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CSIRT CAPACITY BUILDING IN ASIA

PROVIDING SECURITY TRAINING AND FACILITATING CREATION OF A TRUSTED INFORMATION SHARING PLATFORM



Do we wait for another large cyber-attack to be a wake-up call for NRENs worldwide or should we rather be proactive and invest in global collaboration and talent in the regions where it is needed most?

The wider deployment of eduoam and eduGAIN services throughout the global Research & Education community assumes that the NREN (or similar organisation) supporting these services was also responsible for the operation of a Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT). While this is the case in Europe, where TF-CSIRT (task force promoting collaboration and coordination between CSIRTs) supports over 70 CSIRTs from the R&E community, the situation in the Asia Pacific region is very different. Most of the NRENs in the region do not have a CSIRT team, and the collaboration between those who do, could be strengthened and improved.

To bridge the gap, the Asi@Connect project has committed to fund the CSIRT Capacity Building in Asia project, aiming to facilitate CSIRT co-ordination, development, training and information sharing within the Asia-Pacific region with the organisation of a series of CSIRT Capacity Building in Asia events, to be held in 2018 and 2019. This project is led by GÉANT, in cooperation with experienced trainers from APNIC and the TF-CSIRT Community.

CSIRT Capacity Building in Asia events happen in conjunction with APAN conferences and include two parts – meetings and training sessions. The meetings' agendas include participants' presentations, information, experiences, knowledge sharing, discussions and demos. The training programme

is modelled after TRANSITS I and comprises 4 modules: Operational, Organisational, Technical and Legal.

Project in Numbers

In 2018 (Year 1 of the project):

- 2 events (APAN45 Singapore & APAN46 New Zealand)
- 4 CSIRT in Asia knowledge and experience sharing sessions
- 35 participants (24 funded + 11 unfunded)
- 4 trainers
- 14 economies represented

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand

- CSIRT team created at LEARN (Sri Lanka). LEARN organised a remote training session for its constituents, led by APNIC trainers, on the importance of CERT activities, further to attending the CSIRT Capacity Building in Asia events. This topic will now become a part of all NREN training, and was shared as a best practice at the CSIRT Capacity Building in Asia event in August 2018.
- BdREN (Bangladesh) and MYREN (Malaysia) are in the process of creating an NREN CERT, which will be supported by the CSIRT Capacity Building in Asia and other Asi@Connect activities.
- After attending TRANSITS at APAN45, the Universitas Islam Indonesia created a CERT team and is working on reviving Indonesia ACAD-CSIRT. This successful national collaboration of the CERT teams is the first step towards working together with the other teams in the region and worldwide.

What Next?

In 2019, at least two more CSIRT Capacity Building in Asia will be organised, in parallel with APAN conferences, inviting around 30 more funded participants from the Asia-Pacific region. Some of the initially identified beneficiary countries, such as Mongolia, Laos and Vietnam, have not yet nominated attendees for these events, so more effort will be put into getting the partner organisations from these countries involved and networked in the region.

Another focus area, in the second part of the project, will be to encourage further collaboration sharing between those organisations whose members took part in the events in 2018. Dedicated communications platforms for past and future attendees of the CSIRT Capacity Building in Asia have been set up to facilitate information sharing and to help strengthen the active NREN CSIRT network in the Asia-Pacific region.

Year 1 Results

Asi@Connect funding of the CSIRT Capacity Building in Asia has been crucial in attracting the participations from the partner organisations from the developing countries and giving the opportunity not only to learn from the experienced trainers from Europe and Australia, but also from each others' experiences, which can sometimes be region-specific. Some noteworthy results that go beyond the expectations of the first year of the project are listed below:

- PERN (Pakistan) established a CSIRT team to support its higher education institutions. They initiated the process by becoming members of FIRST & APCERT, a very important achievement in the region as it places Pakistan Academic Network cyber security efforts on the world map.