



**Emerging NREN Programme
Terms of Reference**
Helsinki, Finland , 8-12 June 2026



Introduction

The GÉANT Emerging NREN Programme (ENP) is part of the GÉANT Project (GN5-2)¹ and has been taking place alongside TNC, GÉANT's flagship yearly conference, since 2018. In its consecutive editions the programme has integrated individuals from emerging NRENs from around the globe into the TNC community and created further synergies and connections at different organisational levels between European and international NRENs.

Across seven editions, the programme has benefitted 88 participants representing 48 countries and territories.

In 2026 the GÉANT Emerging NREN Programme will be held in person alongside TNC26, from Monday, 8 June 2026 to Friday, 12 June 2026 in Helsinki, Finland, with support from CSC (FUNET), the Finnish NREN.

ENP Programme 26

The ENP26 programme will consist of the activities outlined below. Candidates are required to participate in the full programme.

TNC26 attendance

TNC is the largest Research & Education networking conference and aims to present participants with a unique overview of the latest developments in research networking, both in the technical field and in the area of application and management. Every year TNC brings together a wide cross section of specialists from a variety of roles in the areas of Networking, Trust & Identity, Access Management and more from all NRENs, universities, research organisations and institutions, and industry.

ENP26 candidates will participate in the full TNC26 programme, and registration fees will be waived by the conference organiser.

¹ As part of the GÉANT Framework Partnership Agreement (GN5-FPA), the GN5-2 project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 101100680.

Dedicated ENP programme coordinated with the conference's local NREN host

ENP participants will also enjoy a tailor-made programme that includes the following sessions:

- **A Networking Lunch** jointly held **with the Future Talent Programme (FTP)**
- **A dedicated two-hour session with the TNC host, CSC-IT**, the Finnish NREN.
In previous editions, sessions have included an introductory presentation by the host NREN and additionally during the TNC week, visits to Supercomputers, Campus network equipment, meeting with national telecommunication operators, end users, ICT centers, tech hubs, etc...
- **An introduction to the GÉANT Community Programme²**, explaining the range of topics the community is working on through Special Interest Groups (SIG) or Task Forces (TF).
- Participation in one of the multiple SIG (Special Interest Groups) and side meetings taking place at TNC26 i.e. SIG-AI, SIG-Sustainability, SIG-Procurement, GNA-G.
- **Meeting GÉANT's CEO.**

Prior to TNC26, a series of videoconference calls will be held with participants to help them prepare and to ensure they gain the maximum benefit from attending TNC26.

A provisional Agenda (Agenda in ENP25) can be found in Annex I.

Lightening talk submissions

ENP participants are strongly encouraged to submit Lightning Talk proposals on a topic they wish to share with the TNC26 audience. Further details are available at: <https://tnc25.geant.org/submit/> (Lightning Talks section, opens on 4th February 2026).

The submission process will close on 10th March 2026 (midnight CET) and the selection will be based on a competitive process.

To date **18 ENP** participants have been selected to give lightening talks in this very competitive process and delivered diverse presentations with titles such as:

- Digital Crop-Disease Surveillance Systems in sub-Saharan Africa
- Face Recognition - Internet of Things Fused System for Criminal Recognition and Location Identification in West Africa
- Student information system with integrated management software Cocktail in Madagascar.
- Breaking Silos with the DevOps Mindset

² <https://community.geant.org/community-programme/>

- Calling for REN Engagement in Climate Research Collaboration in Nepal

For selected candidates, GÉANT provide appropriate support for those whose Lightning Talk proposals are accepted.

Integration with the International NREN community

To enhance the value of the ENP, all participants will be paired with GÉANT community members who share similar professional backgrounds. This pairing is designed to facilitate informal dialogue between individuals with common interests.

The objective of this pairing experience is to make TNC participation more relevant and impactful for ENP candidates by providing the opportunity to strengthen and enrich the NREN community and build new relationships. GÉANT community members also benefit from the exchange, gaining insights into NRENs around the world through diverse perspectives on needs and challenges.

Candidate Profile

The ENP team invites Regional and National R&E Networks to nominate representatives for the programme. We especially encourage participation from NREN staff members who are part of the community but may not typically attend conferences, as they stand to gain the most from the knowledge exchange. We also strongly promote diversity among participants, for instance by encouraging applications from women wherever possible.

The ENP26 welcomes up to three candidates for each of the following regions:

- North Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean & Western Asia
- West and Central Africa
- East and Southern Africa
- Latin American and the Caribbean
- Asia-Pacific
- Central Asia

Candidate Application Requirements

Applicants must be NREN employees or affiliated with an NREN and submit their application by providing their CV in English and complete the application form that includes the following elements:

- Organisation, current role and a description of the candidate's responsibilities,
- Topics/issues of interest in the candidate's work,
- Languages spoken and proficiency level,
- Reason for applying for the Emerging NREN Programme,
- Participants are also highly encouraged to submit Lightning Talk proposals. Submission of a Lightning Talk proposal is mandatory for those applying under the GÉANT WOMEN in STEM sponsorship.

In addition to the pre-requisites, the following criteria will be taken into consideration for the final selection:

- Quality of the overall application
- Diversity and gender: The Emerging NREN Programme strongly encourages applications from women/minority groups wherever possible.

Participant Selection and Sponsorship

This year, two selection tracks will be made available to participants:

- 1) Regional REN selection, and
- 2) GÉANT Women in STEM selection

Regional REN Selection

Up to three candidates may be nominated by their Regional Research and Education Network (RREN) in collaboration with the local NREN.

The RREN selection team will expect the following pre-requisites from applicants:

- CV in English,
- Completed ENP26 application form,
- In addition, some regions might define additional selection criteria (e.g. mandatory Lightning Talk application or prioritising the most emerging NRENs from their community).

Regional Networks should collect candidate information and send it to luis.martin@geant.org by the 13th February 2026.

Regional REN Sponsorship

- All costs associated with travel, accommodation and sundry expenses will be covered by EU-funded projects, the RREN, or another arrangement agreed locally, as appropriate. GÉANT will not provide any financial support for such costs.
- The TNC26 registration fee and side meetings entry fees will be waived by GÉANT for all ENP26 participants sponsored by their RREN.

GÉANT Selection – Women in STEM

In addition to the RREN selection, GÉANT will directly sponsor three to five female participants – subject to the quality of their applications and Lightning Talk proposals - from countries and territories listed by the OECD DAC³ as official development assistance recipients. This track is exclusively for women pursuing STEM careers.

³ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>

The GÉANT selection team requires the following from applicants:

- CV in English,
- Completed ENP26 application form,
- Lightning talk submission

GÉANT direct candidates must submit their application form and CV to luis.martin@geant.org by the 13th February 2026, clearly indicating “*Emerging NREN Programme 2026*” in the subject of their email.

A committee composed of three GÉANT International and Partner Relations Managers will meet in March to finalise the list of participants.

Applicants may apply to both the RREN and the GÉANT Women in STEM sponsorship tracks only if they meet the eligibility criteria for each. Both selection processes will take place in parallel.

GÉANT Sponsorship

- All costs associated with travel and accommodation for Women in STEM participants will be covered by the GN5-2 project, as appropriate. Sponsored participants will sign a volunteer agreement with GÉANT to cover expenses such as air travel, public transport, visa application costs, hotel costs, meals and travel insurance.
- The TNC26 registration fee and side meetings entry fees will be waived by GÉANT for all ENP26 participants.

Annex I Tentative Agenda for ENP26

Prior to TNC

Time	Activity
7 May 25 14:00 – 15:30 CET	Welcome to ENP session (Virtual)
Online	Meet and greet with your pair

TNC25 Week

Monday 8 June 26

Time	Activity
14:00 -16:30	Emerging NREN Programme FUNET presentation

Tuesday 9 June 26

Time	Activity
09:30 -10:00	TNC registration
10:00 -10:30	TNC101 getting the most out of your 1st TNC
11:00 – 12:30	Opening Plenary
12:30 – 13:00	TNC Lunch
13:00 – 14:00	Meet the GEANT CEO – Emerging NREN meeting
14:00 – 15:30	TNC Sessions and Demonstrations https://tnc25.geant.org/sessions/ (last year example)
16:00 – 17:30	Lightning Talks: First Strike
17:30 – 19:00	Opening Reception
18:45 – 21:00	ENP Pair Dinner
20:30 – 23:45	Kick-off party

Wednesday 10 June 26

Time	Activity
09:00 – 10:30	Wednesday Plenary
11:00 – 12:30	Lightning Talk Plenaries - Part 2
12:30 – 14:00	TNC Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	GÉANT community programme presentation
19:00 – 23:00	Conference Dinner

Thursday 11 June 26

Time	Activity
09:00 -15:30	TNC Sessions and Demonstrations
12:30 – 14:00	TNC Lunch
16:00 – 17:30	Closing plenary

Friday 12 June 26

Time	Activity
09:00 – 17:30	Day for SIG and TF groups participation / Host NREN planned visit

Annex II: Lightning Talks at TNC25

Lightning Talks were given at TNC25 by 4 Emerging NREN Programme participants. The Lightning Talks can be viewed via the links in the table below:

Name	Institution	Talk Title	Video Link	Time on Video
Isaac Ainamaani	Research and Education Network for Uganda (RENU)	"Breaking Silos With the DevOps Mindset".	https://tnc25.geant.org/recordings/?session=s856	29:15
Caroline Namuddu	Research and Education Network for Uganda (RENU)	"Killing Two Birds with One Node".	https://tnc25.geant.org/recordings/?session=s856	1:05:41
Rajan Parajuli	Nepal Research and Education Network (NREN)	"Calling for REN Engagement in Climate Research Collaboration in Nepal".	https://tnc25.geant.org/recordings/?session=s856	1:16:10
Joshua Brian Kituyi	Research and Education Network for Uganda (RENU)	"Does the World Need More NRENS?".	https://tnc25.geant.org/recordings/?session=s798	28:45

Annexe III Participants Quotes:

“The ENP25 programme didn’t just make TNC easier to follow – it made it meaningful and personal.”

“ENP25 was a great introduction to the GÉANT community and helped me build confidence as a newcomer.”

“My highlight was meeting the GÉANT CEO and hearing about the vision for global collaboration.”

“My highlight was connecting with women in STEM from other regions and learning from their experiences.”

“This experience expanded both my technical knowledge and international network.”

“ENP25 was joyful. It was fun. It was human. And in many ways, it was a reminder that we truly are, as the theme said, Brighter Together.”

“Participating in ENP25 strengthened my commitment to build stronger, more connected NREs in the Arab region.”