TERENA
Community Satisfaction Survey 2012
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Background

Towards the end of 2010, the TERENA Secretariat undertook a Community Satisfaction Survey on behalf of the TERENA Executive Committee. The objective of the survey was to determine how the community views the activities of the Association. The satisfaction study consisted of a comprehensive set of questions sent to more than 3000 TERENA contacts, resulting in well over 600 responses being received. This initial survey represents a baseline against which all later surveys can be compared.

A summary of the results of that survey were presented to the May 2011 TERENA General Assembly meeting in document GA(11)008.

General Assembly members welcomed the survey initiative, suggesting that a further concise study be undertaken in 2012, focusing on General Assembly members as the primary stakeholders.

The Secretariat responded to these suggestions by developing the 2012 survey of 25 questions which was sent to members of the General Assembly email distribution list on 25 May 2012. This document reports the findings of the 2012 survey.

2012 Survey Responses

The Secretariat received 53 replies to the 2012 Community Satisfaction Survey, representing a response rate in excess of 50%.

The earlier survey was segmented in a way that enabled meaningful comparisons with the 2012 General Assembly data to be drawn. In cases where a numeric indicator can be computed, the 2011 and 2012 responses are shown side-by-side for comparison purposes.

The survey team at the Secretariat are extremely grateful to members of the General Assembly for the high level of response and the completeness of answers given.
Survey Results

Task Force Ratings

As in the previous survey, in order to assess the community perception of the TERENA task forces, the survey asked respondents to rate both the relevance and quality of the task forces. The responses were translated into a numeric score ranging from zero (poor) to four (excellent).

As can been seen from the graphs, all of the TERENA task forces maintained their position in the top right segment of the matrix. There has been a little movement between individual task forces in terms of perceived relevance and quality.

The main message remains as for last year that the community consider the TERENA task forces to be highly relevant and of good quality.

In response to open questioning, the most common suggestions to improve the task forces were:

- More interaction between the task forces should be encouraged.
- The task forces should focus on providing more recommendations and best practices based on real experience.
- Try to involve more end users, associate members and institutions in the work of the task forces.
- Shorten the cycle from initial idea to the delivery of result.
- More workshops and training.
- Make the focus of TF-MSP (strategic issues including the business sides of national research and education networking organisation (NREN) operations including outsourcing, adoption of cloud services etc.) more explicit in promotional material.
Community-Support Services

For the purposes of the survey, ‘TERENA community-support services’ include services that have been developed as a result of a TERENA activity and later offered to a wider community.

In the execution of ‘TERENA community-support services’ the Secretariat undertakes a brokerage role between the users and suppliers. This role enables the community to benefit from collective actions in terms of efficiencies and/or cost savings.

As in the previous survey, the perceived quality and importance of the majority of community-support services remains very high.

In response to open questioning the most common opinions regarding the TERENA supported community services were:

- The current services are working well.
- The coverage, adoption and use of eduroam should be broadened and underpinned by improvements in the eduroam website.
- An executive summary of TERENA-supported community services should be provided and this should include an emphasis on the benefits for users (rather than emphasise the provider’s perspective).

In response to questioning on specific services:

Authentication and Authorisation Infrastructure (AAI)

TERENA should continue to focus on federation issues:

- Supporting promotional events for NREN communities.
- Promoting the work of REFEDS (research and education federations) through
workshops with wide participation.
- Liaising and collaborating with international research groups.

Security

- More activities encouraging the application of network security technologies in the networks of NRENs.
- TERENA is doing an excellent job of coordinating incident response teams - explore if there are additional security areas where coordination could be beneficial.
- More security training.

Clouds & Cloud Storage

- Share the NREN experience and developments, strengthen NREN cooperation;
- Explore brokerage models from a tactical and strategic perspective;
- Develop best practice guidance;
- Cooperate with other European organisations, large projects and fora.

Suggestions for additional community services that TERENA should explore

- Prepare plans regarding trends in networking.
- Joint procurement services for NRENs similar to what is done for the TERENA Certificate Service (TCS), but for other services which are especially relevant for small countries/NRENs that cannot benefit from economies of scale within their local research and education community when negotiating with suppliers - an example of such joint procurement could be Adobe Connect licensing for conferencing.
- Services should be more oriented on interdisciplinary research.
- Activities around new media in the classroom.

Publications and Knowledge Transfer Tools

The set of publications and knowledge tools enquired about in the 2012 survey has changed: the 'Case for NRENs' and the 'Foresight Studies' were dropped due to the length of time since their publication, while 'The Executive Newsletter', 'Community Newsletter' and 'TERENA Wiki' were introduced.
A consistent high value of quality and relevance has been maintained. In addition, there is a significant increase in the perceived quality of the TNC (TERENA Networking Conference) website.

**General feedback on TNC**

As might have been expected, much praise was given about TNC in the open questioning, reflected in the high scores in the graph above. The following suggestions for improvements were received in the open questioning:

- Several responders like the diverse TNC programme and suggested broadening it further. Some thought TNC should concentrate on applications of networks rather than the technologies of networks.
- Several thought that since the role of NRENs is changing there should be a stream on the strategic aspects of the business and service management. It was suggested that some of this might be appropriate for more BoFs (Birds of a Feathers) to encourage community discussion.
- Some responders found the costs of attending TNC difficult to meet.
- TERENA should take care not to make the TNC completely GÉANT centric by ensuring a good set of speakers from outside the GÉANT community.

**General feedback on training**

- A wider selection of training topics would be welcome.
- Consider online training that could be customised and re-used by NRENs.
- A focus on the deployment of services training would be welcome.

**General feedback on workshops**

- Improve and market the benefits of workshops for campus users (NREN
customers).

- TERENA should consider delivering more workshops and tutorials locally.
- Provide a clearer digest of what is available.
- Incorporate external presenters when needed. If feasible, provide webcasting and recorded access to the events, etc.
- The material gathered regarding CEF (Connecting Europe Facilities) was appreciated and it was thought that workshops on CEF could fill an important gap.
- There were suggestions that TERENA should launch workshops on:
  - Exploring SDN (software define networking) technologies;
  - The Digital Divide;
  - CEF.

General feedback on service development

NRENs typically lack knowledge and practice in the domain of service design and development, demand management and so on. Many attempts to create new services and service-supporting tools have failed due to:

- Poorly performed service strategy phase;
- Lack of proper analysis of user needs.

NRENs would benefit from help on how to create new services and to boost the use of new services by a wider range of research and education groups.

Community feedback on cooperating with external organisations

Clouds

Since there is an accelerating drive to cloud computing and the acceptance of commodity service points, discussion and cooperation between the NREN community and the commercial space should be intensified with the target of collaboration and partnership. This could take the form of workshops and engagement in task forces.

The specific example of getting an eduGAIN-enabled cloud storage service was mentioned by one responder.

An associate member suggests TERENA supporting universities with the provisioning of cloud-based services, particularly by publishing information about privacy and security of distributed cloud-based services.

Specific bodies

Specific mention was made of the following bodies for cooperation: RIPE, Kantara, IETF, Future Internet initiatives, EGI, ESFRI, W3C, and more contact with the European Commission in general.
**Working with TERENA**

In response to the question:

“How well does TERENA keep your NREN informed of events, membership services and activities?”

13 Excellent
17 Above average
5 Average
1 Below average

**83% replied they perceive that TERENA is performing at excellent or above average level.**

In response to the question:

“How would you rate TERENA’s overall effectiveness in developing and maintaining productive ties with organisations on research networking?”

12 Excellent
17 Above average
5 Average
2 Below average or poor

**81% replied they perceive that TERENA is performing at excellent or above average level.**

In response to the question:

“TERENA is planning to provide each NREN with a nominated member of secretariat staff”

50% replied that this is a welcome development
35% thought the existing arrangements worked well
15% expressed no opinion

(38 responses in all)
Overall Experience with TERENA

In order to judge the perceived experience members have regarding working with TERENA the survey asked the question:

“How would you rate your overall experience with TERENA in the past 3 years?”

The question was answered by 36 NREN managers and 7 representatives of the associate membership.

![Figure 4. Overall Experience with TERENA](image)

The result for the two years are normalised at the level of respondents being very satisfied. The Secretariat management will strive to continue to achieve such a high score in this regard.

The results of the 2012 survey suggest that General Assembly members have more satisfaction with TERENA than respondents in the previous survey – a trend the TERENA Secretariat will endeavour to continue.

Summary and Conclusions

There is greater satisfaction with TERENA’s performance than in the previous survey. The Secretariat will not be complacent about this and will strive to attain even higher ratings in the coming year.

Strategic suggestions put forward in the responses, some of which are reported in this document, have been used in developing the 2013 activity plan.

Operational suggestions relating to task forces and workshops will be reflected in the work of the staff.