



FOCUS ON: GÉANT RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT TEAM – SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL USER COMMUNITIES

CONNECT catches up with Vincenzo Capone, Head of the newly formed GÉANT Research Engagement and Support Team, to talk about the work carried out by his group to support international user organisations, their networks and associated service requirements.

Enzo, what is the rationale behind the creation of this new team?

At GÉANT we have always worked closely with our NREN partners to support international users communities and cater for their varied and complex requirements. The recent creation of a Community Support function within GÉANT is enabling us to address, in a more structured manner, the needs of these pivotal research and education

communities by dedicating a highly-specialised team with complementary skills and extensive experience and expertise.

What is the remit of your team?

We work on behalf of GÉANT's European NREN partners and endeavour to provide a streamlined, professional approach to the support of research

communities with an international presence. The team's service offering focuses around three main areas: account management, technical customer support and commercial management. The account management function ensures that a single point-of-contact, for project management purposes, takes responsibility for the technical and commercial support to the communities and projects, and the proactive anticipation of the user organisation's needs. The technical customer support aims to propose the best services based on the knowledge and understanding of the

Pictures
From left to right; Chris Atherton, Domenico Vicinanza, Richard Hughes-Jones, Vincenzo Capone

user's requirements. The commercial management endeavours to provide a coherent, pan-European response to commercial enquiries.

How do you engage with users?

The team has devised a process that follows specific steps: requirement gathering, design, proposal, implementation, operation and support. Interactions between users, account managers and a lead NREN define the potential service required - the NREN is typically designated according to the country where the headquarters of the user organisation reside. For the design phase, the team draws a technical proposal that includes an overview of the solution's development, implementation and of its technical capabilities, with

the collaboration of relevant technical representatives from GÉANT and/or the NREN involved. The proposal is subsequently reviewed in conjunction with the relevant NREN to ensure that it is fit for purpose and all the parties involved have operational visibility. Upon acceptance of the proposal and the involvement of relevant operational teams, the solution is implemented and enters into the operation and support phase. Following completion of a specific project, we continue monitoring its progress to ensure that all agreed requirements are regularly being met over of the lifetime of the project.

Overview of research areas and organisations supported by the Research, Engagement and Support Team

Energy

Nuclear power, future energy research, anything to do with the science behind the juice that keeps the lights and computers turned on around the world. We work directly with ITER, for example.

Earth and Environmental Sciences

Earth observation, climate monitoring, water quality, volcanoes, and sustainable development. These are just some of the subject areas that we cover while assisting organisations such as Group on Earth Observation, WMO, ESA and EUMETSAT. We are the primary partner in the R&E community of the COPERNICUS project.

Social Sciences

Music, art, languages. We've worked with the likes of CLARIN, ASTRA and LoLa to cater for their specific requirements.

Health and Food

Pharmaceutical research, EMBL-EBI, Human Brain project, ARES have all been assisted through our account management and support to their communities.

Physical Science

Exploring the universe and corner stones of our existence, we're assisting the likes of SKA, JIVE, NEXPreS, LIGO-VIRGO and CERN.

e-infrastructures

We also assist and provide services to the infrastructures who deliver complimentary services to research communities: PRACE, EUDAT, EGI and others.

Meet the Team

Vincenzo Capone, Head of the Research Engagement and Support Team

Prior to joining GÉANT, Enzo worked at the Department of Physics of the University of Naples, where he was the network architect and manager in charge of computing for physics experiments, he was also Technical Associate to the ATLAS experiment collaboration at CERN and to the National Institute for Nuclear Physics (INFN).

Richard Hughes-Jones, Senior Network Advisor

Richard is the network architect in the SKA Signal and Data Transport consortium with responsibility for the long-haul data transmission within the telescopes and the connectivity of the telescopes to the world-wide academic networks. He worked on the ATLAS LHC experiment at CERN and is the area director for infrastructure in the Open Grid Forum (OGF) and a co-chair of the Network Measurements Working Group.

Domenico Vicinanza, Senior Research Engagement Officer

Domenico is a Senior Lecturer in Electronics at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, where he leads the Intelligent Systems, Software Engineering and Gaming research group. In addition to a PhD in physics, he also holds a degree in orchestration for cinema and television and is a qualified argentine tango instructor. As a musician he has worked with CERN and NASA using music to communicate science.

Chris Atherton, Research Engagement Officer

Chris has over 10 years' experience working in the IT and Space industry and holds a BSc (Hons) in Computer Networks and Security; he joined GÉANT in 2017. In his spare time, Chris used to send balloons to the edge of space: a hobby that soon became a small business. Chris' fascination with Space started in his infant school days.