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NEXUS Highlighting the Infrastructure for Research and Education Community

Date and place:
28th February 2024,
The Hotel, Brussels, Belgium

Background:

On July 19, 2023, the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) adopted the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, which aims to transform and expand the capacities and achievements of European and African researchers and innovators into tangible outputs that benefit all sectors, from academia and employment to the private sector.

The AU-EU Innovation Agenda, supported by the Global Gateway, will serve as the cornerstone of Africa-Europe cooperation in science, technology, and innovation for the next decade through four objectives with short-, medium-, and long-term actions organised around priority areas in research and innovation (R&I), science capabilities, and cross-cutting issues through the four priorities, public health, green transition, innovation, and technology.

A welcome development by ASREN- UbuntuNet Alliance and WACREN, the Regional Research and Education Network (RREN) implementing partners of the AfricaConnect project, supports 38 National Research and Education Network (NREN) organisations connecting over 5 million end-users across 1900 institutions in Africa.

In Europe, GÉANT and NORDUnet collaborate with the national NRENs to provide Europe's learners, faculty, and researchers with optimal infrastructure, recognising that an interconnected community is fundamental to establishing a sustainable Research and Education community. The European NREN community embodies this conviction by fostering an environment that intentionally encourages innovation and advancement through collaborative endeavours that demonstrate a resilient ecosystem conducive to the flourishing of ideas and the seamless exchange of knowledge across boundaries.

To this end, GÉANT, NORDUnet, and the Guild are convening a multistakeholder event focusing on how National Research and Education Networks can support ongoing planned initiatives between the Nordic and African universities. The event will focus on strengthening and supporting the community of end-users of higher education and research institutions through NREN.

Specifically, the conference:

Highlight the requirements for infrastructure and tools for some of the use cases that are addressed by existing projects between the Nordic and African Universities

Showcase how the R&E infrastructure can enable cross-border scientific collaboration.

Cultivate multistakeholder collaborations.





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Format of the event:

Nexus is intended to be an interactive, in-person, multi-stakeholder discussion between the panellist and the audience, composed of key actors. The event will consist of five sessions, each moderated by an expert and joined by pre-identified panellists invited to share their expertise.

10:00- 17:45	
Time	Sessions
09:00- 10:15	Registration- Welcome Coffee
10:15-10:30	Opening session- Host
10:30-11:30	Session 1: Enabling Research Collaboration- Challenges and Successes- NORDUnet Participants from academic institutions and research organisations are given the opportunity to present the obstacles and achievements they encounter while conducting international collaborations. In addition, the dialogue will facilitate the exchange of knowledge. The session will conclude with a presentation that introduces participants to RRENs/NRENs and services.
11:30-12:30	Session 2: Policy-Funding- Infrastructure- INTPA This session discusses the policy and investment mechanisms required to achieve infrastructure equity that affects research and higher education institutions' collaboration capacity and capabilities. This session will also emphasise the significance of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda and the African Union Continental Education Strategy for Africa on the European R&E communities.
12:30-14:00	Network Lunch
14:00-15:00	Session 3: Research infrastructures for the African knowledge society - The Guild This session will discuss the potential benefits and current challenges of research infrastructures in Africa with insight from researchers involved in an Africa – Europe Clusters of Research Excellence . Scientists from both continents have come together in these Clusters for long-term agendas of excellent, bottom-up research built on equitable partnerships, aligned with the AU-EU Innovation Agenda and an awareness of the infrastructure needed for a stronger African knowledge society.
15:00-15:45	Session 4: AfricaConnect Project: Connecting the Future. GEANT This session provides an overview of the AfricaConnect initiative and its implementing partners, who are working together to enhance the accessibility of digital infrastructures and technologies for African academic and research institutions to unlock the full potential of quality education and research in Africa.
15:45-16:45	Session 5: Supporting R&E institutions through Sustainable and Resilient- NREN This session will discuss how National Research and Education Networks meet the demands of NREN members, ranging from schools to university research institutes.
16:45-17:10	Closing- remarks
17:15-18:30	Coffee-Cocktail