

AAU REN Unit Views and FEAST

**1st Euro Africa
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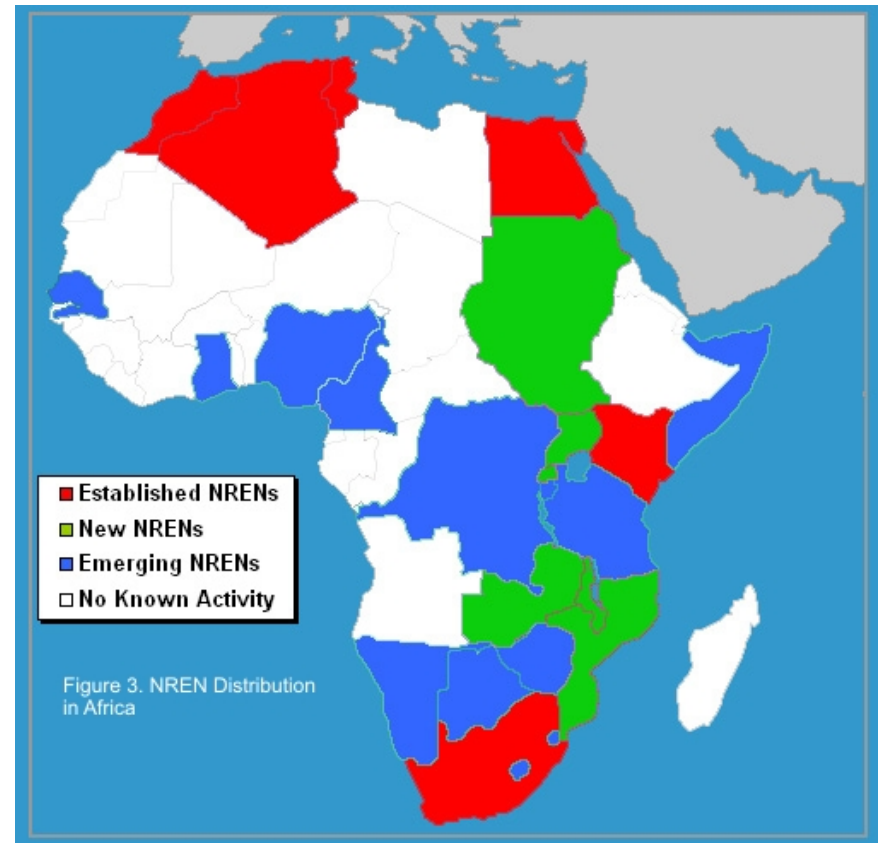


R & E Networking in Africa (1)

- Since the 80s, several initiatives to bring Internet to African higher education institutions
 - First initiatives go as far back as late 80s – early 90s
 - FidoNet, RIOnet and others (based on non-permanent connections via phone lines and X.25 links), basically to fetch and send emails once or a few times per day
- Permanent Internet connections generalized only in the mid' to late 90s
- Several initiatives to set up “NRENs” in the late 90s – beginning of 2000s; most of them failed

R & E Networking in Africa (2)

- NRENS in Africa can be categorized in 3 groups
 - Established (functioning) NRENS
 - New NRENS
 - Emerging NRENS (NRENS in formation)
- Many developments: e.g. in TZ and ET





R & E Networking in Africa (3)

- Active NRENs essentially established in Northern, Eastern and Southern Africa
 - EUMEDCONNECT2
 - UbuntuNet Alliance momentum
- But progress also in Western and Central Africa
 - Several initiatives for the establishment of NRENs, in more and less advanced stage
- Very fruitful dialogue and experience sharing between the various actors, especially between the UbuntuNet Alliance, the EUMEDCONNECT2 networks and the West and Central African initiative



Not the biggest challenge. But still...





FEAST at a glance (1)

- A 10 month feasibility study for AfricaConnect
- Funded by DG-INFISO/F3 “GÉANT and e-Infrastructures”
- Support for fact-finding in W&C Africa from AAU/IDRC
- Collaboration with various other national and international organisations/institutions
- Mission: to pave the way for AfricaConnect, the first lighthouse ICT program project of this programme
 - Connect Sub-Saharan African NRENs to each other and to the global R&E network via GEANT



FEAST at a glance (2)

- Main guidelines for the success of the project:
 - Development of criteria for assessing readiness of countries (R&E communities) to be part of a regional/sub-regional R&E network within the next 3 years
 - Objective assessment of “NREN” readiness in almost all Sub-Saharan countries with involvement of key stakeholders
 - Identification of potential candidates to join the project after a first phase while benefiting from some activities of the first phase (e.g. capacity building, policy development, etc.)



Africa Connect Components

- Call for proposals for Capacity building and application development
 - Training, e.g. as part of NREN twinning
 - Introduction of Communication Network courses in academic curricula
- Connectivity to sub-regional networks for ready enough NRENs
 - Ubutunet Alliance (E&S)
 - WACREN (W&C)
 - EUMEDCONNECT/CAMREN (N)



The way forward

- FEAST Team still assessing NREN readiness and infrastructure
- AfricaConnect now well known in the African and European education and research communities
- High expectations from this community
- Co-funding schemes already under discussion
- Many efforts ongoing on the ground to move the African research and education networking agenda forward
- Implementation of this project now will dramatically catalyze this process



THANK YOU !

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