

Some thoughts from management/funding/political group – session B2
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Political agreement is necessary before an NREN begins connecting schools. This agreement can be at national or at local level.

EU made a goal some years ago that NRENs should connect schools.

Why do politicians think of asking NRENs to connect schools ? Connecting schools is politically important and visible. Therefore this is done in many occasions as a separate project (to be more visible). It is difficult to sustain such projects.

In some countries (in early 90s) central solution seemed to be the only feasible way. In some countries NREN seemed to be the only actor capable of doing this in a coherent manner.

But this requires a new order of magnitude – there as at least 10-100 times more schools than universities

Many smaller institutions are without their own networking expertise. They need more services and more support..

Schools are often very poor – there is a need for central funding.

Experience shows: seed money is easy to get. But paying running cost later is a problem.

Good dialogue is needed especially at local level with school's owners.

The fact is that more small countries serve schools than big ones. In smaller countries there are not so many schools and an NREN can manage them. In addition some NRENs from small countries claim that the economy of scale helps them to bring the costs - calculated per user – down.

Requirements of schools and universities are different – can an NREN serve both ?
Schools need more services and not only large bandwidth.

Should an NREN be demand driven or should it push for new customers ?

Educational Ministry in Italy is certain that GARR can provide excellent service also for schools in Italy. For them it is important that schools are connected to Universities and not only to general internet.

UK representative supported certain level of integration. Reasons:

- with larger user base you can get better results in tendering
- better coordination is possible
- it is easier to propose and follow standards
- there are value added services (e.g. videoconferencing)
- NREN can push further development for middleware in a coordinated way

But in a big country you have to use a tier model. Central coordination should do what it does best and locals should do what they do best.

Should we let market to do everything for schools ? No, because market is good in well developed services. Services for schools are not there yet.