISIBILITY

6.1. Unless the European Commission agrees or requests otherwise, the beneficiary(ies) shall take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the action. Such measures shall comply with the Communication and Visibility Requirements for European Union External Actions laid down and published by the European Commission, that can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-visibility-requirements-2018_en.pdf (for actions within DG DEVCO's remit) and at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/visibility_requirements-near_english.pdf (for actions within DG NEAR's remit) or with any other guidelines agreed between the European Commission and the beneficiary(ies).

6.2. The coordinator shall submit a communication plan for the approval of the European Commission and report on its implementation in accordance with Article 2.

6.3. In particular, the beneficiary(ies) shall mention the action and the European Union's financial contribution in information given to the final recipients of the action, in its internal and annual reports, and in any dealings with the media. It shall display the European Union logo wherever appropriate.

6.4. Any notice or publication by the beneficiary(ies) concerning the action, including those given at conferences or seminars, shall specify that the action has received European Union funding. Any publication by the beneficiary(ies), in whatever form and by whatever medium, including the internet, shall include the following statement: 'This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of < beneficiary(ies)'s name > and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.'

6.5. The beneficiary(ies) authorises the contracting authority and the European Commission (where it is not the contracting authority) to publish its name and address, nationality, the purpose of the grant, duration and location as well as the maximum amount of the grant and the rate of funding of the action's costs, as laid down in Article 3 of the special conditions. Derogation from publication of this information may be granted if it could endanger the beneficiary(ies) or harm their interests.

ARTICLE 7 - OWNERSHIP/USE OF RESULTS AND ASSETS

7.1. Unless otherwise stipulated in the special conditions, ownership of, and title and intellectual and industrial property rights to, the action's results, reports and other documents relating to it will be vested in the beneficiary(ies).

7.2. Without prejudice to Article 7.1, the beneficiary(ies) grant the contracting authority (and the European Commission where it is not this contracting authority) the right to use freely and as it sees fit, and in particular, to store, modify, translate, display, reproduce by any technical procedure, publish or communicate by any medium all documents deriving from the action whatever their form, provided it does not thereby breach existing industrial and intellectual property rights.

7.3. The beneficiary(ies) shall ensure that it has all rights to use any pre-existing intellectual property rights necessary to implement this contract.

7.4. In case natural, recognizable persons are depicted in a photograph or film, the coordinator shall, in the final report to the contracting authority, submit a statement of these persons giving their permissions for the described use of their images. The above does not refer to photographs taken or films shot in public places where random members of the public are identifiable only hypothetically and to public persons acting in their public activities.

7.5. Unless otherwise clearly specified in the description of the action in Annex I, the equipment, vehicles and supplies paid for by the budget for the action shall be transferred to the final beneficiaries of the action, at the latest when submitting the final report.

If there are no final beneficiaries of the action to whom the equipment, vehicles and supplies can be transferred, the beneficiary(ies) may transfer these items to:

- local authorities
- local beneficiary(ies)
- local affiliated entiy(ies)
- another action funded by the European Union
- or, exceptionally, retain ownership of these items.

In such cases, the coordinator shall submit a justified written request for authorisation to the contracting authority, with an inventory listing the items concerned and a proposal concerning their use, in due time and at the latest with the submission of the final report.

In no event may the end use jeopardize the sustainability of the action or result in a profit for the beneficiary(ies).

7.6 Copies of the proofs of transfer of any equipment and vehicles for which the purchase cost was more than EUR 5000 per item, shall be attached to the final report. Proofs of transfer of equipment and vehicles whose purchase cost was less than EUR 5000 per item shall be kept by the beneficiary(ies) for control purposes.

ARTICLE 8 – MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE ACTION

8.1. Annex I shall describe in detail the monitoring and evaluation arrangements that the beneficiary(ies) will put in place.

8.2. If the European Commission carries out an interim or ex post evaluation or a monitoring exercise, the coordinator shall undertake to provide it and/or the persons authorised by it with the documents or information necessary for the evaluation or monitoring exercise.

Representatives of the European Commission shall be invited to participate in the main monitoring and in the evaluation exercises relating to the performance of the action performed by the beneficiary(ies). The European Commission shall be invited to comment the evaluation(s) terms of reference before the exercise is launched as well as the draft report(s) before they are finalised.

8.3. If either the beneficiary(ies) or the European Commission carries out or commissions an evaluation or monitoring exercise in the course of the action, it shall provide the other with a copy of the related report. All the evaluation and monitoring reports, including final values for each of the indicators in the logical framework, shall be submitted to the European Commission with the final narrative report (annex VI).

ARTICLE 9 — AMENDMENT OF THE CONTRACT.

9.1. Any amendment to this contract, including the annexes thereto, shall be set out in writing. This contract can be modified only during its execution period.

9.2. The amendment may not have the purpose or the effect of making changes to this contract that would call into question the grant award decision or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants. The maximum grant referred to in Article 3.2 of the special conditions shall not be increased.

9.3. If an amendment is requested by the beneficiary(ies), the coordinator shall submit a duly justified request to the contracting authority thirty days before the date on which the amendment should enter into force, unless there are special circumstances duly substantiated and accepted by the contracting authority.

9.4. Where the amendment to the budget does not affect the expected results of the action (i.e. impact, outcomes, outputs), and the financial impact is limited to a transfer between items within the same main budget heading including cancellation or introduction of an item, or a transfer between main budget headings involving a variation of 25% or less of the amount originally entered (or as modified by addendum) in relation to each concerned main heading for eligible costs, the coordinator may amend the budget and must inform the contracting authority accordingly, in writing and at the latest in the next report. This method may not be used to amend the headings for indirect costs, for the contingency reserve, for in-kind contributions or the amounts or rates of simplified cost options defined in the contract.

Changes in Description of the Action and the Logical Framework that affect the expected results (impact, outcomes, outputs) shall be agreed in writing with the contracting authority before the modification takes place. Approved changes must be explained in the next report.

9.5. Changes of address, bank account or auditor may simply be notified by the coordinator. However, in duly substantiated circumstances, the contracting authority may oppose the coordinator's choice.

9.6. The contracting authority reserves the right to require that the auditor referred to in Article 5.2 of the special conditions be replaced if considerations which were unknown when this contract was signed cast doubt on the auditor's independence or professional standards.

ARTICLE 10 — IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation contracts

10.1. If the implementation of the action requires the beneficiary(ies) to procure goods, works or services, it shall respect the contract-award rules and rules of nationality and origin set out in Annex IV of this contract.

10.2. To the extent relevant, the beneficiary(ies) shall ensure that the conditions applicable to them under Articles 3, 4, 6 and 16 of these general conditions are also applicable to contractors awarded an implementation contract.

10.3. The coordinator shall provide in its report to the contracting authority a comprehensive and detailed report on the award and implementation of the contracts awarded under Article 10.1, in accordance with the reporting requirements in section 2 of Annex VI.

Subcontracting

10.4. Beneficiary(ies) may subcontract tasks forming part of the action. If it does so, it must ensure that, in addition to the conditions specified in Article 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3, the following conditions are also complied with:

- subcontracting does not cover core tasks of the action;
- recourse to subcontracting is justified because of the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;
- the estimated costs of the subcontracting are clearly identifiable in the estimated budget set out in Annex III;
- [any recourse to subcontracting, if not provided for in Annex I, is communicated by the beneficiary and approved by the Contracting Authority].

Financial support to third parties

10.5. In order to support the achievement of the objectives of the action, and in particular where the implementation of the action requires financial support to be given to third parties, the beneficiary(ies) may award financial support if so provided by the special conditions.

10.6. The maximum amount of financial support shall be limited to EUR 60 000 per each third party, except where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult.

10.7. The description of the action, in conformity with the relevant instructions given in this regard by the contracting authority, shall define the types of entities eligible for financial support and include a fixed list with the types of activity which may be eligible for financial support. The criteria for the selection of the third parties recipient of this financial support, including the criteria for determining its exact amount, shall also be specified.

10.8. The coordinator shall provide in its report to the contracting authority a comprehensive and detailed report on the award and implementation of any financial support given. These reports should provide, amongst other, information on the award procedures, on the identities of the recipient of financial support, the amount granted, the results achieved, the problems encountered and solutions found, the activities carried out as well as a timetable of the activities which still need to be carried out.

10.9. To the extent relevant, the beneficiary(ies) shall ensure that the conditions applicable to them under Articles 3, 4.1-4.4, 6 and 16 of these general conditions are also applicable to third parties awarded financial support.

ARTICLE 11 – EXTENSION AND SUSPENSION

Extension

11.1. The coordinator shall inform the contracting authority without delay of any circumstances likely to hamper or delay the implementation of the action. The coordinator may request an extension of the action's implementation period as laid down in Article 2 of the special conditions in accordance with Article 9. The request shall be accompanied by all the supporting evidence needed for its appraisal.

Suspension by the coordinator

11.2. The coordinator may suspend implementation of the action, or any part thereof, if exceptional circumstances, notably of force majeure, make such implementation excessively difficult or dangerous. The coordinator shall inform the contracting authority without delay, stating the nature, probable duration and foreseeable effects of the suspension.

11.3. The coordinator or the contracting authority may then terminate this contract in accordance with Article 12.1. If the contract is not terminated, the beneficiary(ies) shall endeavour to minimise the time of its suspension and any possible damage and shall resume implementation once circumstances allow, informing the contracting authority accordingly.

Suspension by the contracting authority

11.4. The contracting authority may request the beneficiary(ies) to suspend implementation of the action, or any part thereof, if exceptional circumstances, notably of force majeure, make such implementation excessively difficult or dangerous. To this purpose, the contracting authority shall inform the coordinator stating the nature and probable duration of the suspension.

11.5. The coordinator or the contracting authority may then terminate this contract in accordance with Article 12.1. If the contract is not terminated, the beneficiary(ies) shall endeavour to minimise the time of its suspension and any possible damage and shall resume implementation once circumstances allow and after having obtained the approval of the contracting authority.

11.6. The contracting authority may also suspend this contract or the participation of a beneficiary(ies) in this contract if the contracting authority has evidence that, or if, for objective and well justified reasons, the contracting authority deems necessary to verify whether presumably:

a) the grant award procedure or the implementation of the action have been subject to breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud;

b) the beneficiary(ies) have breached any substantial obligation under this contract.

11.7. The coordinator shall provide any requested information, clarification or document within 30 days of receipt of the requests sent by the contracting authority. If, notwithstanding the information, clarification or document provided by the coordinator, the award procedure or the implementation of the grant prove to have been subject to breach of obligations, irregularities, fraud, or breach of obligations, then the contracting authority may terminate this contract according to Article 12(2) h.

Force majeure

11.8. The term force majeure, as used herein covers any unforeseeable events, not within the control of either party to this contract and which by the exercise of due diligence neither party is able to overcome such as acts of God, strikes, lock-outs or other industrial disturbances, acts of the public enemy, wars whether declared or not, blockades, insurrection, riots, epidemics, landslides, earthquakes, storms, lightning, floods, washouts, civil disturbances, explosion. A decision of the European Union to suspend the cooperation with the partner country is considered to be a case of force majeure when it implies suspending funding under this contract.

11.9. The beneficiary(ies) shall not be held in breach of its contractual obligations if it is prevented from fulfilling them by circumstances of force majeure.

Extension of the implementation period following a suspension.

11.10. In case of suspension according to Articles 11.2, 11.4 and 11.6, the implementation period of the action shall be extended by a period equivalent to the length of suspension, without prejudice to any amendment to the contract that may be necessary to adapt the action to the new implementing conditions. This Article 11.10 does not apply in case of an operating grant.

ARTICLE 12 — TERMINATION OF THE CONTRACT

Termination in case of force majeure

12.1. In the cases foreseen in Article 11.2 and 11.4, if the coordinator or the contracting authority believes that this contract can no longer be executed effectively or appropriately, it shall duly consult the other. Failing agreement on a solution, the coordinator or the contracting authority may terminate this contract by serving two months written notice, without being required to pay indemnity.

Termination by the contracting authority

12.2. Without prejudice to Article 12.1, in the following circumstances the contracting authority may, after having duly consulted the coordinator, terminate this contract or the participation of any beneficiary(ies) in this contract without any indemnity on its part when:

a) a beneficiary(ies) fails, without justification, to fulfil any substantial obligation incumbent on them individually or collectively by this contract and, after being given notice by letter to comply with those obligations, still fails to do so or to furnish a satisfactory explanation within 30 days of receipt of the letter;

b) a beneficiary(ies) or any person that assumes unlimited liability for the debts of the beneficiary(ies) is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding up procedures, is having its assets administered by a liquidator or by the courts, has entered into an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under any national law or regulations relevant to the beneficiary(ies);

c) a beneficiary(ies), or any related entity or person, have been found guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;

d) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision or by proof in possession of the contracting authority that the beneficiary(ies) has been guilty of fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or terrorist financing, terrorist related offences, child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings or circumventing fiscal, social or any other applicable legal obligations, including through the creation of an entity for this purpose;

e) a change to a beneficiary(ies)'s legal, financial, technical, organisational or ownership situation or the termination of the participation of a beneficiary(ies) substantially affects the implementation of this contract or calls into question the decision awarding the grant;

f) a beneficiary(ies) or any related person, are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required in the award procedure or in the implementation of the action or fail to supply – or fail to supply within the deadlines set under this contract - any information related to the action required by the contracting authority;

g) a beneficiary(ies) has not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established;

h) the contracting authority has evidence that a beneficiary(ies), or any related entity or person, has committed breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud in the award procedure or in the implementation of the action;

i) a beneficiary(ies) is subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 12.8;

j) the contracting authority has evidence that a beneficiary(ies) is subject to a conflict of interests;

k) the European Commission has evidence that a beneficiary(ies) has committed systemic or recurrent errors or irregularities, fraud, or serious breach of obligations under other grants financed by the European Union and awarded to that specific beneficiary(ies) under similar conditions, provided that those errors, irregularities, fraud or serious breach of obligations have a material impact on this grant.

The cases of termination under points (b), (c), (d), (h), (j) and (k) may refer also to persons who are members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of the beneficiary(ies) and/or to persons having powers of representation, decision or control with regard to the beneficiary(ies).

12.3. In the cases referred to in points (c), (f), (h) and (k) above, any related person means any physical person with powers of representation, decision-making or control in relation to the beneficiary(ies). Any related entity means, in particular, any entity which meets the criteria laid down by Article 1 of the Seventh Council Directive No 83/349/EEC of 13 June 1983.

Termination of a beneficiary(ies) participation by the coordinator

12.4. In duly justified cases, the participation of a beneficiary(ies) in this contract may be also terminated by the coordinator. To this purpose, the coordinator shall communicate to the contracting authority the reasons for the termination of its participation and the date on which the termination shall take effect, as well as a proposal on the reallocation of the tasks of the beneficiary(ies) whose participation is terminated, or on its possible replacement. The proposal shall be sent in good time before the termination is due to take effect. If the contracting authority agrees, the contract shall be amended accordingly in conformity with Article 9.

End date

12.5. The payment obligations of the European Union under this contract shall end 18 months after the implementation period laid down in Article 2 of the special conditions, unless this contract is terminated according to Article 12.

The contracting authority shall postpone this end date, so as to be able to fulfil its payment obligations, in all cases where the coordinator has submitted a payment request in accordance with contractual provisions or, in case of dispute, until completion of the dispute settlement procedure provided for in Article 13. The contracting authority shall notify the coordinator of any postponement of the end date.

12.6. This contract will be terminated automatically if it has not given rise to any payment by the contracting authority within two years of its signature.

Effects of termination

12.7. Upon termination of this contract the coordinator shall take all immediate steps to bring the action to a close in a prompt and orderly manner and to reduce further expenditure to a minimum.

Without prejudice to Article 14, the beneficiary(ies) shall be entitled to payment only for the part of the action carried out, excluding costs relating to current commitments that are due to be executed after termination.

To this purpose, the coordinator shall introduce a payment request to the contracting authority within the time limit set by Article 15.2 starting from the date of termination.

In the event of termination according to Article 12.1, the contracting authority may agree to reimburse the unavoidable residual expenditures incurred during the notice period, provided, the first paragraph of this Article 12.7 has been properly executed.

In the cases of termination foreseen in Article 12.2 a), c), d), f), h) and k) the contracting authority may, after having properly consulted the coordinator and depending on the gravity of the failings, request full or partial repayment of amounts unduly paid for the action.

Administrative sanctions

12.8 Without prejudice to the application of other remedies laid down in the contract, a sanction of exclusion from all contracts and grants financed by the EU, may be imposed, after an adversarial procedure in line with the applicable Financial Regulation, upon the beneficiary(ies) who, in particular,

a) is guilty of grave professional misconduct, has committed irregularities or has shown significant deficiencies in complying with the main obligations in the performance of the contract or has been circumventing fiscal, social or any other applicable legal obligations, including through the creation of an entity for this purpose. The duration of the exclusion shall not exceed the duration set by final judgement or final administrative decision or, in the absence thereof, three years;

b) is guilty of fraud, corruption, participation in a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorist-related offences, child labour or trafficking in human beings. The duration of the exclusion shall not exceed the duration set by final judgement or final administrative decision or, in the absence thereof, five years;

12.9 In the situations mentioned in Article 12.8, in addition or in alternative to the sanction of exclusion, the beneficiary(ies) may also be subject to financial penalties up to 10% of the contract value.

12.10 Where the contracting authority is entitled to impose financial penalties, it may deduct such financial penalties from any sums due to the beneficiary(ies) or call on the appropriate guarantee.

12.11 The decision to impose administrative sanctions may be published on a dedicated internet-site, explicitly naming the beneficiary(ies).

ARTICLE 13 — APPLICABLE LAW AND DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

13.1. This contract shall be governed by the law of the country of the contracting authority or, where the contracting authority is the European Commission, by the applicable European Union law complemented where necessary by the law of Belgium.

13.2. The parties to this contract shall do everything possible to settle amicably any dispute arising between them during the implementation of this contract. To that end, they shall communicate their positions and any solution that they consider possible in writing, and meet each other at either's request. The coordinator and the contracting authority shall reply to a request sent for an amicable settlement within 30 days. Once this period has expired, or if the attempt to reach amicable settlement has not produced an agreement within 120 days of the first request, the coordinator or the contracting authority may notify the other part that it considers the procedure to have failed.

13.3. In the event of failure to reach an amicable agreement, the dispute may by common agreement of the coordinator and the contracting authority be submitted for conciliation by the European Commission if it is not the contracting authority. If no settlement is reached within 120 days of the opening of the conciliation procedure, each party may notify the other that it considers the procedure to have failed.

13.4. In the event of failure of the above procedures, each party to this contract may submit the dispute to the courts of the country of the contracting authority, or to the Brussels courts where the contracting authority is the European Commission.

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 14 — ELIGIBLE COSTS

Cost eligibility criteria

14.1. Eligible costs are actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) which meet all the following criteria:

a) they are incurred during the implementation of the action as specified in Article 2 of the special conditions. In particular:

(i) Costs relating to services and works shall relate to activities performed during the implementation period. Costs relating to supplies shall relate to delivery and installation of items during the implementation period. Signature of a contract, placing of an order, or entering into any commitment for expenditure within the implementation period for future delivery of services, works or supplies after expiry of the implementation period do not meet this requirement. Cash transfers between the coordinator and/or the other beneficiary(ies) and/or affiliated entity(ies) may not be considered as costs incurred;

(ii) Costs incurred should be paid before the submission of the final reports. They may be paid afterwards, provided they are listed in the final report together with the estimated date of payment;

(iii) An exception is made for costs relating to final reports, including expenditure verification, audit and final evaluation of the action, which may be incurred after the implementation period of the action;

(iv) Procedures to award contracts, as referred to in Article 10, may have been initiated and contracts may be concluded by the beneficiary(ies) before the start of the implementation period of the action, provided the provisions of Annex IV have been respected.

b) they are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the action;

c) they are necessary for the implementation of the action;

d) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary(ies) and determined according to the accounting standards and the usual cost accounting practices applicable to the beneficiary(ies);

e) they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;

f) they are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

Eligible direct costs

14.2. Subject to Article 14.1 and, where relevant, to the provisions of Annex IV being respected, the following direct costs of the beneficiary(ies) shall be eligible:

a) the cost of staff assigned to the action, corresponding to actual gross salaries including social security charges and other remuneration-related costs (excluding performance-based bonuses); salaries and costs shall not exceed those normally borne by the beneficiary(ies), unless it is justified by showing that it is essential to carry out the action;

b) travel and subsistence costs for staff and other persons taking part in the action, provided they do not exceed those normally borne by the beneficiary(ies) according to its rules and regulations. In addition, the rates published by the European Commission at the time of contract signature may never be exceeded;

c) purchase costs for equipment (new or used) and supplies specifically dedicated to the purposes of the action, provided that ownership is transferred at the end of the action when required in Article 7.5.

d) depreciation, rental or leasing costs for equipment (new or used) and supplies specifically dedicated to the purposes of the action;

e) rental costs related to project office, when a project office is foreseen, duly justified and described in the description of the action and in the special conditions;

f) costs of consumables;

g) costs of service, supply and work contracts awarded by the beneficiary(ies) for the purposes of the action referred to in Article 10; this includes the costs for mobilising expertise to improve the quality of the logical framework (e.g. accuracy of baselines, monitoring systems, etc.), both at the beginning and during the implementation of the Action.

h) costs deriving directly from the requirements of the contract (dissemination of information, evaluation specific to the action, audits, translation, reproduction, insurance, etc.) including financial service costs (in particular the cost of transfers and financial guarantees where required according to the contract);

i) duties, taxes and charges, including VAT, paid and not recoverable by the beneficiary(ies), unless otherwise provided in the special conditions;

j) overheads, in the case of an operating grant.

Performance-based financing

14.3. The payment of the EU contribution may be partly or entirely linked to the achievement of results measured by reference to previously set milestones or through performance indicators. Such performance-based financing is not subject to other sub-articles of Article 14. The relevant results and the means to measure their achievement shall be clearly described in Annex I.

The amount to be paid per achieved result shall be set out in Annex III. The method to determine the amount to be paid per achieved result shall be clearly described in Annex I, take into account the principle of sound financial management and avoid double-financing of costs.

The organisation shall not be obliged to report on costs linked to the achievement of results. However the organisation shall submit any necessary supporting documents, including where relevant accounting documents, to prove that the results triggering the payment as defined in Annex I and III have been achieved.Articles 15.1 (schedule of payment), 15.7 (expenditure verification), 17.3 (no profit) do not apply to the part of the action supported by way of result-based financing.

Simplified cost options

14.4. In accordance with the detailed provisions in Annex III and Annex K to the Guidelines for grant applicants, eligible costs may also be constituted by any or a combination of the following cost options:

a) unit costs;
b) lump sums;
c) flat-rate financing;

14.5. The methods used by the beneficiary(ies) to determine unit costs, lump sums, flat-rates shall be clearly described and substantiated in Annex III and shall ensure compliance with the principle of co-financing and no double funding. The information used can be based on the beneficiary(ies)'s historical and/or actual accounting and cost accounting data, external information where available and appropriate, statistical data or expert judgment (provided by internally available experts or procured) or other objective information.

Where possible and appropriate, lump sums, unit costs or flat rates shall be determined in such a way as to allow their payment upon achievement of concrete outputs and/or results. If a result entails several outputs or sub-results, it should be broken down into sub budget lines and each output or sub-result should be attributed a portion of the amount stated for the result to allow partial payments in case the result is not achieved.

Costs declared under simplified cost options shall satisfy the eligibility criteria set out in Article 14.1 and 14.2. They do not need to be backed by accounting or supporting documents, save those necessary to demonstrate the fulfillment of the conditions for reimbursement established in Annex I, III and Annex K to the Guidelines for grant applicants.

These costs may not include ineligible costs as referred to in Article 14.11 or costs already declared under another costs item or heading of the budget of this contract.

The amounts or rates of unit costs, lump sums or flat-rates set out in Annex III may not be amended unilaterally and may not be challenged by ex post verifications.

14.6. Simplified cost options that are not result based shall not be authorized unless they have been ex ante-assessed in accordance with Annex K to the Guidelines for grant applicants.

Contingency reserve

14.7. A reserve for contingencies and/or possible fluctuations in exchange rates not exceeding 5% of the direct eligible costs may be included in the budget for the action, to allow for adjustments necessary in the light of unforeseeable changes of circumstances on the ground. It can be used only with the prior written authorisation of the contracting authority, upon duly justified request by the coordinator.

Indirect costs

14.8. The indirect costs for the action are those eligible costs which may not be identified as specific costs directly linked to the implementation of the action and may not be booked to it directly according to the conditions of eligibility in Article 14.1. However, they are incurred by the beneficiary(ies) in connection with the eligible direct costs for the action. They may not include ineligible costs as referred to in Article 14.11 or costs already declared under another costs item or heading of the budget of this contract.

A fixed percentage of the total amount of direct eligible costs of the action not exceeding the percentage laid down in Article 3.3 of the special conditions may be claimed to cover indirect costs for the action. Flat-rate funding in respect of indirect costs does not need to be supported by accounting documents. This amount shall not be taken into account with regard to the amount of simplified cost options.

Indirect costs shall not be eligible under a grant for an action awarded to a beneficiary who already receives an operating grant financed from the European Union budget during the period in question.

This Article 14.8 does not apply in the case of an operating grant.

In kind contributions

14.9. Any contributions in kind, which shall be listed separately in Annex III, do not represent actual expenditure and are not eligible costs. Unless otherwise specified in the special conditions, contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing by the beneficiary(ies).

If contributions in kind are accepted as co-financing, the beneficiary(ies) shall ensure they comply with national tax and social security rules.

Notwithstanding the above, if the description of the action provides for contributions in kind, such contributions have to be provided.

Volunteers' work

14.10. The value of the work provided by volunteers can be recognised as eligible cost of the action and may be treated as co-financing by the beneficiary(ies).

Where the estimated eligible costs include costs for volunteers' work, the EC contribution shall not exceed the estimated eligible costs other than the costs for volunteers' work.

Beneficiaries shall declare personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers on the basis of unit costs authorised in accordance with Article 14.4 and following[1].

This type of costs must be presented separately from other eligible costs in the estimated budget. The value of the volunteers' work must always be excluded from the calculation of indirect costs.

[1] The value of such unit costs will be determined by the Commission.

Volunteers' work may comprise up to 50 % of the co-financing, the latter corresponding to the part not financed by the EU contribution.

Non-eligible costs

14.11. The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

a) debts and debt service charges (interest);

b) provisions for losses, debts or potential future liabilities;

c) costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a European Union grant (including through the European Development Fund);

d) purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action and according to the conditions specified in the special conditions; in all cases the ownership shall be transferred in accordance with Article 7.5, at the latest at the end of the action;

e) currency exchange losses;

f) credits to third parties, unless otherwise specified in the special conditions;

g) in kind contributions (except for volunteers' work);

h) salary costs of the personnel of national administrations, unless otherwise specified in the special conditions and only to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the action were not undertaken;

i) performance-based bonuses included in costs of staff.

Affiliated entities

14.12. Where the special conditions contain a provision on entities affiliated to a beneficiary, costs incurred by such entity may be eligible, provided that they satisfy the same conditions under Articles 14 and 16, and that the beneficiary ensures that Articles 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 16 are also applicable to the entity.

ARTICLE 15 — PAYMENT AND INTEREST ON LATE PAYMENT

Payment procedures

15.1. The contracting authority must pay the grant to the coordinator following one of the payment procedures below, as set out in Article 4 of the special conditions.

Option 1: Actions with an implementation period of 12 months or less or grant of EUR 100 000 or less

(i) an initial pre-financing payment of 80 % of the maximum amount referred to in Article 3.2 of the special conditions (excluding contingencies);

(ii) the balance of the final amount of the grant.

Option 2: Actions with an implementation period of more than 12 months and grant of more than EUR 100 000

(i) an initial pre-financing payment of 100 % of the part of the estimated budget financed by the contracting authority for the first reporting period (excluding contingencies). The part of the budget financed by the contracting authority is calculated by applying the percentage set out in Article 3.2 of the special conditions;

(ii) further pre-financing payments of 100 % of the part of the estimated budget financed by the contracting authority for the following reporting period (excluding not authorised contingencies):

- the reporting period is intended as a twelve-month period unless otherwise provided for in the special conditions. When the remaining period to the end of the action is up to 18 months, the reporting period shall cover it entirely;
- within 60 days following the end of the reporting period, the coordinator shall present an interim report or, if unable to do so, it shall inform the contracting authority of the reasons and provide a summary of progress of the action;
- if at the end of the reporting period the part of the expenditure actually incurred which is financed by the contracting authority is less than 70 % of the previous payment (and 100 % of any previous payments), the further pre-financing payment shall be reduced by the amount corresponding to the difference between the 70 % of the previous pre-financing payment and the part of the expenditure actually incurred which is financed by the contracting authority;
- the coordinator may submit a request for further pre-financing payment before the end of the reporting period, when the part of the expenditure actually incurred which is financed by the contracting authority is more than 70 % of the previous payment (and 100 % of any previous payments). In this case, the following reporting period starts anew from the end date of the period covered by this payment request;
- in addition, for grants of more than EUR 5 000 000, a further pre-financing payment may be made only if the part financed by the contracting authority of the eligible costs approved is at least equal to the total amount of all the previous payments excluding the last one;
- the total sum of pre-financing payments may not exceed 90 % of the amount referred to in Article 3.2 of the special conditions, excluding not authorised contingencies;

(iii) the balance of the final amount of the grant.

Option 3: All actions

(i) the final amount of the grant.

Submission of final reports

15.2. The coordinator shall submit the final report to the contracting authority no later than three months after the implementation period as defined in Article 2 of the special conditions. The deadline for submission of the final report is extended to six months where the coordinator does not have its headquarters in the country where the action is implemented.

Payment request

15.3. The payment request shall be drafted using the model in Annex V and shall be accompanied by:

a) a narrative and financial report in line with Article 2;

b) a forecast budget for the following reporting period in case of request of further pre-financing;

c) an expenditure verification report or a detailed breakdown of expenditure if required under Article 15.7;

For the purposes of the initial pre-financing payment, the signed contract serves as payment request. A financial guarantee shall be attached if required in the special conditions.

Payment shall not imply recognition of the regularity or of the authenticity, completeness and correctness of the declarations and information provided.

Payment deadlines

15.4. The initial pre-financing payment shall be made within 30 days of receipt of the payment request by the contracting authority.

Further pre-financing payments and payments of the balance shall be made within 60 days of receipt of the payment request by the contracting authority.

However, further pre-financing payments and payments of the balance shall be made within 90 days of receipt of the payment request by the contracting authority in any of the following cases:

a) one beneficiary with affiliated entity(ies);

b) if more than one beneficiary is party to this contract;

c) if the Commission is not the contracting authority

d) for grants exceeding EUR 5 000 000

The payment request is deemed accepted if there is no written reply by the contracting authority within the deadlines set above.

Suspension of the period for payments

15.5. Without prejudice to Article 12, the time-limits for payments may be suspended by notifying the coordinator that:

a) the amount indicated in its request of payments is not due, or;

b) proper supporting documents have not been supplied, or;

c) clarifications, modifications or additional information to the narrative or financial reports are needed, or;

d) there are doubts on the eligibility of expenditure and it is necessary to carry out additional checks, including on-the-spot checks or an audit to make sure that the expenditure is eligible, or;

e) it is necessary to verify, including through an OLAF investigation, whether presumed breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud have occurred in the grant award procedure or the implementation of the action, or;

f) it is necessary to verify whether the beneficiary(ies) have breached any substantial obligations under this contract, or;

g) the visibility obligations set out in Article 6 are not complied with.

The suspension of the time-limits for payments starts when the above notification is sent to the coordinator. The time-limit starts running again on the date on which a correctly formulated request for payment is recorded. The coordinator shall provide any requested information, clarification or document within 30 days of the request.

If, notwithstanding the information, clarification or document provided by the coordinator, the payment request is still inadmissible, or if the award procedure or the implementation of the grant proves to have been subject to irregularities, fraud, or breach of obligations, then the contracting may suspend payments, and in the cases foreseen in Article 12, terminate accordingly this contract.

In addition, the contracting authority may also suspend payments as a precautionary measure without prior notice, prior to, or instead of, terminating this contract as provided for in Article 12.

Interest on late payment

15.6. If the contracting authority pays the coordinator after the time limit, it shall pay default interest as follows:

a) at the rediscount rate applied by the central bank of the country of the contracting authority if payments are in the currency of that country;

b) at the rate applied by the European Central Bank to its main refinancing transactions in euro, as published in the Official Journal of the European Union, C series, if payments are in euro;

c) on the first day of the month in which the time-limit expired, plus three and a half percentage points. The interest will be payable for the time elapsed between the expiry of the payment deadline and the date on which the contracting authority's account is debited.

By way of exception, when the interest calculated in accordance with this provision is lower than or equal to EUR 200, it will be paid to the coordinator only upon demand submitted within two months of receiving late payment.

The default interest is not considered as income for the purposes of Article 17.

This Article 15.6 does not apply if the coordinator is a European Union Member State, including regional and local government authorities or other public body acting in the name and on behalf of the Member State for the purpose of the contract.

Expenditure verification report

15.7. The coordinator must provide an expenditure verification report for:

a) any request for further pre-financing payment in case of grants of more than EUR 5 000 000;

b) any final report in the case of a grant of more than EUR 100 000.

The expenditure verification report shall conform to the model in Annex VII and shall be produced by an auditor approved or chosen by the contracting authority. The auditor shall meet the requirements set out in the terms of reference for expenditure verification in Annex VII.

The auditor shall examine whether the costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and the revenue of the action are real, accurately recorded and eligible under this contract. The expenditure verification report shall cover all expenditure not covered by any previous expenditure verification report.

If no expenditure verification is required with requests for pre-financing payments, a detailed breakdown of expenditure covering the preceding reporting periods not already covered, shall be provided for every other request for further pre-financing payment and starting with the second request for further pre-financing payment (i.e. 3rd, 5th,7th… pre-financing payment).

The detailed breakdown of expenditure shall provide the following information for each cost heading in the financial report and for all underlying entries and transactions: amount of the entry or transaction, accounting reference (e.g. ledger, journal or other relevant reference) description of the entry or transaction (detailing the nature of the expenditure) and reference to underlying documents (e.g. invoice number, salary slip or other relevant reference), in line with Article 16.1. It shall be provided in electronic form and spread sheet format (excel or similar) whenever possible.

The detailed breakdown of expenditure shall be supported by a declaration of honour by the coordinator that the information in the payment request is full, reliable and true and that the costs declared have been incurred and can be considered as eligible in accordance to this contract.

The final report shall in all cases include a detailed breakdown of expenditure covering the whole action.

When the grant takes the form of reimbursement of eligible costs actually incurred and is only expressed in terms of an absolute value (and not as a percentage of the EU contribution to the total eligible costs), verification can be limited to the amount paid by the Commission for the action concerned (i.e. it does not need to cover the whole action).

Where the coordinator is a government department or a public body, the contracting authority may accept to substitute the expenditure verification with a detailed breakdown of expenditure.

The expenditure verification report shall not be provided by the coordinator if the verification is directly done by the contracting authority's own staff, by the Commission or by a body authorised to do so on their behalf, according to Article of 5.2 of the special conditions.

Financial guarantee

15.8. If the grant exceeds EUR 60 000 the contracting authority may request a financial guarantee for the amount of the initial pre-financing payment.

The guarantee shall be denominated in euro or in the currency of the contracting authority, conforming to the model in Annex VIII. The guarantee shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in one of the Member States of the European Union. Where the coordinator is established in a third country, the contracting authority may agree that a bank or financial institution established in that third country may provide the guarantee if the contracting authority considers that the bank or financial institution offers equivalent security and characteristics as those offered by a bank or financial institution established in a Member State of the European Union. This guarantee shall remain in force until its release by the contracting authority when the payment of the balance is made.

During the execution of the contract, if the natural or legal person providing the guarantee (i) is not able or willing to abide by its commitments, (ii) is not authorised to issue guarantees to contracting authorities, or (iii) appears not to be financially reliable, or the financial guarantee ceases to be valid, and the coordinator fails to replace it, either a deduction equal to the amount of the pre-financing may be made by the contracting authority from future payments due to the coordinator under the contract, or the contracting authority shall give formal notice to the coordinator to provide a new guarantee on the same terms as the previous one. Should the coordinator fail to provide a new guarantee, the contracting authority may terminate the contract.

This provision shall not apply if the coordinator is a non-profit organisation, an organisation which has signed a framework partnership agreement with the European Commission, a government department or public body, unless otherwise stipulated in the special conditions.

Rules for currency conversion

15.9. The contracting authority shall make payments to the coordinator to the bank account referred to in the financial identification form in Annex V, which allows the identification of the funds paid by the contracting authority. The contracting authority shall make payments in the currency set in the special conditions.

Reports shall be submitted in the currency set out in the special conditions, and may be drawn from financial statements denominated in other currencies, on the basis of the beneficiary(ies)'s applicable legislation and applicable accounting standards. In such case and for the purpose of reporting, conversion into the currency set in the special conditions shall be made using the rate of exchange at which each contracting authority's contribution was recorded in the beneficiary(ies)'s accounts, unless otherwise provided for in the special conditions. If at the end of the action, a part of the expenses is pre-financed by the beneficiary(ies) (or by other donors), the conversion rate to be applied to this balance is the one set in the special condition according to the beneficiary(ies)'s usual accounting practice. If no specific provision is foreseen in the special conditions, the exchange rate of the last instalment received from the contracting authority will be applied.

15.10. Unless otherwise provided for in the special conditions, costs incurred in other currencies than the one used in the beneficiary(ies)'s accounts for the action shall be converted according to its usual accounting practices, provided they respect the following basic requirements: (i) they are written down as an accounting rule, i.e. they are a standard practice of the beneficiary, (ii) they are applied consistently, (iii) they give equal treatment to all types of transactions and funding sources, (iv) the system can be demonstrated and the exchange rates are easily accessible for verifications.

In the event of an exceptional exchange-rate fluctuation, the parties shall consult each other with a view to amending the action in order to lessen the impact of such a fluctuation. Where necessary, the contracting authority may take additional measures such as terminating the contract.

ARTICLE 16 — ACCOUNTS AND TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL CHECKS

Accounts

16.1. The beneficiary(ies) shall keep accurate and regular accounts of the implementation of the action using an appropriate accounting and double-entry book-keeping system.

The accounts:

a) may be an integrated part of or an adjunct to the beneficiary(ies)'s regular system;

b) shall comply with the accounting and bookkeeping policies and rules that apply in the country concerned;

c) shall enable income and expenditure relating to the action to be easily traced, identified and verified.

16.2. The coordinator shall ensure that any financial report as required under Article 2 can be properly and easily reconciled to the accounting and bookkeeping system and to the underlying accounting and other relevant records. For this purpose the beneficiary(ies) shall prepare and keep appropriate reconciliations, supporting schedules, analyses and breakdowns for inspection and verification.

Right of access

16.3. The beneficiary(ies) shall allow verifications to be carried out by the European Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office, the European Court of Auditors and any external auditor authorised by the contracting authority. The beneficiary(ies) have to take all steps to facilitate their work.

16.4. The beneficiary(ies) shall allow the above entities to:

a) access the sites and locations at which the action is implemented;

b) examine its accounting and information systems, documents and databases concerning the technical and financial management of the action;

c) take copies of documents;

d) carry out on the-spot-checks;

e) conduct a full audit on the basis of all accounting documents and any other document relevant to the financing of the action.

16.5. Additionally the European Anti-Fraud Office shall be allowed to carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with the procedures laid down by the European Union legislation for the protection of the financial interests of the European Union against fraud and other irregularities.

Where appropriate, the findings may lead to recovery by the European Commission.

16.6. Access given to agents of the European Commission, European Anti-Fraud Office and the European Court of Auditors and to any external auditor authorised by the contracting authority carrying out verifications as provided for by this article as well as by Article 15.7 shall be on the basis of confidentiality with respect to third parties, without prejudice to the obligations of public law to which they are subject.

Record keeping

16.7. The beneficiary(ies) shall keep all records, accounting and supporting documents related to this contract for five years following the payment of the balance and for three years in case of grants not exceeding EUR 60 000, and in any case until any on-going audit, verification, appeal, litigation or pursuit of claim has been disposed of.

They shall be easily accessible and filed so as to facilitate their examination and the coordinator shall inform the contracting authority of their precise location.

16.8. All the supporting documents shall be available either in the original form, including in electronic form, or as a copy.

16.9. In addition to the reports mentioned in Article 2, the documents referred to in this article include:

a) Accounting records (computerised or manual) from the beneficiary(ies)'s accounting system such as general ledger, sub-ledgers and payroll accounts, fixed assets registers and other relevant accounting information;

b) Proof of procurement procedures such as tendering documents, bids from tenderers and evaluation reports;

c) Proof of commitments such as contracts and order forms;

d) Proof of delivery of services such as approved reports, time sheets, transport tickets, proof of attending seminars, conferences and training courses (including relevant documentation and material obtained, certificates) etc.;

e) Proof of receipt of goods such as delivery slips from suppliers;

f) Proof of completion of works, such as acceptance certificates;

g) Proof of purchase such as invoices and receipts;

h) Proof of payment such as bank statements, debit notices, proof of settlement by the contractor;

i) Proof that taxes and/or VAT that have been paid cannot actually be reclaimed;

j) For fuel and oil expenses, a summary list of the distance covered, the average consumption of the vehicles used, fuel costs and maintenance costs;

k) Staff and payroll records such as contracts, salary statements and time sheets. For local staff recruited on fixed-term contracts, details of remuneration paid, duly substantiated by the person in charge locally, broken down into gross salary, social security charges, insurance and net salary. For expatriate and/or European-based staff (if the action is implemented in Europe) analyses and breakdowns of expenditure per month of actual work, assessed on the basis of unit prices per verifiable block of time worked and broken down into gross salary, social security charges, insurance and net salary.

16.10 Failure to comply with the obligations set forth in Article 16.1 to 16.9 constitutes a case of breach of a substantial obligation under this contract. In this case, the contracting authority may in particular suspend the contract, payments or the time-limit for a payment, terminate the contract and/or reduce the grant.

ARTICLE 17 — FINAL AMOUNT OF THE GRANT

Final amount

17.1. The grant may not exceed the maximum ceiling in Article 3.2 of the special conditions either in terms of the absolute value or the percentage stated therein.

If the eligible costs of the action at the end of the action are less than the estimated eligible costs as referred to in Article 3.1 of the special conditions, the grant shall be limited to the amount obtained by applying the percentage laid down in Article 3.2 of the special conditions to the eligible costs of the action approved by the contracting authority.

17.2. In addition and without prejudice to its right to terminate this contract pursuant to Article 12, if the action is implemented poorly or partially - and therefore not in accordance with the description of the action in Annex I - or late, the contracting authority may, by a duly reasoned decision and after allowing the beneficiary(ies) to submit its observations, reduce the initial grant in line with the actual implementation of the action and in accordance with the terms of this contract. This applies as well with regards to the visibility obligations set out in Article 6. In case of breach of obligations, fraud or irregularities the contracting authority may also reduce the grant in proportion of the seriousness of breach of obligations, fraud or irregularities.

No profit

17.3. The grant may not produce a profit for the beneficiary(ies), unless specified otherwise in Article 7 of the special conditions. Profit is defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs approved by the contracting authority when the request for payment of the balance is made.

17.4. The receipts to be taken into account are the consolidated receipts on the date on which the payment request for the balance is made by the coordinator which fall within one of the two following categories:

a) EU grant;

b) income generated by the action; unless otherwise specified in the special conditions.

17.5. In case of an operating grant, amounts dedicated to the building up of reserves shall not be considered as a receipt.

17.6. Where the final amount of the grant determined in accordance with the contract would result in a profit, it shall be reduced by the percentage of the profit corresponding to the final European Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred approved by the contracting authority.

17.7. The provisions in Article 17.3 and 17.6 shall not apply to:

a) actions the objective of which is the reinforcement of the financial capacity of a beneficiary, if specified in Article 7 of the special conditions;

b) actions which generate an income to ensure their continuity beyond the end of this contract, if specified in Article 7 of the special conditions;

c) actions implemented by non-profit organisations;

d) study, research or training scholarships paid to natural persons;

e) other direct support paid to natural persons in most need, such as unemployed persons and refugees, if specified in Article 7 of the special conditions;

f) grants of EUR 60 000 or less.

ARTICLE 18 — RECOVERY

Recovery

18.1. If any amount is unduly paid to the coordinator, or if recovery is justified under the terms of this contract, the coordinator undertakes to repay the contracting authority these amounts.

18.2. In particular, payments made do not preclude the possibility for the contracting authority to issue a recovery order following an expenditure verification report, an audit or further verification of the payment request.

18.3. If a verification reveals that the methods used by the beneficiary(ies) to determine unit costs, lump sums or flat-rates are not compliant with the conditions established in this contract, the contracting authority shall be entitled to reduce the final amount of the grant proportionately up to the amount of the unit costs, lump sums or flat rate financing.

18.4. The coordinator undertakes to repay any amounts paid in excess of the final amount due to the contracting authority within 45 days of the issuing of the debit note, the latter being the letter by which the contracting authority requests the amount owed by the coordinator.

Interest on late payments

18.5. Should the coordinator fail to make repayment within the deadline set by the contracting authority, the contracting authority may increase the amounts due by adding interest:

a) at the rediscount rate applied by the central bank of the country of the contracting authority if payments are in the currency of that country;

b) at the rate applied by the European Central Bank to its main refinancing transactions in euro, as published in the Official Journal of the European Union, C series, where payments are in euros;

on the first day of the month in which the time-limit expired, plus three and a half percentage points. The default interest shall be incurred over the time which elapses between the date of the payment deadline set by the contracting authority, and the date on which payment is actually made. Any partial payments shall first cover the interest thus established.

Offsetting

18.6. Amounts to be repaid to the contracting authority may be offset against amounts of any kind due to the coordinator, after informing it accordingly. This shall not affect the parties' right to agree on payment in instalments.

Other provisions

18.7. The repayment under Article 18.4 or the offsetting under Article 18.6 amount to the payment of the balance.

18.8. Bank charges incurred by the repayment of amounts due to the contracting authority shall be borne entirely by the coordinator.

18.9. The guarantee securing the prefinancing may be invoked in order to repay any amount owed by the beneficiary(ies), and the guarantor shall not delay payment nor raise objections for any reason whatsoever.

18.10. Without prejudice to the prerogative of the contracting authority, if necessary, the European Union may, as donor, proceed itself to the recovery by any means.

***

Annex B. Budget for the Action[1]

Expenses	% of time	All Years Unit	# of units	Unit rate (in EUR)	Costs (in EUR)[3]	Year 1[2] Unit	# of units	Unit rate (in EUR)	Costs (in EUR)
1. Human Resources									
1.1 Salaries (gross amounts, local staff)[4]									
1.1.1 Project Management (GEANT)		Per month	60	7.087	425.243	Per month	12	7.087	85.049
1.1.2 Procurement (GEANT)		Per month	60	3.159	189.557	Per month	12	3.159	37.911
1.1.3 Technical (GEANT)		Per month	60	786	47.141	Per month	12	760	9.124
1.1.4 Finance (GEANT)		Per month	60	1.220	73.194	Per month	12	1.220	14.639
1.1.5 Administration and Marcomms (GEANT)		Per month	60	154	9.247	Per month	12	154	1.849
1.1.6 Manpower EaP NRENs		Per month	60	15.000	900.000	Per month	12	15.000	180.000
1.1.7 Manpower EU NRENs		Per month	60	5.833	350.000	Per month	12	5.833	70.000
1.3 Per diems for missions/travel[5]									
1.3.1 Abroad EU NRENS (staff assigned to the Action)		Per diem	522	200	104.462	Per diem	150	200	30.000
1.3.2 Abroad EaP NRENS (staff assigned to the Action)		Per diem	750	200	149.937	Per diem	150	200	30.000
1.3.3 Other seminar/conference participants		Per diem	978	200	195.602	Per diem	150	200	30.000
Subtotal Human Resources					**2.444.383**				**488.572**
2. Travel[6]									
2.1. International travel		per flight	818	550	450.000	per flight	150	550	82.500
Subtotal Travel					**450.000**				**82.500**
3. Equipment and supplies[7] Local Office									
Subtotal Equipment and supplies					**0**				**0**
4. Local office/Action costs[8]									
Subtotal Local office/Action costs					**0**				**0**
5. Other costs, services[9]									
5.1 Promotional activities		per year	5	10.000	50.000		1	10.000	10.000
5.2 Business Consultation		per event	1	50.000	50.000		1	50.000	50.000
5.3 Auditing costs		per year	5	9.000	45.000		1	9.000	9.000
5.4 Training		per event	2	5.000	10.000		1	5.000	5.000
5.5 Translation, interpreters		per year	5	2.000	10.000		1	2.000	2.000
5.6 Financial services (bank costs etc.)		per month	60	667	40.000		12	667	8.000
5.7 Legal and Professional Fees		per year	1	100.000	100.000		1	100.000	100.000
5.8 Costs of conferences/seminars[10]		per year	3	70.000	210.000		1	70.000	70.000
5.9 Open Access Publications		per year	5	8.000	40.000		1	8.000	8.000
5.10 Procurement Contractor		per year	5	14.400	72.000		1	14.400	14.400
Subtotal Other costs, services					**627.000**				**276.400**
6. Other									
6.1 Connectivity		*per network*			5.450.295				2.500.000
6.2 Equipment and Software		*per network*			866.001				450.000
Subtotal Other					**6.316.296**				**2.950.000**
7. Subtotal direct costs of the Action (1-6)					**9.837.679**				**3.797.472**
8. Administrative costs (maximum 7% of 7, total direct eligible costs of the Action)				7,00%	688.637				265.823

Annex B. Budget for the Action[1]

Expenses	% of time	All Years: Unit	# of units	Unit rate (in EUR)	Costs (in EUR)[3]	Year 1[2]: Unit	# of units	Unit rate (in EUR)	Costs (in EUR)
9. Total eligible costs of the Action (7+ 8)					10.526.316				4.063.295

1. The Budget must cover all eligible costs of the Action, not just the Contracting Authority's contribution. All items must be broken down into their individual components. The number of units for each component must be specified.

2. This section must be completed if the Action is to be implemented over a period of more than 12 months.
3. If the Contracting Authority is not the European Commission, the budget may be established in euro or in the currency of the country of the Contracting Authority.

4. If staff are not working full time on the Action, the percentage should be indicated alongside the description of the item and reflected in the number of units (not the unit rate).

5. Indicate the country where the per diems are incurred and the applicable rates (which must not exceed the scales approved by the European Commission). Per diems cover accommodation, meals and local travel within the place of the mission and sundry expenses.

6. Indicate the place of departure and the destination.
7. Costs of purchase or rental
8. These costs may cover only premises rented especially for the Action. The normal rental and service costs of participating bodies are administrative expenditure under heading 8.
9. Specify. Lump sums will not be accepted.
10. Only indicate here when fully subcontracted.

2. Justification of the Budget for the Action

Costs	All Years	
	Clarification of the budget items *Provide a narrative clarification of each budget item demonstrating the necessity of the costs and how they relate to the action (e.g. through references to the activities and/or results in the Description of the Action).*	**Justification of the estimated costs** *Provide a justification of the calculation of the estimated costs. Note that the estimation should be based on real costs or on simplified cost options if allowed, as described in section 2.1.5 of the Guidelines for Grants Applicants*
1. Human Resources		
1.1 Salaries (gross salaries including social security charges and other related costs, local staff)[4]		
1.1.1 Project Management (GEANT)	Salaries paid to GEANT	Salaries payment calculated as hours worked times hourly wage
1.1.2 Procurement (GEANT)		
1.1.3 Technical (GEANT)		
1.1.4 Finance (GEANT)		
1.1.5 Administration and Marcomms (GEANT)		
1.1.6 Project Management (EaP NRENS)	Salaries paid to EaP NRENS	Salaries payment calculated as hours worked times hourly wage
1.1.7 Project Management (EU NRENS)	Salaries paid to EU NRENS	Salaries payment calculated as hours worked times hourly wage
1.3 Per diems for missions/travel[5]		

1.3.1 Abroad EU NRENS (staff assigned to the Action)	Per diem expenses incured by the EU NRENS	Per diem expenses calculated based on the number of units of travel times EC standard per diem rate
1.3.2 Abroad EaP NRENS (staff assigned to the Action)	Per diem expenses incurred by the EaP NRENS	Per diem expenses calculated based on the number of units of travel times EC standard per diem rate
1.3.3 Non EU NRENS (staff assigned to the Action)	Per diem expenses incurred by the Non EU NRENS	Per diem expenses calculated based on the number of units of travel times EC standard per diem rate
Subtotal Human Resources		
2. Travel[6]		
2.1. International travel	Beneficiary partners and staff travels for seminar, conference and meetings	Assuming about 818 international travels with an average of 550 EURO per travel
Subtotal Travel		
3. Equipment and supplies		
3.1 Purchase or rent of vehicles		
3.2 Furniture, computer equipment		
3.3 Machines, tools...		
3.4 Spare parts/equipment for machines, tools		
3.5 Other (please specify)		
Subtotal Equipment and supplies		
4. Local office		
4.1 Vehicle costs		
4.2 Office rent		
4.3 Consumables - office supplies		
4.4 Other services (tel/fax, electricity/heating, maintenance)		
Subtotal Local office		
5. Other costs, services		

5.1 Promotional activities	Create web-based community, public site and social media communication channels. Promote project to potential users, projects, funding organisations and national governments. Promote the use of existing and the newly implemented services	Based on previous GEANT experience
5.2 Business consultation	To help improve business plans od each NREN which will contribute to sustainability	Based on GEANT experience in other international projects.
5.3 Auditing cost	Grant Audit fees	Based on the current costs for other GEANT projects
5.4 Training	Hire of trainers for capacity building activities	Based on previous GEANT experience
5.5 Translation, interpreters	Translation and interpreters services	Based on previous GEANT experience
5.6 Financial Services (bank costs, etc.)	Bank charges and other financial services related to keeping separate accounts for the project and performing transactions	Based on previous GEANT experience
5.7 Legal and Professional fees	Legal costs of external agencies related to setting up GÉANT Points od Presence in the EaP region (contracts review, Financial & Tax advisory professional services - needed also for VAT related activities)	Based on previous GEANT experience
5.8 Costs of conferences/seminars	Costs for annual conferences, workshops and other partner meetings (rental fee of space(hall), facilities, equipment, reception, etc.)	Based on previous GEANT experience
5.9 Open Access Publications	Cost of supporting promotion of Open and Fair Data principles through the support of publishing any publications related to the work of NRENs in the open source repositories.	Based on previous GEANT experience
5.10 Procurement contractor	Cost of procurement support in the project	Based on previous GEANT experience

Subtotal Other costs, services		
6. Other		
6.1 Connectivity	Costs for leasing international capacity and IRUs	Based on initial discussions with main connectivity providers operating in the EPConnect region.
6.2 Equipment and Software	Internet routing equipment, network transmission equipment, optical equipment, routers, switches, servers, associated software and Online Jounrnals	Based on previous GEANT experience
Subtotal Other		
8. Indirect costs (maximum 7% of 7, subtotal of direct eligible costs of the Action)	Office costs (e.g. office security, maintenance, rent), office expenses (e.g. IT equipment, insurance), staff costs (staff welfare, recruitment, training), professional services fees (internal audit fees, payroll services) etc.	Based on GEANT experience
12. - Taxes - Contributions in kind	-	-

3. Expected sources of funding & summary of estimated costs[1]

	Amount EUR	Percentage %
Expected sources of funding		
EU/EDF contribution sought in this application **(A)**	10.000.000	
Other contributions (Applicant, other Donors etc)		
Name | *Conditions* [6]		
Applicant's | None	526.316	
Revenue from the Action		
Expected TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	10.526.316	
Estimated Costs		
Estimated TOTAL ELIGIBLE COSTS [2] **(B)**	10.526.316	
EU/EDF contribution expressed as a percentage of total eligible costs [4] **(A/B x 100)**		95,00%
Estimated TOTAL ACCEPTED COSTS [3] **(C)**	10.526.316	
EU/EDF contribution expressed as a percentage of total accepted costs[4] **(A/C x 100)**		95,00%

ANNEX IV
Procurement by grant beneficiaries in the context of European Union external actions

1. PRINCIPLES

If the implementation of an action requires procurement by the beneficiary(ies), the contract must be awarded to the tender offering best value for money (i.e. the tender offering the best price-quality ratio) or, as appropriate, to the tender offering the lowest price. In doing so, the beneficiary(ies) shall avoid any conflict of interests and respect the following basic principles:

Where the beneficiary does not launch an open tender procedure it shall justify the choice of tenderers that are invited to submit an offer.

The beneficiary shall evaluate the offers received against objective criteria which enable measuring the quality of the offers and which take into account the price (the offer with the lowest price shall be awarded the highest score for the price criterion).

The beneficiary shall keep sufficient and appropriate documentation with regard to the procedures applied and which justify the decision on the pre-selection of tenderers (where an open tender procedure is not used) and the award decision.

With reference to Section 2.4 of PRAG, the beneficiary shall be responsible for the respect of EU restrictive measures in the award of contracts.

The beneficiary may decide to apply the procurement procedures set forth in the practical guide. If these procedures are correctly followed the principles above will be deemed to be complied with.

The European Commission will carry out *ex post* checks on beneficiary(ies)'s compliance with the principles above and the rules of section 2 below. Failure to comply with these principles or rules would render the related expenditure ineligible for EU/EDF funding.

The provisions of this Annex apply *mutatis mutandis* to contracts to be concluded by the beneficiary(ies)'s affiliated entity(ies).

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR CONTRACTS

2.1. The nationality rule

Participation in tender procedures managed by the beneficiary(ies) is open on equal terms to all natural who are nationals of and legal persons (participating either individually or in grouping-consortium- of tenderers) effectively established in a Member State or a country, territory or region mentioned as eligible by the relevant regulation/basic act governing the eligibility rules for the grant as per Annex A2a to the practical guide. Tenderers must state their nationality in their tenders and provide the usual proof of nationality under their national legislation.

This rule does not apply to the experts proposed under service tenders financed by the grant.

2.2. The rule of origin

If the basic act or the other instruments applicable to the programme under which the grant is financed contain rules of origin for supplies acquired by the beneficiary in the context of the grant[1], the tenderer must be requested to state the origin[2] of the supplies, and the selected contractor will always have to prove the origin of the supplies.

For equipment and vehicles of a unit cost on purchase of more than EUR 5 000, contractors must present proof of origin to the beneficiary(ies) at the latest when the first invoice is presented. The certificate of origin must be made out by the competent authorities of the country of origin of the supplies and must comply with the rules laid down by the relevant Union legislation. Failure to comply with this condition may result in the termination of the contract and/or suspension of payment.

Where supplies may originate from any country, no certificate of origin needs to be submitted.

2.3. Exceptions to the rules on nationality and origin

Where an agreement on widening the market for procurement of goods, works or services applies, access must also be open to nationals and goods originating from other countries under the conditions laid down in that agreement.

In addition, in duly substantiated exceptional cases foreseen by the applicable regulations, in order to give access to nationals or goods originating from countries other than those referred to in Sections 2.1 and 2.2, a prior authorisation by the European Commission must be sought prior to the launch of the procedure, unless the action takes place in a country under a crisis declaration.

* * *

[1] Under the CIR (i.e. not IPA I) and the EDF supplies may originate from any country if the amount of the supplies to be procured is below EUR 100 000 per purchase.

[2] For the purpose of this annex, the term 'origin' is defined in Chapter 2 of Regulation (EC) No 450/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 laying down the EU Customs Code (Modernised Customs Code).

Letterhead from the Beneficiary (Coordinator)

ANNEX V

Request for payment for grant contract

European Union external actions

Letterhead from the Beneficiary (Coordinator)

Request for payment for grant contract
European Union external actions

<Date of the payment request >

For the attention of

<address of the contracting authority>
<Financial unit/section indicated in the contract >[1]

Reference number of the grant contract:

Title of the grant contract:

Name and address of the coordinator:

Payment request number:

Period covered by the payment request:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I hereby request [a further pre-financing payment] [payment of the balance] under the contract mentioned above.

The amount requested is <according to the option indicated in Article 4(1) of the special conditions of the contract/the following: ...>.

Please find attached the following supporting documents:

- detailed breakdown of expenditure (if required by Article 15.7 of the general conditions of the contract)
- narrative and financial interim report (for further pre-financing payments)
- a forecast budget for the subsequent reporting period (for further pre-financing payments)
- narrative and financial final report (for payment of the balance)
- expenditure verification report (for payment of the balance).

The payment should be made to the following bank account: <give the account number shown on the

---

[1] Please do not forget to send a copy of this letter to the entities mentioned in Article 5(1) of the special conditions of the contract, if any.

Letterhead from the Beneficiary (Coordinator)

financial identification form annexed to the contract[2]>

Declaration on honour

I hereby certify that the information contained in this payment request is full, reliable and true, and is substantiated by adequate supporting documents that can be checked.

I hereby certify that the costs declared have been incurred in accordance with this contract and that they can be considered as eligible in accordance with the contract.

Yours faithfully,

< Signature >

---

[2] In case a different bank account has to be used a new financial identification form has to be timely submitted.

FINANCIAL IDENTIFICATION

PRIVACY STATEMENT https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/about_the_european_commission/eu_budget/privacy_statement_en.pdf

By submitting this form, you acknowledge that you have been informed about the processing of your personal data by the European Commission for accounting and contractual purposes.

Please use CAPITAL LETTERS and LATIN CHARACTERS when filling in the form.

BANKING DETAILS ①

ACCOUNT NAME ②	EAP CONNECT 2 EC		
IBAN/ACCOUNT NUMBER ③	GB24BARC20176887969488		
CURRENCY	EUR		
BIC/SWIFT CODE	BARCGB22	BRANCH CODE ④	
BANK NAME	BARCLAYS BANK PL		

ADDRESS OF BANK BRANCH

STREET & NUMBER	Bene't Street Branch		
TOWN/CITY	Cambridge	POSTCODE	CB2 3PZ
COUNTRY	United Kingdom		

ACCOUNT HOLDER'S DATA

AS DECLARED TO THE BANK

ACCOUNT HOLDER	GEANT Vereniging		
STREET & NUMBER	City House 126 – 130 Hills Road		
TOWN/CITY	Cambridge	POSTCODE	CB2 1PQ
COUNTRY	United Kingdom		

REMARK

BANK STAMP + SIGNATURE OF BANK REPRESENTATIVE ⑤

20 - 57 - 40
BARCLAYS BANK
CO - 7 NOV 2019 CO
MILTON KEYNES
ASHTON HOUSE
20 - 57 - 40

22/10/2019 **DATE (Obligatory)**

SIGNATURE OF ACCOUNT HOLDER (Obligatory)

① Enter the final bank data and not the data of the intermediary bank.

② This does not refer to the type of account. The account name is usually the one of the account holder. However, the account holder may have chosen to give a different name to its bank account.

③ Fill in the IBAN Code (International Bank Account Number) if it exists in the country where your bank is established

④ Only applicable for US (ABA code), for AU/NZ (BSB code) and for CA (Transit code). Does not apply for other countries.

⑤ It is preferable to attach a copy of RECENT bank statement. Please note that the bank statement has to confirm all the information listed above under 'ACCOUNT NAME', 'ACCOUNT NUMBER/IBAN' and 'BANK NAME'. With an attached statement, the stamp of the bank and the signature of the bank's representative are not required. The signature of the account-holder and the date are ALWAYS mandatory.

LEGAL ENTITY

PRIVACY STATEMENT https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/about_the_european_commission/eu_budget/privacy_statement_en.pdf

By submitting this form, you acknowledge that you have been informed about the processing of your personal data by the European Commission for accounting and contractual purposes.

Please use CAPITAL LETTERS and LATIN CHARACTERS when filling in the form.

PUBLIC LAW BODY ①

OFFICIAL NAME ②	GEANT Vereniging (Association)
ABBREVIATION	
MAIN REGISTRATION NUMBER ③	40535155
SECONDARY REGISTRATION NUMBER (if applicable)	
PLACE OF MAIN REGISTRATION	CITY Amsterdam · COUNTRY The Netherlands
DATE OF MAIN REGISTRATION	13 (DD) 06 (MM) 1986 (YYYY)
VAT NUMBER	NL007981752B01
OFFICIAL ADDRESS	6B, Nieuw Amsterdam, Hoekenrode 3 Amsterdam-Zuidoost
POSTCODE	1102BR
P.O. BOX	
CITY	Amsterdam
COUNTRY	The Netherlands
PHONE	+31 20 5304488
E-MAIL	

22/10/2019 DATE

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVE

STAMP

GÉANT Vereniging (Association)
Hoekenrode 3
1102 BR Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Tel +31 20 5304488
Registration No 40535155

PLEASE COMPLETE AND SIGN THIS FORM AND ATTACH COPIES OF OFFICIAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (RESOLUTION, LAW, REGISTER(S) OF COMPANIES, OFFICIAL GAZETTE, VAT REGISTRATION, ETC.)

① Public law body WITH LEGAL PERSONALITY, meaning a public entity being able to represent itself and act in its own name, i.e. being capable of suing or being sued, acquiring and disposing of property, entering into contracts. This legal status is confirmed by the official legal act establishing the entity (a law, a decree, etc.).

② National denomination and its translation in EN or FR if existing.

③ Registration number in the national register of the entity.

ANNEX VI
INTERIM NARRATIVE REPORT

- This report must be completed and signed by the contact person of the coordinator.
- The information provided below must correspond to the financial information that appears in the financial report.
- Please complete the report using a typewriter or computer (***you can find this form at the following address <specify>).***
- Please expand the paragraphs as necessary.
- ***Please refer to the special conditions of your grant contract and send one copy of the report to each address mentioned.***
- The contracting authority will reject any incomplete or badly completed reports.
- The answer to all questions must cover the reporting period as specified in point 1.6.

Table of contents

List of acronyms used in the report

1. Description

1.1. Name of coordinator of the grant contract:

1.2. Name and title of the contact person:

1.3. Name of beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies) in the action:

1.4. Title of the action:

1.5. Contract number:

1.6. Start date and end date of the reporting period:

1.7. Target country(ies) or region(s):

1.8. Final beneficiaries &/or target groups[1] (if different) (including numbers of women and men):

1.9. Country(ies) in which the activities take place (if different from 1.7):

[1] 'Target groups' are the groups/entities who will be directly positively affected by the project at the project purpose level, and 'final beneficiaries'" are those who will benefit from the project in the long term at the level of the society or sector at large.

2. Assessment of the implementation of the action activities and its results

2.1. Executive summary of the action

Please give a global overview of the action's implementation for the reporting period (no more than ½ page).

Referring to the updated logical framework matrix[2] (see point 2.3. below), please describe and comment the level of achievement of the outcome(s), if it is relevant at this stage and the likeliness of reaching the final target(s) related to the outcome(s) at the end of the action.

Please explain briefly if any changes should be or have been brought to the intervention logic and to the Logical framework matrix, giving the justification for such changes (complete explanation should be placed in the 2.2 section under the relevant level considered: outcomes, outputs, activities). Comment the likeliness of reaching the final target(s) related to the impact in the future (specify).

2.2. Results and activities

A. RESULTS

The narrative report should be based on the monitoring and evaluation system set up using as a basis the Logical framework matrix. As such, narrative report must inform all the indicators defined in the logical framework. Monitoring and/or evaluation reports relating to the performance of the Action shall be used and mentioned in the narrative reports.

What is your assessment of the results of the action so far? Include observations on the performance and the achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts and whether the action has had any unforeseen positive or negative results.

Explain how the Action has mainstreamed cross-cutting issues such as promotion of human rights,[3] gender equality,[4] democracy, good governance, children's rights and indigenous peoples, youth, environmental sustainability[5] and combating HIV/AIDS (if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region).

Referring to the logical framework matrix (see point 2.3. below) please comment for each level of results (output, outcome, impact) the level of achievement of all the results on the basis of the corresponding current value of the indicators and all the related activities implemented during the reporting period.

- the level of achievement on the basis of the corresponding baseline, target and current value of the indicators, making reference to the assumptions and risks defined in the Logical framework

[2] The relevant terminology (i.e. outputs, outcome, indicators, etc.) is defined in the logical framework matrix template attached to the guidelines for applicants (Annex e3d).

[3] Including those of people with disabilities. For more information, see 'Guidance note on disability and development' at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/disability-inclusive-development-cooperation-guidance-note-eu-staff_en

[4] See Guidance on Gender equality at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/toolkit-mainstreaming-gender-equality-ec-development-cooperation_en

[5] See Guidelines for environmental integration at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/economic-growth/environment-and-green-economy/climate-change-and-environment_en

- the activities covered and implemented. Activities should be linked to corresponding output(s) through clear numbering.

In case of underperformance, please explain the reasons and the corrective measures.

Outcome (Oc) – "<Title of Outcome > "

<comment on current status of indicators associated to Oc and explain any changes, especially any underperformance; refer to assumptions in the Logframe>

(possibly) intermediary Outcome 1 (iOc 1) - "<Title of intermediary Outcome 1>"

(...)

Output 1.1. (Op 1.1.)

(...)

<Following the above assessment of results, please elaborate on all the topics/activities covered and implemented. >

B. ACTIVITIES

Activity 1.1.1.

<please explain any problems (e.g. delay, cancellation, postponement of activities) which have arisen and how they have been addressed> (if applicable)

<please list any risks that might have jeopardised the realisation of some activities and explain how they have been tackled> (if applicable)

Activity 1.1.2.

<...>

2.3. Logframe matrix updated

The Logical framework (logframe) matrix should evolve during the Action project (i.e. the projects) lifetime: new lines can be added for listing new activities as well as new columns for intermediary targets (milestones) when it is relevant and values will be regularly updated in the column foreseen for reporting purpose (see "Current value"). The term "results" refers to the outputs, outcome(s) and impact of the Action.

The logframe can be revised as necessary (in line with the provisions defined in Article 9.4 of the General Conditions).

	Result chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Current value* (reference year) (* to be included in interim and final reports)*	*Source and mean of verification*	*Assumptions*

	Result chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Current value* (reference year) (* to be included in interim and final reports)*	*Source and mean of verification*	*Assumptions*
Impact (Overall objective)	*The broader, long-term change to which the action contributes at country, regional or sector level, in the political, social, economic and environmental global context which will stem from interventions of all relevant actors and stakeholders.*	*Quantitative and/or qualitative variable that provides a simple and reliable mean to measure the achievement of the corresponding result To be presented, when relevant, disaggregated by sex, age, urban/rural, disability, etc.*	*The value of the indicator(s) prior to the intervention against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made. (Ideally, to be drawn from the partner's strategy)*	*The intended final value of the indicator(s). (Ideally, to be drawn from the partner's strategy)*	*The latest available value of the indicator(s) at the time of reporting (* to be updated in interim and final reports)*	*Ideally to be drawn from the partner's strategy.*	*Not applicable*
Outcome (s) (Specific objective(s))	*The main medium-term effect of the intervention focusing on behavioural and institutional changes resulting from the Action (It is good practice to have one specific objective only, however for large Actions, other short term outcomes can be included here)*	*(see definition above)*	*The value of the indicator(s) prior to the intervention against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.*	*The intended final value of the indicator(s).*	*(same as above)*	*Sources of information and methods used to collect and report (including who and when/how frequently).*	*Factors outside project management's control that may influence on the impact-outcome(s) linkage.*
Outputs	*The direct/tangible products (infrastructure, goods and services) delivered/generated by the intervention (*Outputs should in principle be linked to corresponding outcomes through clear numbering)*	*(same as above)*	*(same as above)*	*(same as above)*	*(same as above)*	*(same as above)*	*Factors outside project management's control that may influence on the other outcome(s)/outputs linkage.*

2.4. Activity Matrix

What are the key activities to be carried out to produce the intended outputs? *(*activities should in principle be linked to corresponding output(s) through clear numbering)*	***Means*** *What are the political, technical, financial, human and material resources required to implement these activities, e.g. staff, equipment, supplies, operational facilities, etc.* ***Costs*** *What are the action costs? How are they classified? (Breakdown in the Budget for the Action)*	***Assumptions*** *Factors outside project management's control that may impact on the activities-outputs linkage.*

2.5. Please provide an updated action plan for the future activities of the project[6]

Year													
	Half-year 1						Half-year 2						
Activity	Month 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Implementing body
Example	*example*												*Example*
Preparation Activity 1(title)													Beneficiary or affiliated entity 1
Execution Activity 1(title)													Beneficiary of affiliat entity 1
Preparation Activity 2 (title)													Beneficiary or affiliat entity 2
Etc.													

3. Beneficiaries/affiliated entities, trainees and other cooperation

3.1. How do you assess the relationship between the beneficiaries/affiliated entities of this grant contract (i.e. those having signed the mandate for the coordinator or the affiliated entity statement)? Please provide specific information for each beneficiary/affiliated entity.

3.2. How would you assess the relationship between your organisation and State authorities in the action countries? How has this relationship affected the action?

3.3. Where applicable, describe your relationship with any other organisations involved in implementing the action:

- Associate(s) (if any)
- Contractor(s) (if any))
- Final beneficiaries and target groups
- Other third parties involved (including other donors, other government agencies or local government units, NGOs, etc.)

[6] This plan will cover the financial period between the interim report and the next report.

3.4. Where applicable, outline any links and synergies you have developed with other actions.

3.5. If your organisation has received previous EU grants in view of strengthening the same target group, in how far has this action been able to build upon/complement the previous one(s)? (List all previous relevant EU grants).

3.6. Where applicable, include a traineeship report on each traineeship which ended in the reporting period to be prepared by the trainee including the result of the traineeship and assessment of the qualifications obtained by the trainee with a view to his/her future employment.

4. Visibility

How is the visibility of the EU contribution being ensured in the action?

The European Commission may wish to publicise the results of actions. Do you have any objection to this report being published on the EuropeAid website? If so, please state your objections here.

Name of the contact person for the action:

....

Signature: ....

Location: ....

Date report due: ....

Date report sent: ....

ANNEX VI
FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

- This report must be completed and signed by the contact person of the coordinator.
- The information provided below must correspond to the financial information that appears in the financial report.
- Please complete the report using a typewriter or computer ***(you can find this form at the following address <specify>).***
- Please expand the paragraphs as necessary.
- ***Please refer to the special conditions of your grant contract and send one copy of the report to each address mentioned.***
- The contracting authority will reject any incomplete or badly completed reports.
- Unless otherwise specified, the answer to all questions must cover the reporting period as specified in point 1.6.
- Please do not forget to attach to this report the proof of the transfers of ownership referred to in Article 7.5 of the general conditions.

Table of contents

List of acronyms used in the report

1. Description

1.1. Name of coordinator of the grant contract:

1.2. Name and title of the contact person:

1.3. Name of beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies) in the action:

1.4. Title of the action:

1.5. Contract number:

1.6. Start date and end date of the action:

1.7. Target country(ies) or region(s):

1.8. Final beneficiaries &/or target groups[1] (if different) (including numbers of women and men):

1.9. Country(ies) in which the activities take place (if different from 1.7):

[1] 'Target groups' are the groups/entities who will be directly positively affected by the project at the project purpose level, and 'final beneficiaries' are those who will benefit from the project in the long term at the level of the society or sector at large.

2. Assessment of the implementation of action activities and its results

2.1. Executive summary of the action

Please give a global overview of the action's implementation for the whole duration of the project

Referring to the updated final logical framework matrix[2] (see point 2.3. below), describe the level of achievement of the outcome(s) on both the final beneficiaries &/or target group (if different) and the situation in the target country or target region which the action addressed.

Please explain if the intervention logic has proved to be valid, including with the possible changes and their justifications presented in earlier reports, comment the likeliness of reaching the final target(s) related to the impact in a near future (specify).

Please indicate any modification that have be brought to the Logical framework matrix since the start of the Action and explain briefly why (complete explanation should be placed in the 2.2 section under the relevant level considered: outcomes, outputs, activities).

2.2. Results and activities

A. RESULTS

The narrative report should be based on the monitoring and evaluation system set up using as a basis the Logical framework matrix. As such, narrative reports must inform all the indicators defined in the logical framework. Monitoring and/or evaluation reports relating to the performance of the Action shall be used and mentioned in the narrative report. All the monitoring and/or evaluation reports shall be submitted to the Commission with the Final narrative report.

What is your assessment of the results of the action so far? Include observations on the performance and the achievement of outputs, outcomes and impact and whether the action has had any unforeseen positive or negative results.

Explain how the Action has mainstreamed cross-cutting issues such as promotion of human rights,[3] gender equality,[4] democracy, good governance, children's rights and indigenous peoples, youth, environmental sustainability[5] and combating HIV/AIDS (if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region).

Referring to the final updated logframe matrix (see point 2.3. below) please comment the level of achievement of all the results on the basis of the corresponding current value of the indicators and all the related activities implemented during the reporting period.

- the level of achievement on the basis of the corresponding baseline, target and current value of the indicators, making reference to the assumptions and risks defined in the Logical framework

[2] The relevant terminology (i.e. outputs, outcome, indicators, etc.) is defined in the logical framework matrix template attached to the guidelines for applicants (Annex e3d).

[3] Including those of people with disabilities. For more information, see 'Guidance note on disability and development' at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/disability-inclusive-development-cooperation-guidance-note-eu-staff_en

[4] See Guidance on Gender equality at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/toolkit-mainstreaming-gender-equality-ec-development-cooperation_en

[5] See Guideline for environmental integration at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/economic-growth/environment-and-green-economy/climate-change-and-environment_en

- the activities covered and implemented. Activities should be linked to corresponding output(s) through clear numbering.

(…)

Outcome – "<Title of the Outcome>"

(…)

Comment on final status of indicators associated to Oc and explain any changes, especially any underperformance; refer to the indicators and assumptions in the Logframe:

(Possibly) intermediary Outcome 1 (iOc1) – "<Title of intermediary Outcome 1>"

(…)

Output 1.1. (Op 1.1.) – "Title of Output 1.1. "

(…)

Following the above assessment of results, please elaborate on all the topics/activities covered.

B. ACTIVITIES

Activity 1.1.1.

Please explain any problems (e.g. delay, cancellation, postponement of activities) which have arisen and how they have been addressed (if applicable)

Please list any risks that might have jeopardised the realisation of some activities and explain how they have been tackled.

Activity 1.1.2.

(…)

2.3. What has your organisation or any actor involved in the Action learned from the Action and how has this learning (including evidence from monitoring and evaluations) -been utilised and disseminated? What has and has not worked?

Describe if the action will continue after the support from the European Union has ended. Are there any follow up activities envisaged? What will ensure the sustainability of the action?

2.4. The Logical framework (logframe) matrix should evolve during the Action project (i.e. the projects) lifetime: new lines can be added for listing new activities as well as new columns for intermediary targets (milestones) when it is relevant and values will be regularly updated in the column foreseen for reporting purpose (see "Current value"). The term "results" refers to the outputs, outcome(s) and impact of the Action.

The logframe can be revised as necessary (in line with the provisions defined in Article 9.4 of the General Conditions).

	Result chain	Indicator	Baseline (value & reference year)	Target (value & reference year)	Current value* (reference year) (* to be included in interim and final reports)	Source and mean of verification	Assumptions
Impact (Overall objective)	*The broader, long-term change to which the action contributes at country, regional or sector level, in the political, social, economic and environmental global context which will stem from interventions of all relevant actors and stakeholders.*	*Quantitative and/or qualitative variable that provides a simple and reliable mean to measure the achievement of the corresponding result To be presented, when relevant, disaggregated by sex, age, urban/rural, disability, etc.*	*The value of the indicator(s) prior to the intervention against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made. (Ideally, to be drawn from the partner's strategy)*	*The intended final value of the indicator(s). (Ideally, to be drawn from the partner's strategy)*	*The latest available value of the indicator(s) at the time of reporting (* to be updated in interim and final reports)*	*Ideally to be drawn from the partner's strategy.*	*Not applicable*
Outcome (s) (Specific objective(s))	*The main medium-term effect of the intervention focusing on behavioural and institutional changes resulting from the Action (It is good practice to have one specific objective only, however for large Actions, other short term outcomes can be included here)*	*(see definition above)*	*The value of the indicator(s) prior to the intervention against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.*	*The intended final value of the indicator(s).*	*(same as above)*	*Sources of information and methods used to collect and report (including who and when/how frequently).*	*Factors outside project management's control that may influence on the impact-outcome(s) linkage.*

	Result chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Current value* (reference year) (* to be included in interim and final reports)*	*Source and mean of verification*	*Assumptions*
Outputs	*The direct/tangible products (infrastructure, goods and services) delivered/generated by the intervention (*Outputs should in principle be linked to corresponding outcomes through clear numbering)*	*(same as above)*	*(same as above)*	*(same as above)*	*(same as above)*	*(same as above)*	*Factors outside project management's control that may influence on the other outcome(s)/outputs linkage.*

2.5. Activity matrix

What are the key activities to be carried out to produce the intended outputs? *(*activities should in principle be linked to corresponding output(s) through clear numbering)*	***Means*** *What are the political, technical, financial, human and material resources required to implement these activities, e.g. staff, equipment, supplies, operational facilities, etc.* ***Costs*** *What are the action costs? How are they classified? (Breakdown in the Budget for the Action)*	***Assumptions*** *Factors outside project management's control that may impact on the activities-outputs linkage.*

2.6. Explain how the action has mainstreamed cross-cutting issues such as promotion of human rights,[6] gender equality,[7] democracy, good governance, children's rights and indigenous peoples, environmental sustainability[8] and combating HIV/AIDS (if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region)[9].

2.7. How and by whom have the activities been monitored/evaluated? Please summarise the results of the feedback received from the beneficiaries and others.

2.8. What has your organisation or any actor involved in the action learned from the action and how has this learning been utilised and disseminated?

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[6] Including those of people with disabilities. For more information, see 'Guidance note on disability and development' at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/disability-inclusive-development-cooperation-guidance-note-eu-staff_en

[7] https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/toolkit-mainstreaming-gender-equality-ec-development-cooperation_en

[8] Guidelines for environmental integration are available at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/economic-growth/environment-and-green-economy/climate-change-and-environment_en

[9] Please refer to EC Guidelines on gender equality, disabilities, etc.

2.9. Please list all materials (and number of copies) produced during the action on whatever format (please enclose a copy of each item, except if you have already done so in the past).

Please state how the items produced are being distributed and to whom.

2.10. Please list all contracts (works, supplies, services) above EUR 60 000 awarded for the implementation of the action for the whole implementation period since the last interim report if any or during the reporting period, giving for each contract the amount, the name of the contractor and a brief description on how the contractor was selected, including compliance with EU restrictive measures.

3. Beneficiaries/affiliated entities, trainees and relations with Government/other cooperation

3.1. How do you assess the relationship between the beneficiaries/affiliated entities of this grant contract (i.e. those having signed the mandate for the coordinator or an affiliated entity statement)? Please provide specific information for each beneficiary/affiliated entity.

3.2. Is the above agreement between the signatories to the grant contract to continue? If so, how? If not, why?

3.3. How would you assess the relationship between your organisation and State authorities in the action countries? How has this relationship affected the action?

3.4. Where applicable, describe your relationship with any other organisations involved in implementing the action:

- Associate(s) (if any)
- Contractor(s) (if any)
- Final beneficiaries and target groups
- Other third parties involved (including other donors, other government agencies or local government units, NGOs, etc.)

3.5. Where applicable, outline any links and synergies you have developed with other actions.

3.6. If your organisation has received previous EU grants in view of strengthening the same target group, in how far has this action been able to build upon/complement the previous one(s)? (List all previous relevant EU grants).

3.7. How do you evaluate cooperation with the services of the contracting authority?

3.8 Where applicable, include a traineeship report on each traineeship which ended in the reporting period to be prepared by the trainee including the result of the traineeship and assessment of the qualifications obtained by the trainee with a view to his/her future employment.

4. Visibility

How is the visibility of the EU contribution being ensured in the action?

The European Commission may wish to publicise the results of actions. Do you have any objection to this report being published on the EuropeAid website? If so, please state your objections here.

5. Location of records, accounting and supporting documents

Please indicate in a table the location of records, accounting and supporting documents for each beneficiary and affiliated entity entitled to incur costs.

The European Commission may wish to publicise the results of actions. Do you have any objection to this report being published on the website of DG International Cooperation and Development ? If so, please state your objections here.

Name of the contact person for the action: ....

Signature: ....Location: ....

Date report due: ....Date report sent: ....

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN
EXPENDITURE VERIFICATION OF A GRANT CONTRACT
EXTERNAL ACTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- **How to use this terms of reference MODEL**
- **(also applies to Annex 1)**
- **insert** the information requested between the <...>
- **choose** the optional text between [...] highlighted in grey when applicable or delete
- **delete** all yellow instructions and the present text box

The present terms of reference apply to the verification of expenditure declared in financial reports under the following contracts:

1) Grant Contract[1] number and title of the action: <...>

[2) Grant Contract[2] number and title of the action: <...>]

<Repeat contracts/reports as applicable>

Detailed information is provided at the cover page of Annex 1

---

1 Contract in relation to which the financial report subject to verification is issued. The contract established with the expenditure verifier will be identified as "Verification Contract"

2 Contract in relation to which the financial report subject to verification is issued. The contract established with the expenditure verifier will be identified as "Verification Contract"

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

The present document and the Annexes listed in Section 8 are the terms of reference ('ToR') on which the Coordinator (The term "Coordinator" refers to the Beneficiary identified as the Coordinator in the Special Conditions) agrees to engage 'the Expenditure Verifier' to perform a verification of reported expenditure .

Where in these ToR the 'Contracting Authority' is mentioned, this refers to the < European Commission or name of another contracting authority>, which has signed the Grant Contract with the Beneficiary and is providing the grant funding. The Contracting Authority is not party to this agreement.

These ToR will become an integral part of the contract concluded between the Coordinator and the Expenditure Verifier.

They apply to expenditure verifications contracted by the Coordinator and cover the verification of expenditure incurred under the EU financed contracts on the cover sheet.

2 Objectives and context

The Expenditure Verifier is expected

- to carry out the agreed-upon procedures listed in Annex 2, and

- to issue reports based on the template in Annex 3 which will support the Contracting Authority's conclusions on the eligibility of the reported expenditure and the related follow-up.

The expenditure verification will be performed as [<Choose either one or both> a desk review or/and fieldwork at the location indicated in Annex 1.]

The Expenditure Verifier is not expected to provide an audit opinion.

3 Standards and Ethics

The Expenditure Verifier shall undertake this engagement in accordance with:

- the International Standard on Related Services ('ISRS') 4400 Engagements to perform Agreed-upon Procedures regarding Financial Information as promulgated by the IFAC;
- the IFAC Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants, developed and issued by IFAC's International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants (IESBA), which establishes fundamental ethical principles for Auditors with regard to integrity, objectivity, independence, professional competence and due care, confidentiality, professional behaviour and technical standards.

  Although ISRS 4400 provides that independence is not a requirement for agreed-upon procedures engagements, the Coordinator requires that the Expenditure Verifier is independent from the Coordinator and complies with the independence requirements of the IFAC Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants.

4 Requirements for the Expenditure Verifier

By agreeing these ToR, the Expenditure Verifier confirms meeting at least one of the following conditions:

- The Expenditure Verifier is a member of a national accounting or auditing body or institution which in turn is a member of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC).
- The Expenditure Verifier is a member of a national accounting or auditing body or institution. Although this organisation is not member of the IFAC, the Expenditure Verifier commits to undertake this expenditure verification in accordance with the IFAC standards and ethics set out in these ToR.
- The Expenditure Verifier is registered as a statutory auditor in the public register of a public oversight body in an EU member state in accordance with the principles of public oversight set out in Directive 2006/43/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (this applies to auditors and audit firms based in an EU member state)[3].
- The Expenditure Verifier is registered as a statutory auditor in the public register of a public oversight body in a third country and this register is subject to principles of public oversight as set out in the legislation of the country concerned (this applies to auditors and audit firms based in a third country).

5 Scope

5.1 Contracts and Financial Reports covered by these ToR

The Contract(s) and Financial Reports subject to this expenditure verification are indicated on the cover sheet and in Annex 1.

5.2 Conditions for Eligibility of Expenditure

The conditions for eligibility are stipulated in the Contracts which are provided in Annex 1 (including riders).

6 Verification Process and Methodology

6.1 Preparation of the Verification

The Expenditure Verifier shall prepare the verification and to agree on the timing for carrying out the expenditure verification, notably with regard to fieldwork (if any) (see Section 6.2. for applicable maximum time lags). The Expenditure Verifier will then also confirm with the Coordinator the location(s) indicated in Annex 1 and ensure that relevant supporting documents as well as key staff will be available during the verification.

6.2 Preparatory Meeting, Fieldwork, Desk Review

[The Coordinator foresees a preparatory meeting with the Expenditure Verifier which will be held [<Choose either one or both> by conference call or at <name and address of the meeting place should be clearly stated>.]

The field work or desk review shall commence as soon as possible and not later than <number > calendar days after the signature of the verification contract or the date of

[3] Directive 2006/43 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2006 on statutory audits of annual accounts and consolidated accounts, amending Council Directives 78/660/EEC and 83/349/EEC and repealing Council Directive 84/253 EEC.

availability of the Financial Report (i.e. financial report, supporting documents and other relevant information).

6.2.1 Engagement Context, Materiality, Risk Analysis, Sampling

The Expenditure Verifier's procedures should include:

- obtaining a sufficient understanding of the engagement context including the contractual conditions, the Coordinator and the applicable EC laws and regulations which are set out in Section 5 above (Scope). The Expenditure Verifier should pay specific attention to the contractual provisions relevant for the following aspects:
  - documentation, filing and record keeping for expenditure and income;
  - eligibility of expenditure and income;
  - procurement and origin rules insofar as these conditions are relevant to determine the eligibility of expenditure;
  - asset management (management and control of fixed assets; e.g. equipment).
  - cash and bank management (treasury);
  - payroll and time management;
  - accounting (including the use of exchange rates) and financial reporting of expenditure and income; and
  - internal controls and notably financial internal controls.

The understanding should be sufficient to identify and assess the risks of material errors or misstatements in the expenditure and revenue stated in the Financial Report in order to determine the size and structure of the expenditure sample to be tested, whether caused by error or fraud, and sufficient to design and perform further verification procedures.

- performing a risk analysis (Annex 2).

The outcome of the risk analysis has to be clearly described in the Verification Report (Annex 3, Section 2.1);

- determining the sample size;

For the purpose of determining what the overall material misstatement or error is, the Expenditure Verifier will apply a materiality threshold of 2% of the total amount of the gross reported expenditure with a confidence level of 95%.

- establishing the sample and selecting the individual items for testing (Annex 2).

The link between the risk assessment and the size and composition of the sample, as well as the sampling method (statistical/non-statistical) must be clearly described in the Verification Report (Annex 3, Section 2.2);

6.2.2 Fieldwork / Desk Review

The main task during the fieldwork or desk review will be to perform the substantive tests (Annex 2, Section 2). Key information about the testing process must be provided in the Verification Report (Annex 3, Section 4).

6.2.3 Debriefing Memo and Closing Meeting

At the end of the fieldwork or desk review, the Expenditure Verifier should prepare a debriefing memo, organize a closing meeting with the Coordinator in order to discuss the findings, obtain its initial comments and agree on additional information to be provided at a later date.

6.2.4 Documentation and Verification Evidence

The evidence to be used for performing the procedures in Annex 2 is all financial and non-financial information which makes it possible to examine the expenditure declared in the Financial Report.

The Expenditure Verifier documents matters which are important in providing evidence to support the report of factual findings, and evidence that the work was carried out in accordance with ISRS 4400 and these ToR.

6.3 Reporting

6.3.1 Structure and Content of the Report

The use of the Expenditure Verification Report template in Annex 3 of these ToR, including the annexed tables, is **compulsory**.

If the verification scope covers Financial Reports related to different Contracts, a separate and specific report should be issued for each Contract.

The report should provide basic information about the Contract and should describe the outcome of the risk analysis and its implications on the sampling. The report should also give an overview of the substantive testing and fully disclose the information regarding the items included in the expenditure population and in the sample. The report should finally detail the findings identified through the performance of the agreed-upon procedures.

The report should be presented in <language>.

The Expenditure Verifier will submit within < number of working days to be indicated by the Coordinator> working days of the conclusion of the field work a draft report to the Coordinator for comments to be received within < number of working days to be indicated by the Coordinator>working days. This delay expired, the Expenditure Verifier will provide the final report to the Coordinator within < number of working days to be indicated by the Coordinator>working days from the receipt of the comments (if any).

6.3.2 Expenditure Verification Findings and Recommendations

The factual findings shall be reported in accordance with the formats and criteria specified in the Expenditure Verification Report template (Annex 3). The description of findings will include the standard applied (e.g. art. xx of the General Conditions of the Contract), the facts and the analysis of the Expenditure Verifier.

The verification report should include all financial findings made by the Expenditure Verifier, regardless of the amount involved. Changes in the financial findings occurring between the draft and final report as a result of the consultation procedure should be clearly and sequentially reported.

7 Other Matters

7.1 Subcontracting

The Expenditure Verifier will not subcontract without prior written authorisation from the Coordinator.

8 Annexes

Annex 1 - Engagement Context / Key Information

Annex 2 – Guidelines for Risk Analysis and Verification Procedures

Annex 3 - Model for Expenditure Verification Report

Annex 1: Engagement Context / Key Information

Contract[4] and report summary

[Annex to be completed by the Coordinator]

Information about the Grant Contract	
Reference number and date of the Grant Contract	< Contracting Authority's reference for the Grant Contract>
Grant contract title	
Country	
Coordinator	< full name and address of the Coordinator as per the Grant Contract>
Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies)	< full name and address of the Beneficiary(ies) and related affiliated entity(ies) as per the Grant Contract>
Start date of the implementation period of the Action	
End date of the implementation period of the Action	
Financial Report(s) subject to verification:	<DD/MM/YYYY-DD/MM/YYYY> <DD/MM/YYYY-DD/MM/YYYY> <DD/MM/YYYY-DD/MM/YYYY>
Total amount received to date by the Coordinator from Contracting Authority	< Total amount received as per dd.mm.yyyy>
Total amount of the payment request	< provide the total amount requested for payment as per Annex V to the Special Conditions for Grant Contracts (Payment Request for a grant contract for European Union external actions) >
Contracting Authority	[<Provide the name, position/title, phone and E-mail of the contact person at the Contracting Authority>. (To be completed only if the Contracting Authority is not the Commission.)]
European Commission	< provide the name, position/title, phone and E-mail of the contact person in the Delegation of the European Union in the country concerned, or if applicable at Headquarters>
Auditor	< Name and address of the audit firm and names/positions of the auditors>

[4] Contract in relation to which the financial report subject to verification is issued. The contract established with the expenditure verifier will be identified as "Verification Contract"

A	Logistics	
Issue	**Question**	**Reply**
Locations	1. Where do the Coordinator and other Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies) retain the accounting records?	
	2. Where do the Coordinator and other Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies) retain the original supporting documents?	
	3. Where were contractual activities carried out?	
	4. Where are key project staff available to provide information and explanations?	
Languages	5. Which is the contractual language?	
	6. Which is the language of the accounting records?	
	7. Which are the languages of supporting documents?	
	8. Which languages are spoken by key project staff?	

B	Contractual Conditions	
Contract amount	9. What is the total amount of the contract?	
EC contribution	10. What is the amount of the EC contribution?	
Other contributions	11. Which are the other sources of funding (including the Coordinator)?	Source 1 / amount
		Source 2 / amount
		Source 3 / amount
		Source 4 / amount
		Source 5 / amount

C	Financial Report (enclosed as Annex 1.1)	
Financial report	12. Approximately how many expense transactions have been reported / are expected to be reported in the Financial Report?	
	13. What is the distribution of these transactions (e.g. capital expenditure, operating expenditure, fees, simplified costs, per diem, etc.), Are the transactions few/many of large/small value?	
	14. To what extent have Project transactions been carried out in cash?	**[high, medium, low]**
	15. In which currencies has expenditure been incurred?	

	16. What is the reporting currency?	
	17. How many other Financial Reports have already been presented by the Coordinator under this contract?	

D	Procurement	
Procurement	18. How many procurement procedures have been undertaken during the period covered by the Financial Report?	
	19. Was the EC involved in any of the procurement procedures referred to in question 18 (e.g. ex-ante verifications or derogations to the rule of origin)?	
	20. Are works done and supplies delivered under the contract located centrally or are they dispersed?	

E	Previous contracts verifications, audits or monitoring	
Previous verifications, audits or monitoring	21. Which previous experience did the Entity have with EC contracts and associated regulations?	
	22. How many of the previously presented Financial Reports (if any) have been subject to audit/verification by external consultants contracted by the Coordinator?	
	23. Have any verification, audit or monitoring exercises other than those referred to under numeral 22 been carried out with regard to the contract or the Coordinator that are relevant for the scope of the current verification?	
	24. Have any significant findings been raised under the exercises referred to in questions 22 and 23? If so, what are they?	
	25. Have any instances of fraud or irregularities been previously identified in dealings with the particular Entity?	

F Contact Details

Coordinator: <full name of the entity subject to audit>

Address		Country	
Phone		Fax	
Website			
Key contact			

Annex 1/<… >.1: Financial Report(s) to be verified

Annex 1/<… >.2: Contract and riders

<Other documents to be sent to the Auditor, (e.g. narrative reports, previous audit reports)>

Annex 2: Guidelines for risk analysis and verification procedures

Table of Contents

1. RISK ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATION OF THE SAMPLE

The Expenditure Verifier should assess the risks of material errors or misstatements in the expenditure and revenue declared in the Financial Report in order to determine the size and structure of the expenditure sample to be tested according to the procedures described in Section 2.

This work involves an assessment of the inherent risks that:
- The Financial Report is not reliable, i.e. that it does not present, in all material aspects, the actual expenditure incurred and the revenue received in conformity with applicable conditions.
- Expenditure declared in the financial report has not, in all material aspects, been incurred in conformity with applicable contractual conditions.
- Revenues generated by the Coordinator in the execution of the contract are not deducted from the declared expenditure in conformity with applicable conditions.
- Fraud and irregularities have occurred which could have had an impact on expenditure and/or revenue reported under the contract.

The Expenditure Verifier should assess the inherent risk based, inter alia, on the number and complexity of the transactions, the complexity of the activities provided for by the Contract, the number of implementing Entities involved and the environment where the Contract is implemented. In addition the Expenditure Verifier, based inter alia on the information provided in annex 1 to the Terms of Reference (*Engagement Context / Key Information*) will consider the control risk, i.e. whether the design of the Internal Control System sufficiently mitigates the identified inherent risks and whether it is plausible that it is operating effectively.

2. EXPENDITURE VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

The following checks must be performed by the Expenditure Verifier unless they are irrelevant in relation to the eligibility criteria applicable to the contract type. Therefore the Expenditure Verifier is required to gain appropriate understanding of such requirements in order to carry out only the relevant checks and properly apply the relevant eligibility requirements.

2.1 The expenditure was incurred by and pertains to the Entity.

2.2 The expenditure is recorded in the accounting system of the Coordinator and other Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies)

The expenditure is recorded in the accounting system of the Coordinator and other Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies) in accordance with the applicable accounting standards and the Coordinator's usual cost accounting practices.

2.3 Expenditure incurred during the contractual eligibility period

The expenditure declared in the financial report was incurred during the contractual implementation period of the Action, except for expenditure relating to final reports, expenditure verification, audit and evaluation. Expenditure paid after the submission of the financial report, is listed in the final report along with the estimated date of payment.

2.4 Expenditure indicated in the contractual estimated budget

The expenditure included in the financial report was indicated in the contractual budget.

The applicable budget ceilings were not exceeded.

The expenditure has been allocated to the correct heading of the Financial Report.

2.5 Expenditure necessary for the implementation of the contractual activities, reasonable and justified

It is plausible that the direct and indirect expenditures included in the financial report were necessary for the implementation of the contractual activities.

The amount of the expenditure items included in the financial report is reasonable and justified and respects the principle of sound financial management.

2.6 Expenditure identifiable and verifiable

The expenditure is backed up by sufficient supporting documentation (e.g. invoices, contracts, order forms, pay slips, time sheets) and proof of payment.

Where expenditure was apportioned, the applied allocation key was based on sufficient, appropriate and verifiable underlying information.

The expenditure is backed up by evidence of works done, goods received or services rendered. The existence of assets is verifiable.

2.7 Compliance with Procurement Principles and Nationality and Origin Rules

For the expenditure items concerned, the Coordinator has complied with the contractual requirements for procurement. Contractual nationality and origin rules have been applied, including those on derogations to be awarded by the Commission.

2.8 Expenditure complies with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation

For the expenditure items concerned, the Coordinator complies with the requirements of tax and social security legislation (for example: employer's part of taxes, pension premiums and social security charges).

2.9 Financial support to third parties (sub-granting)

Financial support to third parties is provided for by the contractual conditions and its amount does not exceed the contractual limits.

The expenditure incurred by the third parties meets the relevant eligibility requirements. In particular it was incurred by and pertains to the third party, during the contractual eligibility period, is necessary for the implementation of the contractual activities and is identifiable and verifiable (see definition at point 2.6).

2.10 Other eligibility requirements

Duties, taxes and charges, (e.g. VAT) included in the financial report cannot be recovered by the Entity unless otherwise provided for in the contractual conditions (accepted costs system). In the latter case these expenses are reported separately and relate to eligible direct expenditure.

The correct exchange rates are used where applicable.

The contingency reserve has been established in accordance to the contractual conditions and its use authorised by the Contracting Authority.

The indirect costs do not exceed the maximum contractual percentage of the eligible direct costs and do not include ineligible expenses or expenses already declared as direct ones.

Contributions in kind are not included in the financial report, unless otherwise provided for in the contractual conditions.

Expenditure specifically considered ineligible by the contractual conditions is not included in the financial report.

Expenditure declared under the simplified cost options respects the contractual requirements.

The revenues generated by the Coordinator in the execution of the contract are disclosed in the financial report and deducted from the declared expenditure, unless otherwise provided for in the contractual conditions.

<Annex 3: Model for > Expenditure verification Report

<To be printed on AUDITOR'S letterhead>

Report for an Expenditure Verification of a Grant Contract
External Actions of the European Union
<Title of and number of the grant contract >

How this model should be completed by the Expenditure Verifier

- **insert** the information requested between the <...>
- **choose** the optional text between **[...]** highlighted in grey when applicable or delete
- **delete** all yellow instructions and the present text box

1. Background information

1.1. Short description of the action subject to verification

Contract number and title:	
Contract type	grant contract,
Financial Report(s) subject to verification	<DD/MM/YYYY-DD/MM/YYYY> <DD/MM/YYYY-DD/MM/YYYY> <DD/MM/YYYY-DD/MM/YYYY>
Coordinator and other Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies)	< Identify the Coordinator and other Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies) and provide key information about their legal form, nationality, size, main field(s) of activity and other elements deemed relevant – max 200 words>
Location(s) where the Contract is implemented	
Contract execution period	
Contract implementation status	< indicate on-going or completed >
General and specific objectives of the Contract	
Synthetic description of the activities, outputs and target group	<max 300 words>

1.2. Basic financial information of the Contract (at the time of the verification)

1.2.1 Expenditure

Budget Headings	**Budgeted Expenditure (amount)**	**Reported Expenditure (amount)**
Budget Heading "..."		
...		
Total		

1.2.2 Contributions

Source of Contribution	**Budgeted Contribution (amount)**	**Actual Contribution (amount)**
EU		
Coordinator		
Other Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies)		
...		
Other Donor 1		
...		
Total		

1.2.3 Revenues

Revenue Types	**Budgeted Revenues (amount)**	**Actual Revenues (amount)**
Type "..."		
Type "..."		
...		
Total		

1.3. Verified Financial Reports

See annex 3.1

2. Risk analysis

2.1. Outcome of risk analysis

Based on the risk analysis performed according to the Terms of Reference, provide succinct information about the identified risks possibly affecting the verified report, regarding the action, the context in which the latter is implemented, the beneficiaries and the target group.

<E.g. action implemented via complex procurement procedures, financial assistance to third parties (sub-grants) or revolving funds, transactions incurred in several currencies, technical complexity, high corruption perception index, instances of political interference, predominance of cash payments, number of parties involved, partners lacking administrative capacity, known weaknesses in internal control systems, lack of involvement or cooperation of the target group, history of fraud cases. *(max. 300 words)*>

In addition, please identify possible mitigating factors.

< E.g. previous audit or verification work, evidence of close follow up by the contracting authority, good results yielded in the past by the implementing partner, etc. *(max. 150 words)*>

2.2 Implications on the sampling

Explain how the identified risk factors are reflected in the structure and size of the sample.

<Based on the identified risk factors, describe how the sample was selected (e.g. statistical/judgemental sampling, stratification, etc.), what type of transactions were prioritised (e.g. amount above xx EUR, expensed declared by co-beneficiary XY, staff expenditure, payments to sub-grantees, etc.) what is the coverage ratio in amount and number of transaction *(max. 200 words)*>

3. Transaction population and sample

Sampling Highlights/Overview

The sample size was determined based on a materiality threshold of 2% of the total amount of reported expenditure with a confidence level of 95% and considering the risk analysis presented above.

Report/invoice: <indicate the report/invoice number and cut-off dates>		
	Population	**Audited sample**
Number of transactions		
Value of transactions EUR		

[If more than one financial report/invoice is verified, repeat as applicable]

A complete list of the transactions included in the population is to be included in Annex 3.3.

4. Substantive testing

Short description of the testing process

Compliance with the Terms of Reference and with the International Standard on Related Services (ISRS) 4400.

<Confirm that the testing procedures established in the annex 2 to the Terms of Reference were fully applied or disclose any scope limitation. Also confirm that the testing was executed in accordance with the International Standard on Related Services (ISRS) 4400, "Engagements to Perform Agreed-upon Procedures Regarding Financial Information".>

Provide the key information about the testing process.

<E.g. describe if the verification work took place at the implementing partner's premises, whether qualified representatives of the auditee were present, if they were cooperative, if the supporting documentation was available in full, if additional documents had to be received after the field mission, whether evidence of the equipment transfer is available, if physical inspections were performed, any scope limitations, etc. (max. 300 words)>

5. Summary of findings

5.1 Summary of errors detected

<Description of the main outcomes of the transaction testing (e.g. type of errors detected, type of transactions, geographic scope, sector, involved implementing partners, etc.) *(max. 200 words)*>

5.2 Audit team

<List names and expert category levels for this report.>

<Name and signature of the Verifier>

<Verifier's address: office having responsibility for the audit>

[for final reports <Date of signature> the date when the **final** report is signed]

Annex 3.1: Financial reports provided by the auditee

Annex 3.2: Procedures performed

Annex 3.3: Table of transactions - provided as Excel file

Annex 3.4: Table of errors - provided as Excel file

Nota Bene
The beneficiary(ies) alone is responsible for ensuring that the financial information provided in these tables is correct.

Forecast budget and follow-up
In accordance with Article 15.3 of the General Conditions a forecast budget for the subsequent reporting period or for the remaining period (if shorter) must be provided with any request for payment of further pre-financing instalment.

Interim Report & Final Report
Additional information on expenditure incurred in local or other currencies than the euro (or the currency of the Contract) may be asked by the Contracting Authority

Addenda and use of contingencies
To be filled in case of an addendum and/or when contingencies are used.

ROUNDINGS
Figures have to be rounded to the nearest euro cent

Addenda or use of contingencies

Contract No

Implementation period of the contract (dd/mm/yyyy-dd/mm/yyyy)

	Budget as per contract/last addendum signed				Use of contingencies/ addenda	Budget as per new addendum signed (Only to be completed when an amendment is necessary)			
Expenditures	Unit	# Units	Unit value (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)		Unit	# Units	Unit value (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)
		(a)	(b)	(a)*(b)			(a)	(b)	(a)*(b)
1. Human Resources									
1.1 Salaries (gross salaries including social security charges and other related costs, local staff)									
1.1.1 Technical	Per month					Per month			
1.1.2 Administrative/support staff	Per month					Per month			
1.2 Salaries (gross amounts incl social sec charges and other related costs, expat/int. staff)	Per month					Per month			
1.3 Per diems for missions/travel									
1.3.1 Abroad (staff assigned to the Action)	Per diem					Per diem			
1.3.2 Local (staff assigned to the Action)	Per diem					Per diem			
1.3.3 Seminar/conference participants	Per diem					Per diem			
Subtotal Human Resources									
2. Travel									
2.1. International travel	Per flight					Per flight			
2.2 Local transportation	Per month					Per month			
Subtotal Travel									
3. Equipment and supplies									
3.1 Purchase or rent of vehicles	Per vehicle					Per vehicle			
3.2 Furniture, computer equipment									
3.3 Machines, tools, etc.									
3.4 Spare parts/equipment for machines, tools									
3.5 Other (please specify)									
Subtotal Equipment and supplies									
4. Local office									
4.1 Vehicle costs	Per month					Per month			
4.2 Office rent	Per month					Per month			
4.3 Consumables - office supplies	Per month					Per month			
4.4 Other services (tel/fax, electricity/heating, maintenance)	Per month					Per month			
Subtotal Local office									
5. Other costs, services									
5.1 Publications									
5.2 Studies, research									
5.3 Expenditure verification/Audit									
5.4 Evaluation costs									
5.5 Translation, interpreters									
5.6 Financial services (bank guarantee costs etc.)									
5.7 Costs of conferences/seminars									
5.8 Visibility actions									
Subtotal Other costs, services									
6. Other									
Subtotal Other									
7. Subtotal direct eligible costs of the Action (1-6)									
8. Indirect costs (maximum 7% of 7. subtotal of direct eligible costs of the Action)									
9. Total eligible costs of the Action, excluding reserve and volunteers' work (7+8)									
10.1 Provision for contingency reserve (maximum 5% of 7. subtotal of direct eligible costs of the Action)									
10.2 Volunteers' work	Per day					Per day			
11. Total eligible costs (9+10)									
12. - Taxes - Contributions in kind									
13. Total accepted costs of the Action (11+12)									

Forecast Budget & follow-up

Contract No
Implementation period of the contract (dd/mm/yyyy-dd/mm/yyyy)

Expenditures	Previous period (dd/mm/yyyy-dd/mm/yyyy) Forecast				Real Previous Period	Following period (dd/mm/yyyy-dd/mm/yyyy) Forecast			
	Unit	# Units	Unit value (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)	Unit	# Units	Unit value (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)
1. Human Resources									
1.1 Salaries (gross amounts, local staff)									
1.1.1 Technical	Per month					Per month			
1.1.2 Administrative/ support staff	Per month					Per month			
1.2 Salaries (gross amounts, expat/int. staff)	Per month					Per month			
1.3 Per diems for missions/travel									
1.3.1 Abroad (staff assigned to the Action)	Per diem					Per diem			
1.3.2 Local (staff assigned to the Action)	Per diem					Per diem			
1.3.3 Seminar/conference participants	Per diem					Per diem			
Subtotal Human Resources									
2. Travel									
2.1. International travel	Per flight					Per flight			
2.2 Local transportation	Per month					Per month			
Subtotal Travel									
3. Equipment and supplies									
3.1 Purchase or rent of vehicles	Per vehicle					Per vehicle			
3.2 Furniture, computer equipment									
3.3 Machines, tools...									
3.4 Spare parts/equipment for machines, tools									
3.5 Other (please specify)									
Subtotal Equipment and supplies									
4. Local office									
4.1 Vehicle costs	Per month					Per month			
4.2 Office rent	Per month					Per month			
4.3 Consumables - office supplies	Per month					Per month			
4.4 Other services (tel/fax, electricity/heating, maintenance)	Per month					Per month			
Subtotal Local office									
5. Other costs, services									
5.1 Publications									
5.2 Studies, research									
5.3 Expenditure verification/Audit									
5.4 Evaluation costs									
5.5 Translation, interpreters									
5.6 Financial services (bank guarantee costs etc.)									
5.7 Costs of conferences/seminars									
5.8 Visibility actions									
Subtotal Other costs, services									
6. Other									
Subtotal Other									
7. Subtotal direct eligible costs of the Action (1-6)									
8. Indirect costs (maximum 7% of 7. subtotal of direct eligible costs of the Action)									
9. Total eligible costs of the Action, excluding reserve and volunteers' work (7+ 8)									
10.1 Provision for contingencies (maximum 5% of 7. subtotal direct eligible costs of the Action)									
10.2 Volunteers' work	Per day					Per day			
11. Total eligible costs (9+10)									
12. - Taxes - Contributions in kind									
13. Total accepted costs of the action (11+12)									

Contract No

Implementation period of the contract (dd/mm/yyyy-dd/mm/yyyy)

Interim financial report:
period (dd/mm/yyyy-dd/mm/yyyy)

Expenditures	Budget as per contract/addendum				Reallocation	Expenditure incurred					Variation in compar budget/reall
	Unit	# Units	Unit value (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)	allowed reallocation (article 9.4 of the GC)	# Units	Unit value (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)	Cumulated costs (before current report) (in EUR)	Cumulated costs (from start of implementation to present report included) (in EUR)	Difference of cumulated costs till present and budget as per contract/addendum
		(a)	(b)	(c)=a*b	(r)	(a)	(b)	(c)=a*b	(d)	(f)=c+d	(g)= c (or r) - f
1. Human Resources											
1.1 Salaries (gross amounts, local staff)											
1.1.1 Technical	Per month										
1.1.2 Administrative/ support staff	Per month										
1.2 Salaries (gross amounts, expat/int. staff)	Per month										
1.3 Per diems for missions/travel											
1.3.1 Abroad (staff assigned to the Action)	Per diem										
1.3.2 Local (staff assigned to the Action)	Per diem										
1.3.3 Seminar/conference participants	Per diem										
2. Travel											
2.1. International travel	Per flight										
2.2 Local transportation	Per month										
Subtotal Travel											
3. Equipment and supplies											
3.1 Purchase or rent of vehicles	Per vehicle										
3.2 Furniture, computer equipment											
3.3 Machines, tools, etc.											
3.4 Spare parts/equipment for machines, tools											
3.5 Other (please specify)											
Subtotal Equipment and supplies											
4. Local office											
4.1 Vehicle costs	Per month										
4.2 Office rent	Per month										
4.3 Consumables - office supplies	Per month										
4.4 Other services (tel/fax, electricity/heating, maintenance)	Per month										
Subtotal Local office											
5. Other costs, services											
5.1 Publications											
5.2 Studies, research											
5.3 Expenditure verification/Audit											
5.4 Evaluation costs											
5.5 Translation, interpreters											
5.6 Financial services (bank guarantee costs etc.)											
5.7 Costs of conferences/seminars											
5.8 Visibility actions											
Subtotal Other costs, services											
6. Other											
Subtotal Other											
7. Subtotal direct eligible costs of the Action (1-6)											
8. Indirect costs (maximum 7% of 7, subtotal of direct eligible costs of the Action)											
9. Total eligible costs of the Action, excluding reserve and volunteers' work (7+ 8)											
10.1 Not applicable											
10.2 Volunteers' work	Per day										
11. Total eligible costs (9+10)											
12. - Taxes - Contributions in kind											
13. Total accepted costs of the action (11+12)											

Contract No

Implementation period of the contract (dd/mm/yyyy-dd/mm/yyyy)

Final financial report:
period (dd/mm/yyyy-dd/mm/yyyy)

Expenditures	Budget as per contract/addendum				Reallocation	Expenditure incurred					Variations in comparison with initial budget/addendum		
	Unit	# Units	Unit value (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)	Reallocation allowed (Article 9.4 of the General Conditions)	# Units	Unit value (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)	Cumulated costs (before current report) (in EUR)	Cumulated costs (from start of implementation to present report included) (in EUR)	In absolute value in EUR	In %	Explanation for all variations
		(a)	(b)	(c)=a*b		(a)	(b)	(c)=a*b	(d)	(f)=c+d			
1. Human Resources													
1.1 Salaries (gross amounts, local staff)													
1.1.1 Technical	Per month												
1.1.2 Administrative/ support staff	Per month												
1.2 Salaries (gross amounts, expat/int. staff)	Per month												
1.3 Per diems for missions/travel													
1.3.1 Abroad (staff assigned to the Action)	Per diem												
1.3.2 Local (staff assigned to the Action)	Per diem												
1.3.3 Seminar/conference participants	Per diem												
2. Travel													
2.1. International travel	Per flight												
2.2 Local transportation	Per month												
Subtotal Travel													
3. Equipment and supplies													
3.1 Purchase or rent of vehicles	Per vehicle												
3.2 Furniture, computer equipment													
3.3 Machines, tools, etc.													
3.4 Spare parts/equipment for machines, tools													
3.5 Other (please specify)													
Subtotal Equipment and supplies													
4. Local office													
4.1 Vehicle costs	Per month												
4.2 Office rent	Per month												
4.3 Consumables - office supplies	Per month												
4.4 Other services (tel/fax, electricity/heating, maintenance)	Per month												
Subtotal Local office													
5. Other costs, services													
5.1 Publications													
5.2 Studies, research													
5.3 Expenditure verification/Audit													
5.4 Evaluation costs													
5.5 Translation, interpreters													
5.6 Financial services (bank guarantee costs etc.)													
5.7 Costs of conferences/seminars													
5.8 Visibility actions													
Subtotal Other costs, services													
6. Other													
Subtotal Other													
7. Subtotal direct eligible costs of the Action (1-6)													
8. Indirect costs (maximum 7% of 7, subtotal of direct eligible costs of the Action)													
9. Total eligible costs of the Action, excluding reserve and volunteers' work (7+ 8)													
10.1 Not applicable													
10.2 Volunteers' work	Per day												
11. Total eligible costs (9+10)													
12. - Taxes - Contributions in kind													
13. Total accepted costs of the action (11+12)													

Final sources of funding

		Amount EUR
Applicant contribution		
Other contributions (other Donors etc)		
Name	*Conditions*	
Revenue from the Action		
To be inserted if applicable and allowed by the guidelines:		
In-kind contribution		
Volunteers´ work		

List of Pending payments (above 500 EUR)

Please list the following details: Name of the provider, Object of the contract (Final Audit, Works execution guarantee…), Amount in €, Due date, Reference document (Date and number of Invoice/ contract), Explanation and comments (why still not paid?)

Name of the provider	Object of the contract	Amount in EUR	Due date	Reference document	Explanation and comments

We herewith commit to refund to the European Union, according to art. 18 of the General Conditions, any amount for which proof of payment cannot be provided upon request after the due date, unless reasonable justification is provided.

Signed

Accounting reference (ID number)	Verified report reference	Budget line (if applicable)	Date	Payee	Description	Amount (currency)	Included in the sample	Error detected	Error number (if applicable)
							Y/N	Y/N	

Error number	Accounting reference (ID number)	Verified report reference	Budget line (if applicable)	Date	Payee	Description	Amount (currency)	Standard (finding legal basis)	Initial Finding - (to be organised by facts/analysis)	Reaction of the entities	Initial error amount	Final auditor's position	Final error amount	Classification of the error

ANNEX IX

TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF ASSETS

Grant contract identification number:
Title of the action:
Name of beneficiary:
Name of local beneficiary/local affiliated entity/final beneficiary of the action to whom the assets are transferred:

Assets	Description of item (> EUR 5 000)	Date of purchase	Purchase cost in EUR	Date of transfer / comments
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
Etc.				

The above list was drawn up to comply with Articles 2 and 7.5 of the general conditions applicable to EU-financed grant contracts for external action (Annex II of the contract). Ownership of each item listed has been transferred. The local beneficiary(ies) and/or the local affiliated Entity(ies) and/or final beneficiaries are in agreement with its content.

Done in : .... on...

____________ ________________________ ________________________

(Beneficiary) (local beneficiary/local affiliated entity/final beneficiary of the action No 1)
(local beneficiary/local affiliated entity/final beneficiary of the action No 2 etc.)

Name & Position Name & Position Name & Position

EU4Digital "Connecting research and education communities" (Eastern Partnership Connect)

Project Communication and Visibility Plan

2020-2024

EU4Digital

This project is funded by the European Union

Project Fact Sheet

Project Title: Eastern Partnership Connect (EaPConnect)

Project Objective: Extend connectivity between the research and education (R&E) communities in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and the GÉANT European research and education network, supported by services and strengthened and sustainable national research and education network (NREN) organisations.

Implementing partners: GÉANT (coordinating partner) and the six EaP national NRENs:

Armenia	**IIAP NAS RA** The Institute for Informatics and Automation Problems of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia
Azerbaijan	**AzScienceNet** The Institute of Information Technology of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences
Belarus	**UIIP NASB** The United Institute of Informatics Problems National Academy of Sciences of Belarus
Georgia	**GRENA** The Georgian Research and Educational Networking Association
Moldova	**RENAM** The Research and Educational Networking Association of Moldova
Ukraine	**URAN Association** The Association of Users of Ukrainian Research and Academic Network

Funding: € 10.526M. The European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargements Negotiations (DG NEAR) contributes 95% of the project costs while the partners bring in the remaining 5%

Time frame: 5 years from 1st July 2020

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 The EaPConnect Vision

To understand the EaPConnect vision, it is important to understand its underlying framework which is the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

The Eastern Partnership is a multilateral initiative between the EU and six Eastern European countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine – to support sustainability reforms for the benefit of their citizens and strengthen their links of the EU. As its fundamental premise, EaPConnect recognises the importance of e-infrastructures in:

- Promoting digital inclusion;
- Developing regional R&E assets;
- Facilitating participation of EaP countries in EU-funded projects.

The Eastern Partnership Connect (EaPConnect) project aims to optimise the starting conditions for students, researchers and academics in the Eastern Partnership area, to give them the best possible chance for a bright future.

1.2 The EaPConnect Mission

EaPConnect contributes to the creation of a modern digital environment for innovation and collaboration in the Eastern Partnership region by providing advanced e-infrastructure and services to schools, universities and science institutes and integrating them within the European research area.

The first Eastern Partnership Connect project resulted in the creation of a regional high-speed internet network dedicated to research and education (R&E) across all the partnership countries. This was achieved by interconnecting the national research and education networks (NRENs) in the six EaP countries and integrating them into the pan-European GÉANT network, thus creating a regional gateway for international collaborations.

Currently all six EaP countries have a formally established NREN that provides connectivity as well as a limited amount of network services to local users. The second EaPConnect project will help extend and upgrade these network ('digital highways'), increase the use of services implemented under the first project and offer new services, to strengthen the EaP NRENs' position in their national R&E ecosystems.

To achieve this, the second EaPConnect project will use communication and visibility tools to:

- Secure the engagement of multiple stakeholders;
- Develop and strengthen a community of users;
- Create an environment that will support sustainable models.

2. Communication Objectives

The EaPConnect communication and visibility strategy will focus on:

- **Raising awareness of the project** in the region, in Europe and beyond in order to:
  - create interest and secure engagement and funding from several stakeholders in the EaP region as well as in the EU,
  - attract future users of the network,
  - optimise the use of the network,
  - initiate collaborations between providers of possible applications supported by the network and the NRENs community;
- **Creating tools and initiatives to allow community building**, and foster communication synergies: this aspect is key to the success of the project and will also rely on the NRENs' own resources and communication strategies. NRENs will need to reach out to their community to encourage engagement, and EaPConnect will accompany them in this task, providing support and tools to share best practice and allow cross-fertilisation of ideas;
- **Fostering good relationships with opinion formers, regional media and media specialising in networking and research & education, to accompany community building.**

3. Target Groups

The main target audiences are:

- **The NREN community**:
  - the six EaP NRENs, their staff and other contractors and engineers involved in the project,
  - the supporting NRENs and other interested NRENs from around the world;
- **The end-user community**: including people in higher education institutions and research centres as well as individual academics and scientists;
- **Eastern Partnership and European policy makers, and potential supporters and funders**. These include:
  - public authorities at national, regional and European level,
  - civil society and leading experts,
  - key opinion influencers in the EaP region;
- **The general public in the EaP area and elsewhere:** as a wider audience the general public can influence policy makers and possible investors and help raise awareness of the project. This is why they will be addressed through current affairs media.

The regional and specialist media will be used as both a communication channel and as a target audience to engage them in participating in community building in the field.

4. Content Strategy & Key Messages

The content strategy will focus on disseminating the achievements of the EaP NRENs and project developments as well as the collaborations enabled by the use of the new network, including examples of real users and success stories. Content will be provided by the NRENs and will be disseminated through their own channels as well as relayed by the EaPConnect dissemination channels (see 6. Dissemination).

The key messages are as follows:

NREN Community:

To benefit operating NRENs EaPConnect will:

- Provide access to a regional backbone;
- Lower connectivity prices (through bulk purchasing) and upgrade capacities;
- Create a regional gateway for global collaborations thanks to connections to the GÉANT network,
- Enable them to offer new services provided by the GÉANT community to their end users;
- Provide access to workshops, trainings, mentorship and other opportunities for partner NRENs to develop skills, knowledge and best practices and to network with their peers from NRENs in other regions.

To benefit the wider NREN community EaPConnect will:

- Provide new opportunities for collaboration;
- Extend the European R&E community;
- Enable the advance of global knowledge and research and education.

End users:

EaPConnect will address end users directly with messaging highlighting that it will:

- Enable collaboration with regional and international counterparts;
- Facilitate participation in EU-funded projects;
- Offer new services that will support R&E and use of the network;
- Help provide technical support and visibility for their research, within the region and internationally.

Policy makers and possible supporters:

To benefit the Eastern Partnership and European policy makers, possible supporters and funders, EaPConnect will:

- Help bridge the digital divide;

Bbring the EaP R&E community closer to Europe;

- Create opportunities that contribute to the retention of high-profile talent in the region;
- Help the local community overcome economic and political differences through collaborative educational work and research;
- Support the consistent articulation of Digital Single Market policies.

Civil society:

To benefit the civil societies in the Eastern Partnership and in Europe, EaPConnect will:

- Raise awareness of collaborations across borders in the domains of education and research and show their relevance and benefits to society, particularly in the areas of particle physics, astrophysics, weather prediction and climate change as well as in the life sciences;
- Promote relevant market opportunities to help support a society based on skills and knowledge;
- Support collaboration between the Eastern Partnership countries and the European research community while supporting the development of regional educational and scientific assets.

5. Visibility and Communication Tools

The EaPConnect communication plan will focus on:

- Providing visibility and communication tools to the partners;
- Gathering and disseminating relevant and impactful content to support the project's mission;
- Fostering PR capacity building in the region to support the project and its end users;
- Ensuring compatibility and dissemination through relevant EU channels.

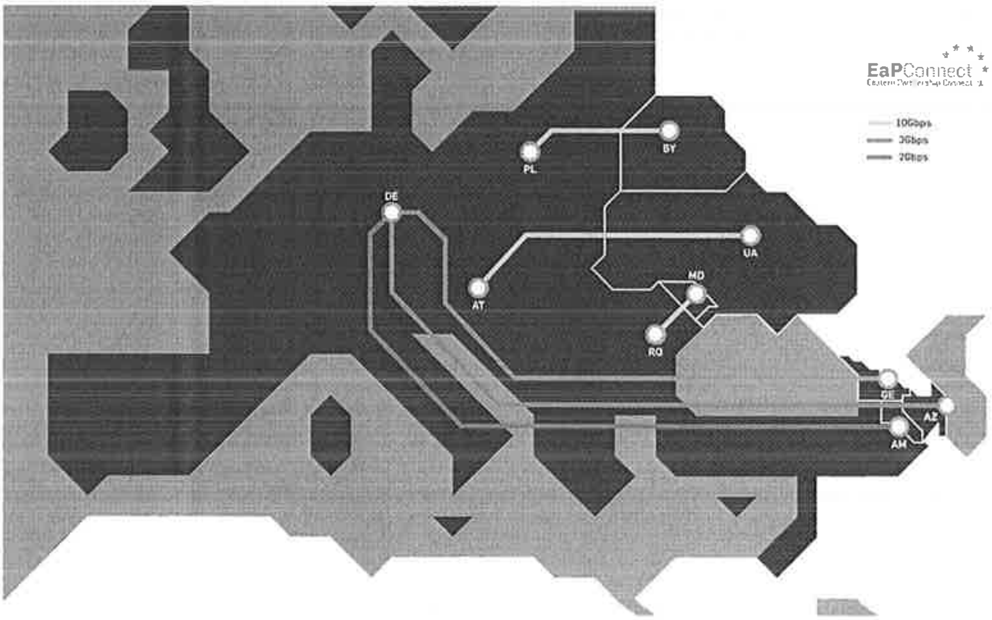
5.1. Visibility Tools

As part of the communication plan, GÉANT has created a series of tools to maximise the visibility of the project including:

- A logo with the stars representing the six partners to represent a closer relationship to the EU using the same blue as that of the EU flag. The logo aims to give a visual reminder of the project's European commitment. For the sake of continuity in brand recognition it is proposed to use the same logo and project name for the second phase of the project:

EaPConnect
Eastern Partnership Connect

- A map of the region's network topology, which can be used alone or in other marketing collateral:



- A signature summarising the mission statement: ***Connecting the R&E communities in the Eastern Partnership***

5.2. Overview of Communication Tools by Audience

Towards the NREN community:

Audience	Communication Objective	Communication Tools
NRENs	Build engagement	<u>**Participating NRENs:**</u> **Project website:** > To encourage partners to provide input, updates (photos, workshops etc.), news and testimonials > To provide project information, updates and points of contact in the region **Project mailing list:** > An easy-to-use platform of communication; to be updated with new contacts as the project unfolds > **Facebook community page & Twitter news account:** To be updated and moderated by GÉANT and partners > **Videos**: to be developed in collaboration with partners > **Case studies, success stories, user stories**: to be developed in collaboration with partners > **Newsletter**: Internal updates for project partners & EC <u>**NREN community around the world:**</u> > **Project website**: updates, case studies, event reports, collaboration calls > **Press releases** > **Twitter & Facebook**: to encourage the continuous exchange of relevant info and project updates and approach new possible partners > **LinkedIn**: to network with key stakeholders and foster NREN-to-NREN collaborations > **Newsletters**: Post articles in GÉANT Project & CONNECT community newsletters > **CONNECT**: GÉANT community magazine for news & features > **Community events**: TNC and other relevant events > **Other R&E media outlets**: <u>In The Field Blog*</u> (impact marketing) etc.
		National events: > To be organised by each partner in their country with NREN speakers taking the lead on organisation and message delivery

Audience	Communication Objective	Communication Tools
	Create advocates	**Regional and global events:** > Encourage participating NRENs to present the EaPConnect project and their work to the whole R&E and NREN community at regional and global events
	Build regional partnership spirit	**Project meetings to:** > Address regional issues and best ways to achieve the project objectives together > Share best practices > Identify new collaborations, events to participate in etc. **Facebook & Twitter:** > To develop and strengthen a community spirit **Box storage 'Intranet':** > To support project management > To record all available project info in one easy-to-access platform and plan next steps **Wiki** for partner - public information sharing e.g. about workshops
	Develop Best Practices	> **Capacity building** providing practical tutorials on various marcomms topics & integrating the EaP NRENs' marcomms staff into the GÉANT Special Interest Group on Marketing Communications, **SIG-MarComms** > **Case study** writing > Participation in **In The Field Blog*** with national and regional impact stories of R&E networking > Project MarComms team calls on a three-weekly basis

**In The Field: a blog site for NRENs from around the world to showcase stories of how they support real research and education users with their networks and services: https://www.inthefieldstories.net/why-re-networks/*

Audience	Communication Objective	Communication Tools
End Users	**Raise awareness**	> Participation in **regional events** targeting end users > **Brochures** distributed at events > **Press releases** targeting research and higher education press > **NREN websites** to provide points of contact > **NREN mailing lists** to update about activities and new services available
	Build engagement towards use of the network and services	**Facebook R&E community page**: > asking for feedback through user survey questionnaires > posting invitations to events, workshops and review groups **Events**: > Attendance lists to gather figures > Distribute "Tell us" (what you liked/disliked) questionnaires to be collected after events **Mailing lists**: from NRENs to their network users Review groups: > When first connections are established: reach out to key influential users to review network and services and share best practice > Post relevant outcomes of these reviews to the R&E community **Project website**: Promote relevant end users content (research publications etc.)

Audience	Communication Objective	Communication Tools
	Strengthen the EaP community spirit	**Facebook community page**: > as a forum of expression to share experiences and information **Incentives to participate to Horizon2020**: > to be then disseminated through Facebook, mailing lists, website, brochure, Twitter **Project website**: > promoting regional content > asking users to provide content (research articles, testimonials etc.)
EU & EaP Stakeholders and Supporters	Raise awareness	DG NEAR and EU Community: > **Website** to promote the project and give updates > **Twitter** to build relationships and exchange information > **Reporting** to update on project advancements and share results > **Joint press releases** > Consulting of EC delegations in EaP to give updates and gather input and feedback on planned activities as well as **share distribution channels**
		Public authorities and civil society In EaP: > **Press releases** targeting current affairs media in the region > **Project website** to promote the project and inform about tenders and other calls for interest to possible suppliers and supporters in building the network **Twitter**: > To announce collaborations, events, milestones > To advertise procurement calls

Audience	Communication Objective	Communication Tools
		<u>Supporting the NREN community all over the world</u>: **Project website**: updates, case studies, post-activity reports, collaboration calls **Twitter**: reminders of events, updates on milestones achieved and calls for collaborations **LinkedIn**: to network with key stakeholders and foster NREN-to-NREN collaborations **CONNECT:** GÉANT community magazine to announce news **Networking at community events: TNC**
	Secure interest and funding contributions	<u>DG NEAR</u>: > Yearly review of **Communication Plan** > **Post-event reviews** on website > **Twitter** updates > Involve EU to contribute to website/ press release / brochures with **testimonials** > Promotion of **case studies** resulting from EaPConnect
		<u>Public authorities in EaP including EU delegations and EaP stakeholders</u>: > Participation in main **R&E events in the region** > Distribution of **brochures** at events > **Feedback questionnaire**s distributed at events > **Post events reports** (on website) > Promotion of **workshops o**ffered to R&E community in the region > Highlights on EaP contributions to **H2020** and other European ang global research (on website, twitter, in press release) > Highlights on **collaborations** foreseen and enabled by EaPConnect (on website, twitter, in press release) > Promotion of **case studies** involving EaP R&E community

Towards the end users:

Audience	Communication objective	Communication tools
End users	**Raise awareness**	> Participation in **regional events** targeting end users > Marcomms collateral distributed / visible at events > **Press releases** targeting research and higher education press > **EaPConnect website** for project overview > **NREN websites** to provide regional points of contact > **NREN mailing lists** to update about activities and new services available > Dissemination via **EU4Digital** website, **euneighbbours.eu** newsletter, **EU Delegations** channels
	Build engagement towards use of the network and services	**Partners websites & social media channels:** >Build interactivity with the community > Promote connectivity and service offer >Inform on all R&E opportunities to take part in (including Eu-funded) >Promote end user achievements (case studies etc) **Facebook R&E community page:** > Asking for feedback through user survey questionnaires > Posting invitations to events, workshops and review groups **Events:** > Attendance lists to gather figures > Feedback surveys to be collected during / after events and to identify champions in the community **Mailing lists:** from NRENs to their network users **Review groups:** > When first connections are established: reach out to key influential users to review network and services and share best practice > Post relevant outcomes of these reviews to the R&E community
	Strengthen the EaP community spirit	**Facebook community page:** > As a forum of expression to share experiences > To disseminate info on interesting projects to take part in

Audience	Communication Objective	Communication Tools
End Users	**Raise awareness**	> Participation in **regional events** targeting end users > **Brochures** distributed at events > **Press releases** targeting research and higher education press > **NREN websites** to provide points of contact > **NREN mailing lists** to update about activities and new services available
	Build engagement towards use of the network and services	**Facebook R&E community page**: > asking for feedback through user survey questionnaires > posting invitations to events, workshops and review groups **Events**: > Attendance lists to gather figures > Distribute "Tell us" (what you liked/disliked) questionnaires to be collected after events **Mailing lists**: from NRENs to their network users Review groups: > When first connections are established: reach out to key influencial users to review network and services and share best practice > Post relevant outcomes of these reviews to the R&E community **Project website**: Promote relevant end users content (research publications etc.)

Audience	Communication Objective	Communication Tools
	Strengthen the EaP community spirit	**Facebook community page**: > as a forum of expression to share experiences and information **Incentives to participate to Horizon2020**: > to be then disseminated through Facebook, mailing lists, website, brochure, Twitter **Project website**: > promotiong regional content > asking users to provide content (research articles, testimonials etc.)
EU & EaP Stakeholders and Supporters	Raise awareness	DG NEAR and EU Community: > **Website** to promote the project and give updates > **Twitter** to build relationships and exchange information > **Reporting** to update on project advancements and share results > **Joint press releases** > Consulting of EC delegations in EaP to give updates and gather input and feedback on planned activities as well as **share distribution channels**
		Public authorities and civil society In EaP: > **Press releases** targeting current affairs media in the region > **Project website** to promote the project and inform about tenders and other calls for interest to possible suppliers and supporters in building the network **Twitter**: > To announce collaborations, events, milestones > To advertise procurement calls

Audience	Communication Objective	Communication Tools
		Supporting NREN community all over the world: **Project website**: updates, case studies, post-activity reports, collaboration calls **Twitter**: reminding of events, updating on milestones achieved and calling for collaborations **LinkedIn**: to network with key stakeholders and foster NREN to NREN collaborations **CONNECT:** GÉANT community magazine to announce news **Networking at community events: TNC**
	Secure interest and funding contributions	DG NEAR: > Yearly review of **Communication Plan** > **Post-event reviews** on website > **Twitter** updates > Involve EU to contribute to website/ press release / brochures with **testimonials** > Promotion of **case studies** resulting of EaPConnect
		Public authorities in EaP including EU delegations and EaP stakeholders: > Participation to main **R&E events in the region** > Distribution of **brochures** at events > **Feedback questionnaire**s distributed at events > **Post events reports** (on website) > Promotion of **workshops** offered to R&E community in the region > Highlights on EaP contributions to **H2020** and other European ang global research (on website, twitter, in press release) > Highlights on **collaborations** foreseen and enabled by EaPConnect (on website, twitter, in press release) > Promotion of **case studies** involving EaP R&E community

Towards EaP policy makers and stakeholders:

Audience	Communication Objective	Communication Tools
EaP Stakeholders	Raise awareness	Public authorities and civil society In EaP: > **Press releases** targeting current affairs media in the region > **Project website** to promote the project and inform about tenders and other calls for interest to possible suppliers and supporters in building the network **Twitter:** > To announce collaborations, events, milestones > To advertise procurement calls **> Videos** to present the benefits and use of the network > Dissemination via **EU4Digital** website, **euneighbbours.eu** newsletter, **EU Delegations** channels
EaP Policy Makers and Stakeholders	Secure interest and funding contributions	Public authorities in EaP including EaP stakeholders: > Participation in main R&E events in the region > Distribution / visibility of marketing collateral at events > Feedback questionnaires distributed at events > Post events reports (on website) > Promotion of workshops offered to R&E community in the region > Highlights on EaP contributions to European and global research (on website, twitter, in press release) > Highlights on collaborations foreseen and enabled by EaPConnect (on website, twitter, in press release) > Promotion of case studies involving EaP R&E community

Towards the general public:

Audience	Communication Objective	Communication Tools
General Public	Raise awareness	Press releases: to current affairs media locally and internationally Videos: on Youtube and other popular channels. Case studies: on the project website disseminated via its social media accounts, In The Field and any other relevant channels.

6. Dissemination and PR Coordination

6.1 Dissemination Channels

EaPConnect will use internal and external dissemination channels in the form of:

- RealWire (global press release distribution service specialising in online media) for the circulation of project press releases;
- R&E networking community mailing lists;
- Project website and partners' websites;
- Project and partners' social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn);
- GÉANT CONNECT (print) magazine and community newsletter service;
- GÉANT Project newsletter;
- 'In the Field with research and education' blog;
- EU4Digital website;
- Euneighbours.eu;
- EU Delegations' channels in relevant countries

Events will also play an important role in the dissemination of the messages, as follows:

- A conference will be organised in year 1, 3 and 5 of the project, with the participation of European e-infrastructures, flagship European research projects, policy makers, regulators (EU, EU delegations and local authorities), relevant science and education bodies (ministries and national academies of sciences, etc.) and research and education communities from the EU and EaP regions;
- Workshops and training events organised throughout the year to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and human capacity building between the EU NRENs and R&E community and the EaP project partners;
- Attendance at other relevant regional and international events; these are highlighted in the calendar of activities in section 7.

6.2 PR Coordination

GÉANT, as the EaPConnect project lead, will coordinate all project PR activities with the participation of EaP NRENs, to:

- Improve the overall web presence (websites & social media) of the project;
- Guide the production and dissemination of a variety of content formats via various channels;
- Provide marketing communications guidelines, and arrange team meetings and tutorials and face-to-face events.

EaPConnect will liaise with DG NEAR and the EU community – in particular EU4Digital - to:

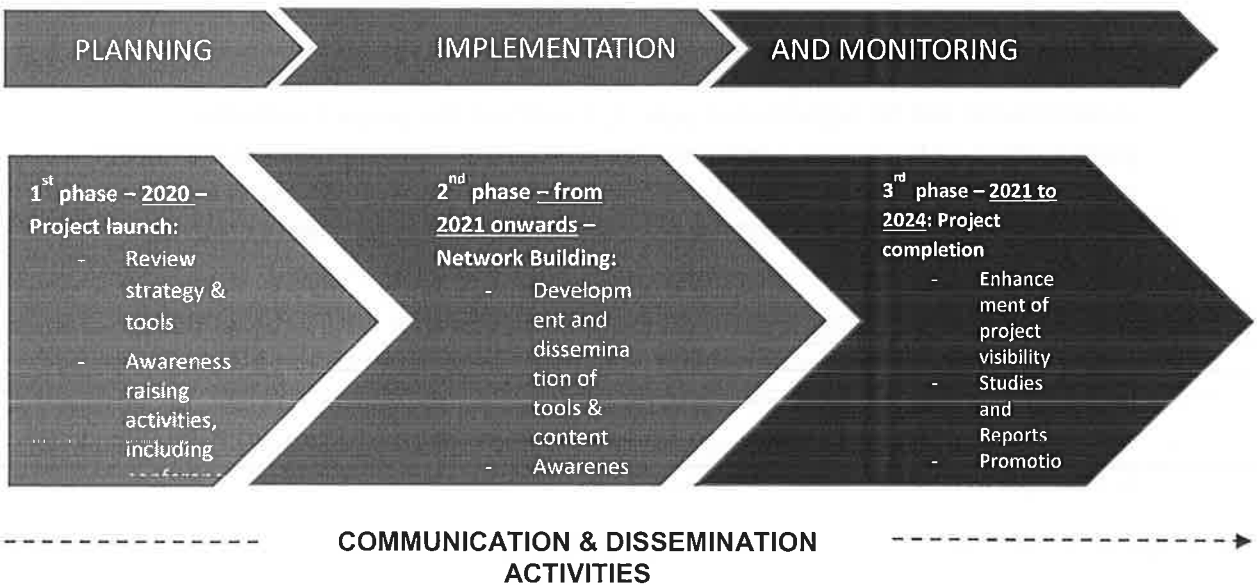
- Annually review the communications plans;

- Coordinate branding, messages, activities and dissemination:
    - promoting the project, its developments and materials, giving updates and sharing results,
    - using Twitter to build relationships and exchange information,
    - preparing and issuing joint press releases where relevant,
    - developing materials such as videos to present the benefits and use of the network as appropriate,
    - involving EU representatives where relevant e.g. to provide testimonials and quotes for materials.

EaPConnect will consult with EC Delegations in EaP countries to give updates and gather input and feedback on planned activities as well as to share them via distribution channels.

7. Calendar of Activities

The figure below illustrates the EaPConnect visibility activities model during the course of the project:



A detailed overview of events and promotional activities in 2020 will be added once the other work packages have determined dates for project meetings, workshops etc.; these will include:

- Project-organised events attended by project partners, such as:
    - steering committee meetings,
    - training and other workshops,
    - EaPEC 2020 Eastern Partnership E-infrastructure Conference (provisionally October);

- Externally organised events attended by project partners, such as:
    - Network Performing Arts Production Workshop,
    - PRACE Days,
    - TNC20 (8-12 June),
    - ICT 2020,
    - GÉANT General Assemblies,
    - GÉANT SIG-Marcomms meetings (March, June, autumn);
- Success stories about projects completed under the EaP 'Enlighten Your Research' banner;
- Partner news stories;
- Connectivity upgrades;
- Service developments and users.

Promotional Activities:

Web presence

The project website (www.eapconnect.eu) that was launched at the beginning of the first phase is being overhauled to showcase achievements so far and to prepare the ground for the second phase of the project. The EaPEC conference site is being included in this exercise to ensure it is better integrated with the project site and provides a suitable outlet for future conference information. This will also bring the website more in line with the visibility requirements of EU4Digital, and will interconnect it with that site, as well as reflect the project's relationship with the Eastern Partnership and GÉANT and the international NREN community. The overhaul includes look-and-feel aspects as well as functional and structural changes to improve site manageability in order to achieve a more dynamic effect.

The project's Twitter (@EaPConnect_News) and Facebook (@EaPConnectProject) accounts will be maintained and developed, using the more recently (2018-2019) created partner accounts and GÉANT accounts to amplify dissemination. The project's LinkedIn account will be assessed and a decision made whether or not to continue using it. The project playlist in YouTube will be updated with videos from the EaPEC 2020 conference and any additional videos that are produced in the course of the project and these will be disseminated across the project web presence and partner channels.

Increased effort will be given to monitoring the statistics across these sites to ensure their optimal use in onward planning and dissemination.

News and other content

The project team will issue project news stories (e.g. about connectivity and service developments, workshops and the conference) and partner news stories (e.g. about national events and developments) on the project website for dissemination across project, partner and EU channels (e.g. EU4Digital, euneighbours.eu and EU Delegations).

More formal press releases on selected topics (one per year expected) will be published as social media press releases using the RealWire platform, targeting relevant media sectors and countries.

The effort to produce success stories that focus on the real-life benefits of the project and partner activities to individuals, research groups and wider society will continue. The team will also diversify the type of content produced to take advantage of new opportunities that allow new formats – such as the 'interviews' section in the new (as of October 2019) GÉANT CONNECT newsletter, which will enable the team to highlight new dimensions such as key personalities or timely reflections on their work and achievements.

Print collateral

A new project brochure will be produced and will align (in terms of look and feel and content) with the new project web site. The design of pre-existing materials, such as conference pull-up banners, will be reviewed and new materials created as needed.

The following activities have been planned:

Visibility & Promotional activities	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Review / update visual identity	x				
Project launch press release	x				
Website content & technical updates	x	x	x	x	x
Twitter updates and monitoring	x	x	x	x	x
LinkedIn review	x				
Facebook updates and monitoring	x	x	x	x	x
Intranet (Box) content updates	x	x	x	x	x
Brochure	x				
PPT template review & refresh	x				
Promotion in community & EU outlets (CONNECT, InTheField, EU4Digital etc.)	x	x	x	x	x
Events	x	x	x	x	x
Press release (non-launch)		x	x	x	x
Comms guidance for NRENs	x	x	x	x	x
Launch event	x				

Visibility & Promotional activities	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
EaPEC conferences	X		X		X
Promotion of services offered	X	X	X	X	X
Success stories, interviews & other content / formats	X	X	X	X	X
Monitoring of activity impacts	X	X	X	X	X

EaPConnect will liaise with EC communications managers to use their channels and website for extended visibility of project activities. EaPConnect will also work with 'Enlighten Your Research' partners such as OpenAire to ensure promotion of Enlighten Your Research (EYR) activities through their channels.

Action-specific objectives:

- Revision of the EaPConnect website: to showcase user stories, results and impacts; to provide a better user experience; to simplify content management.
- Improved evaluation of the website statistics.
- Rethinking the Social Media strategy to better adapt to regional / local circumstances.
- Support events organisation with communications and design support, to improve branding consistency, outreach and engagement.

Content-specific objectives:

- Success stories – emphasise real users and benefits to them and society, online and in print collateral – e.g. posters, brochure, pull-up banners.
- Highlight the positive impact of EaPConnect on research, education and innovation.
- Adapt this message where relevant and possible for story usage and dissemination by EU4Digital and EU Delegations, e.g. to highlight their role in the project.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The project management team will use quantitative and qualitative indicators to evaluate the impact of the dissemination activities.

Quantitative (e.g. number of articles, events attendance, publication disseminated, website visits, etc):

- Press releases and news stories: the aim will be to produce a minimum of 5 press releases during the course of the project (i.e. one per year on average) and to aim for a coverage of at least 10 media outlets per press release.
- Events attendance: the target is over 50 attendees per annual regional event as well as per training workshop. Attendees' lists will be collected for project meetings. Other main events will be assessed based on registration and organisers' data.
- Publications:
    - The EaPConnect brochure will be reviewed regularly to add testimonials, project developments and user success stories enabled by the project. Based on other regional projects managed by GÉANT, it is planned to print over 1500 copies of the brochure during the course of the project, to be disseminated not only in the EaP countries but also in Europe and at global networking events, and to additionally make it available online.
    - The aim is to produce at least two case studies per year about collaborations and success stories enabled by the network, with a view to publishing them on the website, in the brochure and in relevant blogs and portals such as the In The Field Stories blog and the EU4Digital and / or EU Delegations sites.
    - Emphasis will be given to the production and dissemination of stories such as EYR@EaP projects, and to new formats such as interviews, as well as liaising with the EU Delegations' and EU4Digital communications departments to disseminate content further.
- Much focus will be given to web presence. Google analytics (or similar) will be used to assess the impact of online activities, in particular:
    - Visitors: the aim is to have over 50 each month,
    - Pages viewed: the goal is to have 100 page views per month.

  These indicators are based on EUMEDCONNECT regional project web data. Further qualitative indicators will also be used (see below).

- Social media: the objective is to have over 800 relevant* followers on all social media combined by the end of the project. (*These followers can be regulators, policy makers, NRENs, researchers, R&E bodies in EaP, Europe and the rest of the world.)

Qualitative (e.g. tone and position of articles, questionnaire given to people attending, most visited pages, etc.):

- Articles: the quality and audience of the media outlets in which EaPConnect is featured will be an indicator of the dissemination activities.
- Events: the use of feedback questionnaires will be encouraged for events when possible, to improve and collect insight on network and services optimisations.
- Web:
    - Attention will be given to the pages viewed on EaPConnect as well as other online outlets (blog, portal, etc.),
    - Time spent per news page and other important pages will give further indication of the audience's interests,
    - Geographical origin of the traffic will also be a good qualitative indicator of EaP engagement.
- On social media: posts liked, commented on or retweeted, as well as the threads and discussions on Facebook and LinkedIn, will give an appreciation of the audience's engagement.

9. Resources

The EaPConnect project will contribute the following resources to communication activities:

- 1 regional marketing officer in charge of coordinating the development and dissemination of all communication activities for the project.
- EaP NRENs and support from Associate NRENs.
- An in-house design studio which assists all GÉANT graphic design developments, including regional projects websites and online media.
- Outsourced suppliers for ad-hoc design work brochures and other promotional material.

Amsterdam October 2019

This communication and visibility plan will be reviewed yearly.