



TF-CSIRT Membership: Phase 2 Proposal

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1. Background

In 2012, TF-CSIRT underwent a re-chartering process to move the task force away from a traditional task force model, in order to establish it as an entity with defined membership and to bring the task force closer to the services associated with the security work within TERENA (TRANSITS and Trusted Introducer). This was driven by a paper written by the TF-CSIRT Secretary at the time (Kevin Meynell) supported by a small group of experts in the community¹. This process proved to be quite difficult and complex, and a revision was made to the terms of reference in 2013 to clarify certain processes that did not work effectively in the first re-chartering.

As part of this process it became clear that there is still a misalignment between Trusted Introducer as a service and TF-CSIRT as a membership organisation. Processes between TF-CSIRT and Trusted Introducer were not fully aligned (for example signing up members to mailing lists) and the membership types in TF-CSIRT compared to Trusted Introducer can cause confusion. TF-CSIRT has also identified more work it would like to as a group – including better support for new members and wider engagement of groups at meetings.

In short, whilst the re-chartering has established the concept of a TF-CSIRT membership, more work is needed on TF-CSIRT as a group and in relation to its services to make that membership effective. It is still not clear whether use of TI is a benefit of TF-CSIRT membership, or if TF-CSIRT membership is a benefit of TI.

If TF-CSIRT wishes to grow the concept of TF-CSIRT as a membership entity another issue to

¹ <http://www.terena.org/activities/tf-csirt/publications/restructuring.pdf>.

be addressed is its definition as a “task force” within TERENA and its core funding from GÉANT. In the original paper, these two issues were purposefully left unaddressed (although acknowledged). With the planning for GN4 now on going, it is time to address these points.

This paper aims to address the following questions:

- 1.1. Should TF-CSIRT continue to rely on GÉANT project funding and should this be evenly applied to all members?
- 1.2. Should work be undertaken to ensure that there is an appropriate contingency for the TF-CSIRT events outside of the GÉANT budget?
- 1.3. What increase should be applied to the TI fees in 2015 and should the approach to listed CERTS be changed?

2. Role of TERENA

TERENA performs several functions for the TF-CSIRT community. These are summarised in the table below. For both TRANSITS and Trusted Introducer external staff are clearly also involved but this table focuses on TERENA involvement.

Function	Description	Staff	Cost centre
TF-CSIRT Secretariat	Secretariat support for TF-CSIRT SC and TF-CSIRT community. Minutes of meetings, managing mailing lists, website information, supporting requests from the SC	Nicole Harris	GÉANT project
TF-CSIRT Event Management	Supporting arrangements for all TF-CSIRT meetings, three times a year.	Nicole Harris, Sigita Jurkynaite, Mirko Ampt	GÉANT project
TRANSITS	Organising TRANSITS courses, managing bookings, preparing materials, running events, co-ordinating trainers, support material upgrades.	Jim Buddin, Mirko Ampt	TRANSITS course fees
Trusted Introducer	Managing service procurement and service contract, billing membership fees	Nicole Harris, Wilma Overdevest	TI fees

3. Geographical Scope

The geographical scope of TF-CSIRT, Trusted Introducer and TRANSITS differs between the services. The TF-CSIRT Terms of Reference refers to “all recognised CSIRTs situated in Europe and neighbouring regions, as well as other organisations and individuals with a bona-fide

interest in computer security incident handling”; this is however linked to TI status, which is limited to Europe and surrounding countries. TRANSITS courses are run in Europe by TERENA, and TRANSITS I materials are licensed free of charge to TERENA members and with a fee to other parties. An MoU for promoting TRANSITS exists between TERENA and FIRST.

Recent discussions within the TF-CSIRT Steering Committee have indicated a desire to extend the capabilities of Trusted Introducer (and therefore by inference TF-CSIRT) internationally. This discussion was started in response to a request from an international organization with an interest in being listed and then accredited by Trusted Introducer. The Steering Committee noted that any such move would need to be sensitive to the role of FIRST, and support the idea of TF-CSIRT as a European-focused organisation that is open to external interest. This was compared to international participation at US events such as the Internet2 Member meetings.

Expanding TF-CSIRT internationally would not be unusual for TERENA; there is existing experience in running internationally focused groups such as REFEDS, GLIF and NRENum.net. This would suggest moving TF-CSIRT out of the GÉANT funding model and towards a more self-sustaining approach as shared with the other international groupings within TERENA.

The reprocurement of Trusted Introducer has introduced an allowance for this change in terms of contract wording and costs for certification and accreditation, but more work should be done on the implementation of this approach.

4. Sector Scope

As Trusted Introducer (and by correlation TF-CSIRT) has grown in success, the sector scope of the service has altered. Although Trusted Introducer had an initial focus on NREN and NREN-related CERTS, this element of the service has plateaued; interest from government, military and commercial CERTS has continued to grow. This is unsurprising due to the finite size of the NREN community vs the commercial sector.

For Trusted Introducer to be successful it needs to work as a community that is not simply inward looking to the NREN sector – as it has proven through its successful outreach to other sectors. Awareness of security incidents and best practise comes from a variety of different sectors and flow of trusted information between sectors is vital for service delivery. However, this extended model raises two interesting question points:

- a. Is it acceptable to use GÉANT funding to fully support TF-CSIRT beyond NREN members?
- b. What tax implications are there for TERENA when offering services beyond its membership constituency?

Further discussion on these issues will be needed in the construct of the GÉANT Association and with the TF-CSIRT membership.

5. Re-procurement of Trusted Introducer

Trusted Introducer has been re-procured in 2014, with the new service starting in September 2014. Whilst the points raised in this paper will not impact on this tender, it will be necessary

to have a view on future service models (specifically financial models) in place to help revise Trusted Introducer fees in 2015.

In the future, TERENA and the TF-CSIRT community may wish to consider whether undertaking a procurement exercise for the Trusted Introducer service is a necessary or helpful process given the limited interest in tender exercises. A different model may be to license the name of "TF-CSIRT Trusted Introducer" rather than carrying out a procurement process. Further investigation in to this model would be needed to see if it is a viable option.

6. TRANSITS

Whilst TRANSITS oversight now has a clear link to the TF-CSIRT Steering Committee, operation of TRANSITS is still functionally separate from the other two core CSIRT roles in TERENA (TF-CSIRT meetings and Trusted Introducer liaison). TRANSITS funding is strictly separated as the courses operate on a non-profit basis (partly due to the ENISA subsidy) and all funds received are channelled back in to improving the quality of courses and course material.

As with all parts of the TF-CSIRT family, TRANSITS is evolving and looking at new models. Requests to run TRANSITS in ways that do not necessarily fit with the current structure are common, and TRANSITS has introduced a new way of asking for course material upgrades through mini calls.

7. Membership Incentives and Meeting Attendance

In 2014, the TF-CSIRT Secretary carried out a review of attendance at meetings in comparison to Trusted Introducer status. Unsurprisingly, the highest numbers of regular attendees were Accredited NREN CERTS. Commercial and other CERTS seem to prefer a model of once-per-year attendance and listed CERTS had an erratic attendance record. The TF-CSIRT Steering Committee has discussed these issues and is looking at making certain changes to:

- Make new attendees more welcome at meetings and help integrate in to the community.
- Incentivise Listed CERTS to attend meetings.
- Link up TF-CSIRT mailing list and Trusted Introducer mailing lists.
- Monitor attendance of Accredited CERTS at meetings.

It is worth noting that TERENA event management systems are not robust or flexible enough to allow for the complexity of payment models suggested in section 8 below. As event management systems are not fed from a database of team information it is difficult to carry out event attendance tracking to the level required – a CRM may solve this but it is too far in the future for immediate needs of TF-CSIRT so it has been proposed that event management should be moved to the Trusted Introducer service. Eventr is not currently suitable for CSIRT users, so a new approach to event management for all TF-CSIRT related events is needed. It is recommended that event management be moved to the Trusted Introducer service, but this will come with an associated cost.

Members of the TF-CSIRT Steering Committee have discussed issues of incentivising Listed CERTS within the community to attend meetings. It was felt that the approach of providing

essentially free access to Trusted Introducer for Listed CERTS (subsidised by Accredited fees) needed to be reviewed. A small fee for Trusted Introducer in return for free event 'tickets' may provide a better engagement model, but this would need to be socialised with the community.

8. Funding for Meetings

TF-CSIRT meetings have now grown to a significant size – with a typical attendance of around 80 - 90 for meetings (150+ at the January meetings). Charging for the January meetings is accepted as an appropriate approach, whilst the May and September meetings tend to be funded by local hosts.

Whilst TF-CSIRT has been successful in attracting hosts for the meetings, the economic climate is making this more complex. Hosts are often unable to fund all aspects of the meeting, and issues arise with ad-hoc requests for meeting rooms or transport arrangements for the events. The size of the meetings means they incur more costs than a typical TERENA Task Force event – as shown in the detailed analysis in section 8.

The cost of PDO support for TF-CSIRT and a small amount of funding for additional costs is provided by the GÉANT project; however the time allocation and support fund available are more appropriate for the traditional Task Force size and do not fit well with the demands and requirements of TF-CSIRT, which typically costs around twice the amount of other task forces to run. It should be noted that the TF-CSIRT constituency is much wider than NRENs in Europe, who are the intended beneficiaries of GÉANT project funding.

9. Trusted Introducer Fees

At the moment Trusted Introducer charges no fees for listing and set fees for accreditation and certification. TERENA applies a small surcharge to the accreditation fee to cover book-keeping and service management at TERENA; certification fees are at cost.

Over the period of the previous contract, the following income and expenditure was made:

Income	333,960.00
Other costs (design costs + gandi costs)	-1,716.44
Presecure	-275,825.00
Personnel costs and overhead	<u>-55,849.94</u>
	568.62

Please note these are as shown on 06/10/2014 and small minor charges may not have been taken into account.

Under the previous contract, Presecure charged TERENA 70 euros per month per accredited CERT. CERTs in turn paid TERENA approximately 88 per month per accredited CERT.

From September 2104, Presecure will charge TERENA 76 euros per month per accredited CERT. No increase in the fee has been introduced. From September 2015, this will increase to 79 euros per month to cater for additional services being added to the TI portfolio.

To maintain the status quo, the accredited CERT fee would need to rise to 1164 euros per annum (from 1056 euros per annum).

10. Recommendation

At the start of this paper, three questions were proposed. Based on the analysis included, the following recommendations are made:

- 10.1. Should TF-CSIRT continue to rely on GÉANT project funding and should this be evenly applied to all members?

TF-CSIRT will continue to be funded as normal under the GN4 project and it is recommended that this process be kept in place as long as it is viable. It is however necessary to ensure the members are aware of this reliance and that with any project funding, long-term sustainability could be an issue.

- 10.2. Should work be undertaken to ensure that there is an appropriate contingency for the TF-CSIRT events outside of the GÉANT budget?

It is recommended that an increase in Trusted Introducer fees takes account of increasing the reserve held at TERENA in order to allow for any unusual issues or requests that might impact on our ability to run any given TF-CSIRT event.

- 10.3. What increase should be applied to the TI fees in 2015 and should the approach to listed CERTS be changed?

It is recommended that members first be consulted on whether they wish to maintain the status quo in terms to approaches to charges within the TF-CSIRT environment, or whether they wish to consider an alternative model (e.g. some charges for listing, some event fees etc.). It is recommended that the accreditation fee should be increased to 1200 euros per annum in this model, which is a significant increase. Charges would be introduced from September 2015.

It is also recommended that some alternative models should be mocked-up to present to members alongside this option asap. Possible options include event fees for listed certs, a small charge for listing, or levying a surcharge on certification.