

The GÉANT cloud activity

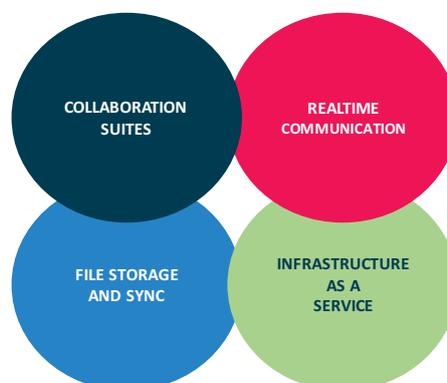
Cloud services are in rapidly growing demand. End users are already using these services, often outside the control of the institutions and its established standards and governance controls. The users want the inherent benefits of cloud services; agility, scalability, free or pay as you go services. They want access to computing power, storage, file sync and share and collaboration services at the click of a mouse.

MEETING USER NEEDS

The NRENS in the GÉANT Cloud Activity are responding to the needs of R&E institutions and users throughout Europe, through our role as trusted advisors.

The GÉANT cloud activity is to:

- Provide faster and easier access to a range of useful cloud services by creating the right legal, procurement and technical environments.
- Create a strong community voice, based on the aggregation of demand across GÉANT members, to get the optimum technical and commercial solutions from vendors.
- Provide services adapted to common community requirements and standards such as federation.



FOUR CLOUD SERVICE AREAS

Through broad consultation with European NRENS, the GÉANT Cloud Activity concentrates on four areas of cloud services. Based on the input from the NRENS, Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) was selected as the first area to bring forward services.

COMMUNITY EFFORT

The European NRENS collaborating through the GÉANT Cloud Activity are:

- Trusted brokers and advisors, acting on behalf of the community in a collaborative effort, leveraging the benefits of the GÉANT network, federation and combined expertise.
- Sharing resources, experiences and knowledge, establishing common standards and requirements.
- Aggregating demand, enabling efficiency and economy of scale.



GÉANT CLOUD SERVICES

The GÉANT (GN4-1) Project's clouds team (SA7) supports NRENS in delivering cloud and mobile services to their communities with the right conditions of use, so that the benefits of the cloud can be fully realised and the risks managed. It provides a community point of contact to suppliers. The Clouds Catalogue offers institutions and NRENS clarity about providers' capabilities and helps with the procurement of cloud services.

More information:
<http://services.geant.net/clouds>

Contact us at: clouds@geant.net

The task is a community effort; we are all part of the community, providing a place for the community to collaborate on clouds, share experiences and knowledge, and aggregate demand. Our aim is to answer the needs and demands of the community and its users and institutions, and to provide cloud services to the community, on behalf of the community. We have no self-interest in this – we are just providing cloud services to those institutions that need them. We are positioning NRENs and their institutions as active players within clouds, and through our common effort we lower costs and gain bargaining strength.

THE FOUNDATION OF COLLABORATION



In the initial stages of the cloud activity, the need for a common approach towards cloud services was clear.

The community chose four main areas where a common effort would be valuable.

In these four areas, the cloud activity has delivered:

- An NREN cloud strategy guide for all NRENs to use.
- A set of common cloud standards available for all NRENs.
- A set of common requirements for cloud service providers who wants to deliver cloud services to the European research and education community.
- A cloud services catalogue with close to 30 services from more than 10 different providers.

CLOUDS ADAPTED TO THE COMMUNITY

In addition to the inherent benefits of the cloud services themselves, such as agility, flexibility and on demand access and use, the community effort adds value through adapting cloud services to the demands and requirements of the community.

The aim of the GÉANT Cloud Activity is to

- Maximise benefits, minimise risks.

- Ensure federation and integration; adapting the services to the research and education community portfolio.
- Ensure data control; adhering to legal and security demands, enabling NRENs and institutions to get in and out in a timely manner.

STORAGE TASK FORCE

GÉANT task forces are forums for the exchange of best practices, experience, knowledge and ideas, as well as fostering collaboration among NRENs and institutions. TF-Storage is an open forum for those who operate and build storage infrastructures. It facilitates discussions about data centre technologies, data management and service delivery models; storage applications and services; and storage platforms and protocols.

FILESENDER

FileSender is web-based software that makes the transfer of large files easy, allowing for a variety of federated authentication methods. GÉANT provides the service to its staff to show its potential to NRENs.

OWNCLOUD AGREEMENT

GÉANT secured a deal with ownCloud Inc., which is an industry partner and associate member of GÉANT, so that members can purchase licenses with a significant discount. ownCloud installs easily on a web server, enabling institutions to host their own file sync-and-share, giving complete control of their data whether using on-site or cloud storage.

OPENCLOUDMESH PROJECT

ownCloud proposed an open initiative to interconnect the community's existing ownCloud software-based sync-and-share service domains. The idea is that OpenCloudMesh will deliver universal file access through an interconnected mesh of research clouds without sacrificing any advantages in privacy, control or security that are provided by an on-premises cloud. A pilot project started early 2015 and is open for new participants.

<https://owncloud.com/lp/opencloudmesh/>

PAN-EUROPEAN CLOUD SERVICES FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

The long-term objective of the GÉANT Cloud Activity is twofold:

- to deliver a wide range of cloud services to the European NRENs and the research and education community
- to establish an ecosystem for delivering any number of services across Europe, meeting the needs of European NRENs and the research and education community

