

## In The Field is happening around you

Whether you have an R&E network in your country or not, you will still need to speak to your decision-makers. Whether your NREN is well developed or in a developing stage, you will still need to make a case for it. And once connected, whether you know it or not, there are great things happening out there in your country, in the field. It is precisely these great things that when captured and told can serve as valuable asset for NRENs when arguing their case and showcasing their successes.

The presentation will talk about the In The Field blog, a global collaboration that proves that R&E networks are made up of much more than fibre, pipes, routers and switches. It is a repository of the very spirit of the global R&E community and shares some of the most inspiring stories and achievements that our networks globally create and achieve.

The blog is global but can serve a local need. Does your Minister know that R&E networks operate nationally but connect globally? There are 125 dedicated networks across the world and, once connected, you are part of this vast community with an access to virtually unlimited knowledge and resources. Technical excellence is paired with trust, collaboration and innovation and supported by an ever-growing community.

There are researchers in Europe, in Africa, everywhere. They do their research in isolation or in groups. But they all bring a positive impact to development worldwide. And this is something for the NRENs to be proud of and not to be shy about taking credit for.

The blog can be used in several ways: start your conversation with a decision maker with a story from the blog – tell them about wonderful Dr Lydia Chabala from the University of Zambia, who with the help of the Zambian NREN is conducting advanced research in soil observation and whose results contribute to monitoring soil degradation and providing input to sustainable land management policies.

Or contribute to the blog with your own story and let the global community learn about your NREN and the things that are happening in your R&E environment. This may spark a discussion or a collaboration but will also certainly give your researchers and your NREN greater visibility and status in the global research arena. And if this is not what you are looking for, then why not to use the blog to enhance your marketing strategy within your region and amongst your users?

As a final call, the presentation will invite the NRENs and their communities to be active participants in the global R&E community regardless of the stage of development they are at. This is particularly important for the emerging African NRENs who are largely underrepresented in this global conversation –currently only 12 of the 220 stories in the blog relate to Africa. By engaging, participating and showcasing them in the blog as well as other media, we can jointly make a stronger case for NRENs, particularly those struggling to justify their existence. The more NRENs collectively talk about their contributions to global advances and successes, the sooner their existence will be considered as an essential and integral part of a strong state.

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