

REFEDS Year End Report 2014

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Abstract:

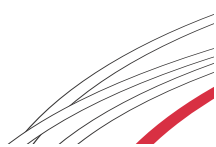
This report provides a short overview of the work carried out by REFEDS during 2014 as well as the costs incurred in the same period. The workplan for 2014, as approved by the REFEDS SC, can be found online at:

<https://refeds.org/work/>

This report is mainly aimed at the REFEDS Steering Committee, REFEDS Sponsors, that provide funding and/or manpower to carry out the REFEDS workplan.

Table of Contents

1. Sponsorship	2
2. Activities	2
REF14-1: REFEDS Coordination and Management	3
REF14-1: Outputs.....	4
REF14-2: Assurance and Policy	5
REF14-2: Outputs.....	5
REF14-3: Standards and Specifications.....	7
REF14-3: Outputs.....	8
REF14-4: Services	9
REF14-5: Specialist Working Groups	10
3. Finances	10



1. Sponsorship

The following organisations were REFEDS Sponsors during the reporting period:

GARR, ISOC, InCommon, NORDUNET, SWITCH, CANARIE, SURFNET, RENATER and AAF. In total these organisations contributed **85.000 EUR** in sponsorship; see chap 3 for a detailed overview of the expenditures.

For 2015, REFEDS has prepared a revised sponsorship process that introduces formal levels of sponsorship and makes the benefits of each level clearer to the sponsoring organisation. A sponsorship letter will also be put in place with each sponsoring organisation.

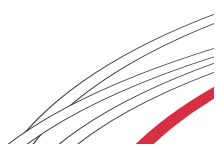
2. Activities

REFEDS work is organised in sets of work items via an annual workplan. Each year REFEDS group is solicited to provide inputs for possible work areas. A short list is created with the expected budget associated with each work area. The REFEDS Steering Committee is then asked to approve the list and to define initial priorities (accordingly with specific wishes from the sponsors if any) should the budget not be sufficient to fund everything.

Each work package covers area of work that are in line with REFEDS goals of:

- Representing the needs for the research and education community in the wider space of access and identity management;
- Addressing inter-federation issues and trying to offer some solutions for these;
- Engaging more actively with other communities interested in identity federations;
- Enhancing international collaborations among participants by sharing best practices and possibly contributing to the creation and/or adoption of new standards.

The 2014 workplan is formally published on the REFEDS website (<https://refeds.org/docs/refedsworkplan2014.pdf>) and supported by further information on the REFEDS wiki (<https://wiki.refeds.org/display/WOR/REFEDS+Planning%3A+2014>). A short summary of the progress with each work package is provided below.



REF14-1: REFEDS Coordination and Management

2014 Core Aim: To progress REFEDS position as an important player within the access and identity management space internationally.

In 2014, REFEDS coordinated the following meetings:

- REFEDS Full Meeting in conjunction with TNC2014 (<https://refeds.org/meetings/may14/>).
- REFEDS Fall Meeting on Sunday 26th October 2014 in Indianapolis, USA in conjunction with Internet2 Technology Exchange (<https://refeds.org/meetings/oct14/>).
- REFEDS BOF on Tuesday 2nd December 2014 in Vienna, Austria in conjunction with the European Workshop on Trust and Identity (<https://refeds.org/meetings/nov14/>).

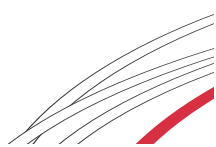
In addition, the REFEDS coordinators attended and presented at the following events (not all them sponsored by REFEDS):

- AAI Workshop, 2nd March 2014 – Brussels.
- FIM4R BoF in conjunction with TNC2014.
- EUNIS Conference, Umea, Sweden, 10th – 12th June 2014.
- Federation Training, Sofia, Bulgaria, 18th – 20th June 2014.
- AAI Training for GÉANT Staff, 29th and 30th July 2014.
- ISOC meetings, Utrecht, the Netherlands, 2nd – 4th September 2014.
- RDA conference, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 22nd – 24th September 2014.

A focus for REFEDS Coordination and management within 2014 was to better align the work carried out within REFEDS with the GN3+ and future GN4 projects coordinated by GÉANT. A successful outcome of this has been the creation of a new harmonisation task within the GN4 project that seeks to use project funding to help disseminate and encourage take-up of REFEDS work items. This work will also be managed by one of the REFEDS Coordinators.

The REFEDS Participant Agreement was updated to reflect the new working group policy (https://refeds.org/about/about_agreement.html) and to support the development of standard REFEDS Working Group text for RFCs submitted to the Independent Stream. A test-case has now been submitted to the RFC process using this boiler-plate.

The REFEDS Coordinators continue to support the REFEDS website (refeds.org), wiki ([refeds.terena.org / wiki.refeds.org](http://refeds.terena.org/wiki.refeds.org)), blog (blog.refeds.org) and various mailing lists.



A complete migration of the REFEDS wiki was completed in 2014 providing a much more user-friendly wiki and better management of REFEDS information. Similar work is planned for the REFEDS website in 2015.

REFEDS put in place two contracts with external parties to support its work in 2014:

- A development contract with Yaco Sistemas to support SAML Metadata Editor developments for PEER.
- A contract with Ian Young to support the further development of the Metadata Query Protocol RFC and pilot work and The Entity Category SAML Entity Metadata Attribute Types RFC.

These work items are described in more detail in the relevant sections below.

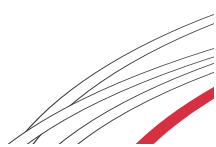
At the May 2014 meeting, the REFEDS Coordinators were asked to create an annual survey for REFEDS / Federation Operators to replace the wiki pages that were not regularly updated by participants. This has now been implemented using the software for the TERENA / GÉANT Compendium and will be launched in 2015. Further information is available on the REFEDS wiki:

<https://wiki.refeds.org/display/OUT/New+Survey>.

This chapter reports in more details the work carried out in each of the activities in the 2014 workplan.

REF14-1: Outputs

- 2014 Workplan: <https://refeds.org/docs/refedsworkplan2014.pdf>.
- Meeting presentations and minutes: https://refeds.org/work/work_meetings.html.
- New wiki: <https://wiki.refeds.org>.
- 2 new contractual arrangements (Ian Young and YACO Sistemas).
- New Participant Agreement: https://refeds.org/about/about_agreement.html.
- New Sponsorship Agreement: https://refeds.org/about/about_fund.html.
- Blog posts: <https://blog.refeds.org>.



REF14-2: Assurance and Policy

2014 Core Aim: To create an accepted LOA1 for research and education federations and start work towards LOA2. To review monitoring tools for SAML federations and future work plans for this area.

This workpackage built on work defined in 2013 to create a set of Federation Operator Practice Statements for REFEDS. These are proposed as defining documentation for a base level of assurance that all federations should reach in order to be considered a formal Research and Education Federation.

At the beginning of the year it was agreed that the Metadata Registration Practice Statement and Key Management Practice Statement would be worked on in 2014. The Metadata Registration Practice Statement is now out for consultation and will be reviewed in 2015:

<https://wiki.refeds.org/display/CON/Metadata+Registration+Practice+Statement+Consultation>. At the request of the community, this consultation period was extended and the work on these templates has been slowed down in general to give Federation Operators more time to consider and assess the changes.

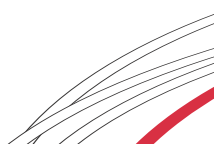
A test-case Key Management Practice Statement has been developed for the REEP service: <https://wiki.refeds.org/display/SER/REEP+Policy>. Consultation on a fully developed statement for the REFEDS Community has been delayed until 2015 at the request of the community and to introduce changes in key-rollover and growing use of HSM infrastructure by federations.

As part of joint work between eduGAIN and REFEDS, the concept of a Metadata Publication Statement is being addressed. Due to the different ways in which Federation Operators are managing upstream and downstream metadata there is clearly a need to publish information regarding individual practice. It is currently undecided whether this should be integrated into the Metadata Registration Practice Statement or maintained separately. This will be further addressed in 2015.

The REFEDS position on assurance has been broadly to work with other groups to meet well-defined needs rather than develop a specific framework for the R&E community. As such, REFEDS has been working closely with the SIRTFI group in 2014. SIRTFI examines assurance from the position of an assurance to meet the use-case of a defined community rather than the traditional

REF14-2: Outputs

- Metadata Registration Practice Statement draft:



<https://wiki.refeds.org/display/CON/Metadata+Registration+Practice+Statement+Consultation>.

- Key Management Practice Statement for REEP:
<https://wiki.refeds.org/display/SER/REEP+Policy>.



REF14-3: Standards and Specifications

2014 Core Aim: To use REFEDS as home for specifications and standards relating to identity federations using robust and tested mechanisms.

REFEDS is taking more of a significant role as a body that works on standards and specifications for the community. It has been agreed that where appropriate, this work should be developed as much as possible via IETF RFC mechanisms. Work in 2014 has focused on this approach.

Ian Young has been responsible for shepherding the Metadata Query Protocol through the REFEDS consultation process and through to submission as an RFC:

<http://tools.ietf.org/html/draft-young-md-query-02>. This work has not only developed a core protocol for use by Federation Operators whilst managing complex metadata sets, but has also acted as a test case for RFCs submitted via REFEDS. Ian has managed the process through several initial Internet Draft submissions. The document has now been submitted for full RFC review and this has resulted in several useful comments and feedback from the reviewers. It has proved that using the RFC process offers value to the REFEDS Community.

REFEDS has advanced its work on Entity Categories in 2014. The Entity Category SAML Entity Metadata Attribute Types has also been submitted to the RFC process by Ian Young, moving from the Mace Dir initial developments:

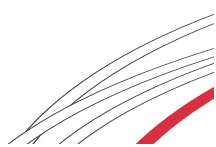
<https://tools.ietf.org/html/draft-young-entity-category-02>.

REFEDS has defined two Entity Categories in 2014 – The Research and Scholarship Entity Category (<https://refeds.org/category/research-and-scholarship/>) and the Hide from Discovery Entity Category (<https://refeds.org/category/hide-from-discovery/>). The Research and Scholarship category went through two separate definition iterations highlighting the complexity of the work and the problems of supporting attribute release in our community.

Further entity category recommendations have been made and taken to initial definition in 2014, including discussions around affiliation and library services as entity tags. These will be pushed forward to definition in 2015 if there is enough appetite in the community for this work. In a blog post in October 2014, REFEDS further discussed the need for more conversations around metadata tagging to support the differentiation of entity types in interederation feeds:

<https://blog.refeds.org/a/201>.

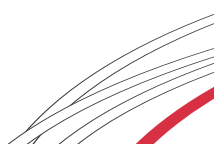
In 2013, REFEDS was invited to take ownership of the SCHAC schema and to manage the process for updating the schema, resolving outstanding issues and putting in place a permanent editorial board. As this work was initiated outside of REFEDS,



TERENA agreed to separately fund some initial work to bring SCHAC back up to a level where it could be effectively maintained. This work was undertaken by Heather Flanagan by contract with TERENA and so is not a formal part of the 2014 REFEDS workplan. It is expected that this work will make recommendations for further REFEDS work in 2015.

REF14-3: Outputs

- Metadata Query Protocol: <http://tools.ietf.org/html/draft-young-md-query-02>.
- Entity Category SAML Entity Metadata Attribute Types: <https://tools.ietf.org/html/draft-young-entity-category-02>.
- Research and Scholarship Entity Category: <https://refeds.org/category/research-and-scholarship/>).
- <https://refeds.org/category/hide-from-discovery/>).
- Entity Categories in development: <https://wiki.refeds.org/display/ENT/Entity-Categories+Home>.

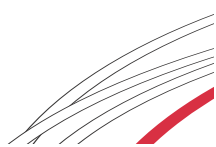


REF14-4: Services

2014 Core Aim: To operationalize REEP and continue to test metadata flow from public repositories. To improve MET as a management tool for federations.

Work item 4 focuses on tools being designed to support the flow and use of metadata within and across federations. Three main areas have been developed:

- **PEER.** PEER is a tool that allows for easy and simple registration of entity metadata in a central source (<https://github.com/Yaco-Sistemas/peer/>). In 2014, work focused on an update of SAMLmetaJS and the SAML Metadata Editor to all the tool to be used more easily.
- **REEP.** REEP is a service instance of PEER. In 2014, work has focused on operationalizing REEP by putting in place a full key-management process at Nordunet and establishing REEP on the Nordunet HSM. This allows entities to use REEP with confidence in the full trust chain. A Key Ceremony was held after the REFEDS meeting in Dublin (May 2014) where the REEP keys were checked and verified by invited members of the community.
- **MET.** The Metadata Explorer Tool is designed to give federations a quick overview of the metadata in existing federations. The tool has been in operation on NORDUNET servers during 2014 – but a security incident in November 2014 has led to the re-evaluation of the service. Further thought will be given to the tool and its future in 2015 as part of the Federation Lab worked planned.



REF14-5: Specialist Working Groups

REFEDS allows for Specialist Working Groups to be set up under its banner. These Working Groups do not receive funding but are designed to be talking shops for specific issues or operational areas. Working Groups may propose work items for funding under the core REFEDS workplan at certain points. REFEDS supports the group by providing wiki space and mailing lists, but otherwise the groups are designed to be self-sustaining through community interest.

REFEDS currently supports the following Working Groups:

- FOG - Federation Operators Group (closed):
<https://wiki.refeds.org/display/GROUPS/FOG>.
- MARI - managing attribute release in interfederation use-cases (open):
<https://wiki.refeds.org/display/GROUPS/MARI>.
- OIDC(re) - OpenID Connect for Research and Education (open):
<https://wiki.refeds.org/display/GROUPS/OIDC%28re%29>.

REFEDS also provides support to the following groups, whilst not formally part of the REFEDS Workplan:

- SIRTFI - Security Incident Response Trust Framework for Federated Identity (open): <https://wiki.refeds.org/display/GROUPS/SIRTFI>.

3. Finances

A summary of the costs incurred by REFEDS in the period reported (January 2014 – December 2014) is given below.

Overview Budget Period 1st Jan 2014 31st Dec 2014	EUR	Comments
Left over budget from 2013	40000	
Contributions from Sponsors in 2014	85000	
TOT Budget available	125000	As per 1 st Jan 2014
Budget required for workplan 2014	120000	
Total Costs for REFEDS 2014	82055	
Left Over Budget Jan 2014	± 38000	As per 31st Dec 2014

Table 1: Budget Summary



Breakdown of Cost 2014	EUR	Comments
Contract with Ian Young	7700	REEP and Metadata Query Protocol
Yaco Costs	16000	REEP and SAML Metadata Editor
Personnel Costs (TERENA)	51000	
Travel Costs (TERENA)	7000	
TOTAL Costs	82055	

Table 2: Breakdown of the costs

