The AfricaConnect Project

Kevin Chege (KENET) and Duncan Martin (TENET) representing the UbuntuNet Alliance
Many slides based on ones by Dr Tusubira
Identity and Purpose

AfricaConnect is a project of the European Commission and the African Union Commission.

AfricaConnect aims to establish a high-capacity Internet network for research and education in Southern and Eastern Africa so as to provide the region with a gateway to global research collaboration.

Project will focus on securing cross-border links between NRENs.

www.africaconnect.eu
Managing Partner

www.dante.net

Project Manager
Cathrin Stover
13 African NREN Partners

- DRC
- Kenya
- Malawi
- Somalia
- Sudan
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia
- EthERNet (Ethiopia)
- Morenet (Mozambique)
- Rwednet (Rwanda)
- XNet (Namibia)
3 African Regional Partners
- UbuntuNet Alliance
- Association of African Universities
- WACREN

Eastern and Southern Africa
Association of African Universities
Western and Central Africa

6 European NREN Partners
- DFN
- Consortium GARR
- FCCN
- HEAnet
- ja.net
- SURFnet

Germany
Italy
Spain
Ireland
UK
Netherlands
African Implementation Partner

- UbuntuNet identified as the African Implementation Partner:
  - Coordinate and involve the NRENs
  - Design the network
  - Operate the network
  - At end of project, take ownership of all project assets
Funding

• Budget of 14.8 M Euro
  – 80% EUC
  – 20% from AfricaConnect beneficiary NRENs
    (This is a huge challenge for many of the NRENs)

• Beneficiaries must be UbuntuNet Alliance member NRENs
  – extends to WACREN for capacity building activities
  – South Africa excluded (too wealthy)

• South Africa invited to contribute
  – Likely to happen
Project Phases

• 4 year project

• Phase 1: Planning and Procurement
  – up to 12 months
  – NREN contributions already in hand
  – Contribution from Carnegie Corporation of NY.

• Phase 2: Operations
  – 3 years
  – UbuntuNet will operate
  – DANTE manages finances
Phase 1: Planning and Procurement

- DANTE is sole procurement contractor
  - “Negotiated Procedure” approved by EU
- Design of a cost-effective network based on offers received
- Confirmation of service requirements and subscriptions with UbuntuNet Alliance
  Development of cost-sharing model and sustainability plan
- Contracts awarded to suppliers
Phase 2: Operations component

• Implement and test network prior to operational service
• Set up network operations management
  – Network Operations Centre
• Set up user support
  – to user communities
  – uptake of ICT applications by the research and education community
Phase 2: Support component

• Training and support activities
  – capacity building for the consolidation of the NRENs
  – training local staff in the effective management, engineering and operations

• Promotion
  – of the use of the network to the end-users and to the international stakeholder community

• Increasing political dialogue to raise support
  – for a sustainable network
  – to cover more countries
Progress to date

• Feasibility study showed the UbuntuNet region was ready to benefit
• Contract between EU’s DG AidCO and DANTE signed
  – during IST-Africa 2011 (11 – 13 May, Gaborone)
  – DANTE and UbuntuNet Alliance have agreed all detailed work plans and the budget
• Phase 1 has started
  – ready to connect NRENs getting priority
The Future is Bright!

• Appreciation
  – IDRC; PHEA; FRENIA; OSISA; EUC

• “We know that we have it in ourselves as Africans, to change all this [the challenges we face]. We must assert our will to do so. We must say there is no obstacle big enough to stop us from bringing about an African renaissance.”
  – Nelson Mandela