



eGY-Africa Discussion Meeting
Monday, November 12th 16:30-17:30

“How to promote Cyber-infrastructure for Science in Africa”

Panel members

Charles Barton (MODERATOR)	Australian National Un.; eGY Intl Cmte	cebarton@gmail.com
Abebe Kibede	NC A&T University; Internet Society	abkebede@gmail.com
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Monique Petitdidier	France; EGEE	monique.petitdidier@cetp.ipsl.fr
Tim Fuller-Rowell	NOAA	Tim.Fuller-Rowell@noaa.gov
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Aim of the discussion

1. Inform people about the proposed *eGY-Africa* initiative
2. Seek opinions about the initiative
3. Develop the draft plan
4. Promote interest in the initiative and find people willing to participate.

Inspirational goal

The central goal is to help make African communities wealthier, safer, and more sustainable through full participation in the information revolution.

Participation in the information revolution is conditional on the existence of a cyber-infrastructure to connect people and machines to the world community and the vast resources of information and services that exist. This is particularly important for scientists and technologists who have the responsibility of producing and using information and knowledge to inform decision-makers and deliver societal benefits. Modern ICT (Information & Communications Technology) is marketed as a quickly implemented and low-cost way for poor communities to share on equal terms with rich ones the benefits of the information revolution. In practice, the digital divide is growing and denying poor countries access to those very benefits. The situation is particularly acute in Universities, where internet services are commonly poorer than in those provided (at high cost) through the private sector.

Self introductions and brief presentations by panel members

- Victor Chukwuma:* The inspirational goal
Charles Barton: eGY-Africa: improving cyber-infrastructure for science
Abebe Kibede: Network in Africa
Monique Petitdidier: Grid infrastructure for Africa
Les Cottrell: Internet performance in Africa?
Tim Fuller-Rowell: ... interested?

Survey of present conditions

Monique Petitdidier Report on progress of the survey and development of the questionnaire

Discussion to get audience feedback from particular countries/regions concerning

1. What infrastructure is there that successfully serves the needs of the scientific community, and on which we can build?
2. What infrastructure exists that does not currently serve the needs of the scientific community (e.g., Internet cafés vs. university facilities)
3. What are the main obstacles to getting better internet access for scientists? (e.g., lack of computers, internet access costs, inadequate backbones, ...)

What do scientists need most from the Internet?

Discussion to identify the biggest gaps:

- communication with national colleagues
- communication with international colleagues
- access to electronic literature
- participation in international events and projects
- participation in national events and projects
- data discovery
- data recovery from instrument arrays
- access to Virtual Observatories and similar data systems and services
- access to open access software
- access to teaching materials
- outreach – informing others
- marketing – promotion of facilities, opportunities, courses,

What can we do to help?

Discussion among the panel and audience, with special attention to questions such as:

1. Do we share and commit to the inspirational goal?
2. What assets (weapons) does the international scientific community have, and how can they be used to help secure a better cyber-infrastructure for science?
3. How shall we organize ourselves as a group in order to take the next steps
4. What steps next?
5. What support shall we request from IUGG's GIA program?
6. What website capabilities do we need?
7. Is it helpful to maintain an editable list of what is going on?
8. Identify key liaison persons for each country/region
9. Other key person to invite as participants.