

A portrait of Raimundas Tuminauskas, a man with a beard and short dark hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a light blue striped shirt, and a dark tie with a pattern. He is standing in what appears to be a modern office or conference room with blue lighting. A purple text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

VOICE OF THE BOARD: RAIMUNDAS TUMINAUSKAS

Continuing our series of Board member interviews, CONNECT spoke to Raimundas Tuminauskas, Head of the LITNET computer network centre in Lithuania, and GÉANT Board member since 2015, about the GÉANT Programme Planning Committee (GPPC) and his hopes for the GÉANT Board.

Raimundas joined the Kaunas University of Technology as a full time network engineer in July 1997 and soon became responsible for high capacity switching and routing in the Lithuanian NREN LITNET. He currently heads the computer network centre, in charge of coordination of the LITNET programme and the university network and services. Being deeply involved in the creation of long-term plans, he is directing efforts towards optical communications, future networking, open architectures, open network technologies, federated use of network infrastructure, and integrated radio access. Raimundas is the Chair of the GÉANT Programme Planning Committee (GPPC).

Raimundas, what is the main purpose of the GPPC?

The GPPC is a committee of NREN representatives elected by the General Assembly (GA). For me the committee's responsibilities could be summarised into two main points: to provide guidance and assistance to the GÉANT staff in planning and writing the project proposals to the EC and to balance the NRENs' position within the GÉANT programme as a whole and within each project in particular. Ultimately, the value of the GPPC lies in the transparent and inclusive planning within known budgetary limits. Currently GÉANT activities are not limited to the "flagship" GN4 project, but include other activities involving the European research e-infrastructures, most notably the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC).

What is the GPPC working on now?

Currently the GPPC is deeply involved in the preparation of the GN4 successor project proposals with the aim to maximise coherency of activities and accuracy of resource planning. Nevertheless, the committee is also looking at other Horizon2020 projects calls. The NRENs are also involved in many parallel activities and have expressed their interest in a variety of initiatives that cannot be covered by the GN4 project alone.

Can you describe the process the GPPC is taking as it plans for a GN4-2 successor project?

There will be two GN4-2 successor projects: a "normal" GN4-3 project with activities and tasks, and a separate proposal for EC-funded network infrastructures, currently known in the community as the IRU (or SGA-3b) proposal. The process has three parallel tracks: definition of GÉANT network strategy, estimation of infrastructure deployment feasibility, and planning of GN4-2 successor activities and tasks. The process is defined by the timeline of the decision points that will be discussed during the meetings of the Board and of the General Assembly (GA).

For the "normal" GN4-3 project the planning process is an iterative community consultation. Currently the GÉANT community experts have prepared their views of the proposed operational directions in white papers apportioned to seven specific thematic areas. The open consultation with NRENs has already started and has produced the initial indication of the priorities that will be taken into account in the actual composition and budgeting of the proposal.

What is your main area of responsibility on the GÉANT Board?

My main area of responsibility focuses on the planning of the GÉANT's programmes. I have also worked on the organisation's governance, or rather on the inter-relations of the various components within GÉANT: in particular, after the DANTE and TERENA merger, I focused on the relation between the committees and the governance triangle represented by the BOARD, the CEO and the General Assembly.

How do you think the Board can best support the work of the GPPC?

As you know, I am in a special position as an elected member of the GÉANT Board and head of the GPPC, so whilst wearing both hats, I can objectively say that the GPPC and the Board have so far established positive understanding and communication flows.

I think that receiving regular updates on the Board's interaction between the EC and the players of the EOSC arena, as well as guidance in the definition of the various activity areas' operational strategies, would definitely ease the work of the GPPC. My vision of the interaction between the GPPC and the Board is based on a mutual and continuous exchange of strategic guidance.

According to new terms of reference submitted to the GA, the GPPC reporting line and liaison with the Board will soon be formalised and the GPPC will report directly to the CEO. The GPPC has been constituted from elected NREN members in order to give NRENs the opportunity to input into the GÉANT planning process. The interaction between NRENs, the CEO and the Board, operating in a fast changing environment, is a balancing act that requires continuous adjustments, and as a keen cyclist, I am very aware of this requirement!