

03-02-2025

OCRE 2024 Framework Agreement: What is the OCRE 2024 Framework Agreement?

Grant Agreement No.:	101194278
Work Package:	WP4
Task Item	Task 1 / Task 2
Nature of Document:	OTHER
Dissemination Level:	PU
Lead Partner:	PSNC / Cynet / HEAnet
Document ID:	GN5-2-25-112EFG
Authors:	Elena Mina (Cynet), Michelle Taylor (HEAnet) Jakob Tendel (DFN), Maria Ristkok (EENet of HTM), Eva Nestorovska (PSNC), Monique Pellinkhof (GÉANT)

Abstract

This document provides guidance on the use of the GÉANT Cloud Framework OCRE 2024. It explains the basics of how the framework operates, outlines its benefits, and offers a step-by-step description of roles.

Disclaimer

This cookbook is intended as a guiding document for internal use within the GÉANT community for informational purposes only and does not constitute a binding agreement, commitment, or endorsement of any kind. No commercial service provider or other external entity may derive any rights, claims, or entitlements from this document or any similar materials produced by GÉANT. GÉANT makes no warranties, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness, or applicability of this document for any specific purpose. GÉANT accepts no liability for any use, reliance, or interpretation of this document outside its intended scope.

Contents

Executive Summary	1
1 Introduction	2
2 Benefits of the Framework	3
2.1 Collective Expenditure and Discounts	3
2.2 Saving Time – No Need for Separate Tenders	3
2.3 Legal Benefits	3
2.4 Assessing National Legal Compliance	4
2.5 Network Connections	4
3 OCRE2024 Framework Agreement	5
3.1 Getting Started	6
4 NREN Support	6
Glossary	7
References	8

Figure

Figure 3.1: NREN service delivery workflow	6
--	---

Executive Summary

The GÉANT Cloud Framework (OCRE2024) is an umbrella contract for the simplified purchasing of cloud services for all institutions in Europe, legal entities listed in the List of Participating Entities [1].

This document provides guidance on the use of OCRE2024. It explains the basics of how the framework operates, outlines its benefits, and offers a step-by-step description of roles. It concludes by summarising the National Research and Education Networks' (NRENs) support available.

1 Introduction

The collective procurement of cloud services by the GÉANT community was first initiated to exploit the level of demand aggregation and centralised effort that the GÉANT collaboration allows, to deliver benefits in effort saved and improved commercial terms over individual procurements.

The first GÉANT OCRE Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) Framework was in 2016, aimed at simplifying cloud service access for the European Research and Education (R&E) sector. This was followed by the OCRE 2020 tender, which expanded the offerings to include Platform as a Service (PaaS) and Software as a Service (SaaS), creating a broader portfolio for institutions across Europe. The OCRE 2024 tender is the third iteration, continuing this effort by aggregating demand and simplifying cloud procurement for institutions across 39 countries.

The OCRE2024 Framework has a duration of five years, starting February 2025.

2 Benefits of the Framework

Through the framework agreement, the European NRENs deliver a digital single market for the consumption of cloud services offerings (IaaS, PaaS, and SaaS) from selected service providers [2] (awarded suppliers, resellers, and/or cloud services provided under the framework agreement) for the European R&E community and other institutions. This is done in a way that satisfies the public procurement requirements, creating an economy of scale with better terms, better pricing, and some improved conditions. The collective tender outcomes ensure that these services are available for all institutions in Europe eligible to benefit from the framework [3].

2.1 Collective Expenditure and Discounts

Through the collective pan-European tender run by GÉANT (acting as the central purchasing body), institutions have a stronger negotiating position: they aggregate the purchasing power of institutions across Europe (over 10,000 are potentially eligible). This allows the participants to negotiate better legal and financial conditions, otherwise not possible for individual institutions or even countries.

The service providers submit bids with a minimum discount over the list pricing and various extra discounts, some as a percentage of current prices, some as a consumption-based discount with thresholds, and more. In addition, the fees normally charged for example data ingress/egress from the cloud are waived.

2.2 Saving Time – No Need for Separate Tenders

The GÉANT Cloud Tender saves both institutions and service providers valuable time. Institutions do not need to run separate tenders and draft contracts themselves. Service providers reach a large user base and potential route to market, only needing to participate in one tender.

2.3 Legal Benefits

The GÉANT Framework Agreements contain ready-to-use standardised terms and conditions compliant with the European Union (EU) Directive of Public Procurement (2014/24/EU) [4]. In some cases, individual countries may have additional local legal or regulatory requirements, for which sufficient margin is created. The GÉANT framework agreements save legal costs, time, and effort for individual institutions. Local legislation from participating countries known to the procurement team has been accommodated as much as possible, creating a multi-national-compliant tender procedure.

GÉANT has applied the EU Directive of Public Procurement, which enables cross-border procurement through a central purchasing body. This EU Directive ensures all institutions can easily consume cloud solutions from the GÉANT Cloud Catalogue, either directly via a cascade method, within a mini-competition, or within a desktop mini-competition.

2.4 Assessing National Legal Compliance

The NREN should check that its usage of the framework complies with EU and local laws, noting the following points:

- GÉANT-concluded framework agreements, in compliance with the European Directive on Public Procurement 2014/24/EU and the Dutch Public Procurement Act. Article 39.3 of the European Directive on Public Procurement 2014/24/EU, state that because GÉANT is a Dutch association acting as a central purchasing body, provision of centralised purchasing activities shall be conducted in accordance with the Dutch Public Procurement Act.
- This is why the OCRE 2024 tender is procured under the procurement legislation of The Netherlands, implementing the EU Directive of Public Procurement (2014/24/EU). The framework agreement is governed by Dutch law, and Call-Off Contracts (CoCs) will be governed by local laws and jurisdictions of the signing institutions.
- For EU (and EEA) countries: According to clauses 39.2 and 39.3 of the European Directive on Public Procurement 2014/24/EU and because GÉANT acted as a central purchasing body, the framework agreement needs to follow the procurement legislation under which the original tender is executed. The application of the Dutch Public Procurement Act cannot be prohibited by a member state in such a case. Therefore, this supersedes the local procurement regulations of all EU Member states.
- Non-EU countries: Some states in the pre-accession or accession process undertook to implement EU directives or harmonise with the EU legislation on public procurement. NRENs should check their laws and local procurement regulations.

2.5 Network Connections

Under OCRE2024, cloud service providers are expected to have no charges levied within the services for data ingress/egress for services procured under the framework. Data ingress must be free of charge, and egress charges waived for all participating entities (PE) except Group C, as long as they constitute less than 15% of the total monthly IaaS+ spend under a CoC. (See *OCRE Framework Agreement: Institution Guide to Using the Framework* for more information about the Groups [5].) Several providers guarantee a 100% waiver of egress traffic on top of this minimum requirement. The service providers are also required by GÉANT to connect their cloud infrastructure to the GÉANT and/or NRENs' networks. The method of achieving such interconnectivity can vary (direct peering – L2 – or the more feature rich – L3).

With an extensive GÉANT backbone, the national NREN network capabilities provide secure, high-capacity, and low-latency network access to over 10,000 institutions across Europe. Direct peering between the NRENs, institutions, and service providers helps to offer services without data-transport-related costs.

3 OCRE2024 Framework Agreement

The OCRE2024 Framework Agreement governs the relationship between GÉANT and the service providers with respect to the provision of services by the service providers to institutions (in this case NREs, their member institutions, and others).

A framework agreement is an ‘umbrella agreement’ that sets out the terms (particularly relating to price, quality, and quantity) under which parties named in the original tender (in this case all participating entities, NREs, their member institutions, and others) can acquire and provide services to their community by individual CoCs throughout the agreement. Individual contracts can be established by:

- Cascade method, a direct award without re-opening the competition within the sub-Lot.
- Mini-competition:
 - within a sub-Lot.
 - between the platforms in a country.
- Desktop mini-competition re-using the award criteria (AC) of the initial tender

The OCRE2024 Framework Agreement sets out the procedure for ordering services, the main terms and conditions for the provision of the services, and the obligations of the service providers under this framework agreement. Institutions may, at their absolute discretion and from time to time, order services from the service providers in accordance with the ordering procedure.

The delivery model is as follows:

- GÉANT ran the tender as central purchasing body and established framework agreements with service providers.
- The framework is split on a per-country basis across into 39 Lots participating countries with GÉANT member NREs (based on realised through implementing 39 participating countries’ separate lots in the tender, one per country) and agreements were awarded per country and per separate cloud platform, delivering frameworks to the highest-ranked (maximum three) service providers for any single platform in that country. In cases where there were fewer than three bidders competing to offer a certain platform in a country, correspondingly fewer frameworks are available for that platform in that country. NREs and their institutions can procure the services that best fit their needs and the needs of their users.
- NREs promote these frameworks in their respective country (and in some cases may add national legislative elements).
- Institutions can procure IaaS+ services without the need to run a tender themselves.

3.1 Getting Started

This section presents the steps you must follow to start using OCRE2024 Cloud Services [6], including the procedures for each of the three award methods to establish contracts under the framework to use specific services from a Service Provider.

The steps are summarised in Figure 3.1. below:

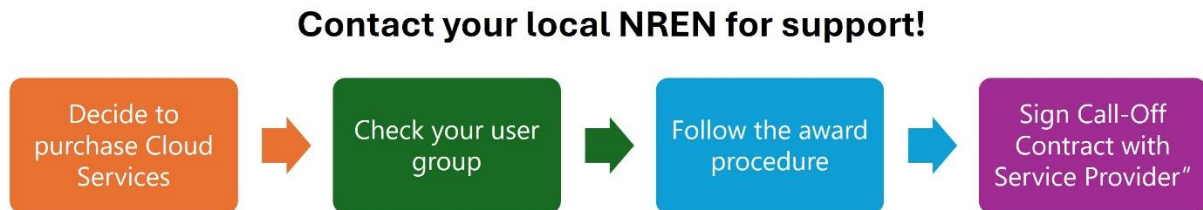


Figure 3.1: NREN service delivery workflow

4 NREN Support

Please contact your local NREN for support and more information [7].

Glossary

AC	Award Criteria
EEA	European Economic Area
EU	European Union
IaaS	Infrastructure as a Service
NREN	National Research and Education Network
OCRE2024	The GÉANT Cloud Framework
PaaS	Platform as a Service
PE	Participating Entity
R&E	Research and Education
SaaS	Software as a Service

References

- [1] <https://clouds.geant.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Lists-of-all-OCRE-2024-participating-entities-across-Europe.pdf>
- [2] <https://clouds.geant.org/ocre-2024-catalogue>
- [3] <https://clouds.geant.org/ocre2024entities/>
- [4] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/TXT/?uri=celex:32014L0024>
- [5] https://clouds.geant.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/GN5-2_OCRE2024-Framework-Agreement-Institution-Guide-to-Using-the-Framework.pdf
- [6] <https://clouds.geant.org/services/>
- [7] <https://clouds.geant.org/nren-cloud-contacts/>