HEAnet
Strategic Plan
2023-2024

HEAnet
Ireland's National Education & Research Network

HEAnet is Ireland's National Education and Research Network.

We deliver high-speed internet connectivity and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) shared services to all levels of the Irish education sector. Over one million students, researchers and staff are relying on our national education network every day.

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Chairperson Foreword

On behalf of HEAnet, it is my pleasure to introduce the HEAnet Strategic Plan for 2023-24.

The HEAnet Strategic Plan was developed in collaboration with stakeholders and international peers to inform our strategic direction for 2020-2022. Given the positive impact on the education and research community and continued relevance, the strategy has been extended for a further two-year period.

HEAnet's Strategic Plan addresses five core areas of strategic focus: Connectivity, Security, Identity, Brokerage, and Research Engagement.

Now over twenty-five years since its incorporation, HEAnet has evolved as an essential shared service provider for the community.

HEAnet will seek to build on this success by further developing the strategic pillars that are the foundation of the services that we offer. This year, the Research Engagement pillar of the Strategic Plan has been recognised, with HEAnet securing funding under the National Action Plan for Open Research, in addition to assisting community funding awards under European Commission programmes relating to quantum communications infrastructure and researcher adoption of cloud services.

HEAnet continues to execute on strategic ambitions under the Security pillar as we expand our security advisory services and plan to launch a sectoral Security Operations Centre service from early 2023.

At HEAnet Group level, to leverage the collective strengths of HEAnet and EduCampus, my Co-Board members and colleagues have set up a Group Advisory Forum comprising of representatives of international peers, the Department of Education and Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. This forum was established to advise on strategic direction at Group and organisational level, with the objective of keeping the HEAnet Group at the cutting edge, enabling us to support stakeholders collaborate and compete on the global stage.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the executive teams and staff of both companies, past and present, who have brought the companies to where they are today. HEAnet is currently in the very capable hands of Ronan Byrne, CEO, who has considerable strategic ambitions for the company.

I am confident that our skilled and dedicated team at HEAnet will continue to drive the development of our services, with vision as well as strategic and operational effectiveness.

We look forward to implementing our strategy via continuous collaboration with our stakeholders and clients, providing quality shared services across all levels of Ireland's education and research community.

Professor Anne Scott
*Chairperson, Board of HEAnet,
and Professor Emerita,
University of Galway*

A Message from the CEO

The HEAnet Strategic Plan for 2023-24 sets out our vision to enable Ireland's digital ambition by creating common, repeatable and shareable solutions for education and research in Ireland.

In its twenty-five years since incorporation, HEAnet has responded to the ever-changing needs of our clients. We will continue to develop digital infrastructure and improve the quality of our services for our clients across the education and research sector.

In parallel to a widening client base, the services of the HEAnet portfolio has also expanded over the intervening twenty-five years.

Where once Connectivity was our core service, clients now look to HEAnet for Identity, Security, Brokerage and other ICT services.

We aim to build on our success to date and continue to empower the education and research sector. Collaboration remains key and HEAnet will continue to develop its infrastructure and enable greater digital transformation in consultation with its stakeholders and clients. HEAnet is a trusted shared service provider which enables it to harness the collective strengths of the community.

This plan sets out the direction for the next two years and identifies five strategic pillars which are critical to the successful delivery of our vision and build on our reputation as an exemplar shared services organisation.

I wish to thank our funders, stakeholders, and clients for their continued loyal support as we work with them to deliver on sectoral and national policy ambitions into the future.

Mr Ronan Byrne
Chief Executive Officer

About HEAnet

HEAnet is Ireland's National Education and Research Network. We deliver high speed internet connectivity and ICT shared services to all levels of the Irish education sector. Over one million students, researchers and staff rely on our national education network every day.

Building on our reputation as a collaborative partner and trusted provider, HEAnet delivers common, repeatable and shareable solutions for all levels of the Irish education system.

Our national and international reach provides Irish learners, educators and researchers with access to educational resources and research infrastructure located across Ireland, Europe, and the rest of the world.
In essence, HEAnet enables the Irish education and research community to both collaborate and compete on the world stage.

HEAnet is also very active in supporting the Irish research community, leading in emerging areas such as open science and the development of quantum communications infrastructure.

More generally at a research engagement level, HEAnet continually strives to meet the future networking capacity needs of research both at national and international level to enable greater research impact and innovation.

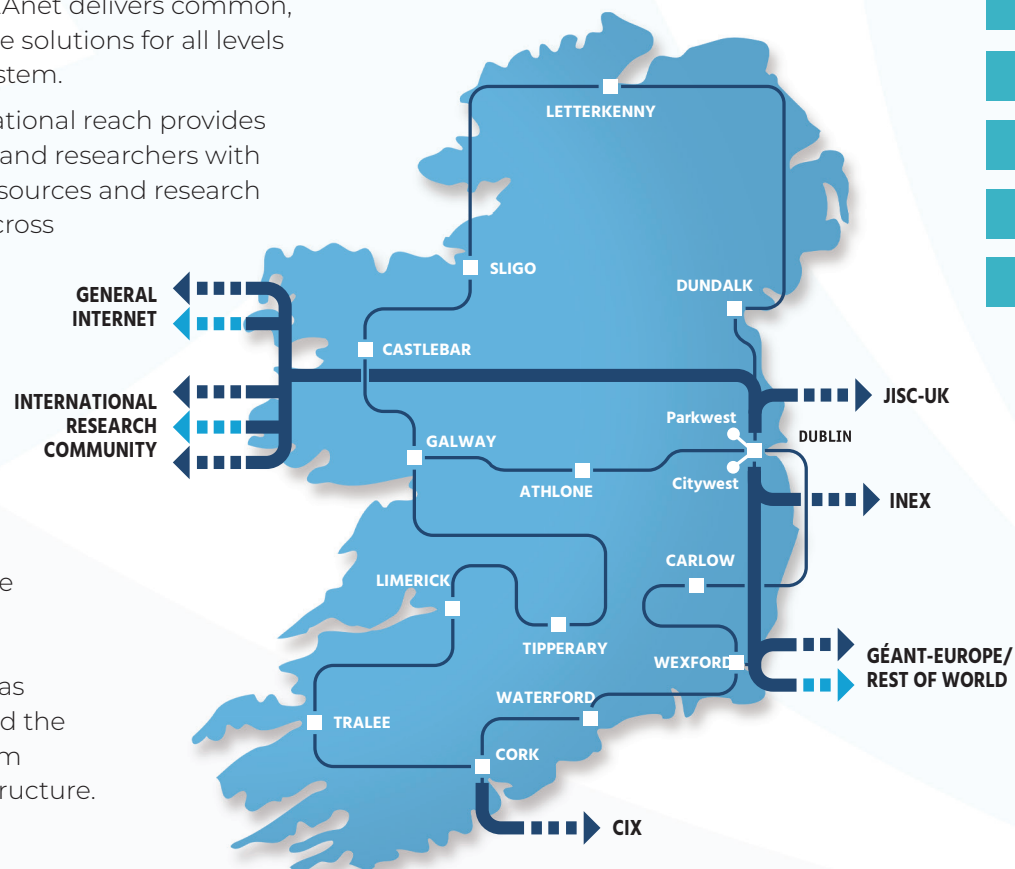Our portfolio has been developed around our core competencies:

- Connectivity
- Security
- Identity
- Brokerage
- Research Engagement

HEAnet Vision

Vision

Enabling Ireland's Digital Ambition

HEAnet Mission

Mission

Delivering common, repeatable and shareable solutions for all of education

HEAnet Values

Enjoy It

We enjoy being challenged, focused and engaged. Our commitment and our drive to achieving our goals ultimately leads us to our greatest success.

Positive Impact

One of the main objectives to why we will continue to support and contribute to Ireland's digital ambition and the education and research sector, is to make a positive impact for stakeholders, clients and society.

Future Focused

We are driven to lead in an impactful way and to strengthen our services so that we can continue to make a difference to the future of our community, our clients and our colleagues at HEAnet.

Empowered Decision Making

Taking leadership and making informed and supported decisions underpins all our values. Fostering an environment where we are all empowered to contribute, share and innovate, impacts the value of the daily lives of HEAnet's associates and of our community as one.

Equality & Fairness

We strive for fairness and equality for our community, our clients and within HEAnet. Our shared services exist to support fair and equal opportunity for access to education across Ireland. Internally, we work for inclusion for all in their contribution and access to an equal future.

We Share

Sharing is built into the foundation of HEAnet, it is who we are. We create, develop and then share these relevant opportunities with our clients and our joined community.

Strategic Pillars 2023-24

Connectivity

Security

Research Engagement

Brokerage

Identity

Connectivity

HEAnet provides connectivity with access to both commercial and academic resources through a variety of providers and peers. During 2022, HEAnet increased its total external connectivity to ensure that the HEAnet service can meet the anticipated growing traffic demands of our clients in 2023 and 2024.

This fast and effective, resilient connectivity will be vital for our education and research clients when accessing any part of the Internet.

HEAnet is committed to providing the appropriate connectivity to all HEAnet clients, across all education levels at the appropriate time. Ensuring our clients will have the appropriate connectivity, HEAnet will continue to monitor the utilisation of all client circuits and will also continue to implement appropriate upgrades as and when they are needed.

We have committed to investing in our IP network by commissioning the next generation of network equipment, and we will also focus on diversifying international connectivity. This will be achieved by working closely with GÉANT.[1]

With continued investment from the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, HEAnet will continue the expansion of eduroam. This transformative service will continue to provide staff, students and researchers secure and easy to use Wi-Fi access in thousands of locations in more than a hundred countries around the globe.

Security

HEAnet recognises the evolving threat landscape and the increase in cyber attacks across all education and research sectors.

The relentless battle against malware and cyber attacks is a recognised challenge, as the education and research sector has become the most targeted, compared to other business and public service sectors[1]. The increased incidence of high profile ransomware attacks has firmly set mitigation of cyber security attacks as the highest client priority. In response to these growing threats, HEAnet has taken a leadership role in supporting and guiding our clients on their security and associated risk challenges.

The ICT Security Advisory Service offering will include:

ICT Security and Risk Assessment

Security Policy Review and Development

Provision of Security and Perimeter Assessment including Penetration Testing

Security Awareness Training including Phishing Campaigns and Access to Security Competence

HEAnet will establish a sectoral Security Operations Centre (SOC) enabling consistent and comprehensive 24/7 detection and alerting capabilities across the education and research sector in Ireland. The development of a SOC will serve to reduce cyber risks and associated business interruptions.

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[1] *Check Point Research: Education sector experiencing more than double monthly attacks, compared to other industries.*

Identity

HEAnet's Identity service portfolio will evolve and expand over this strategy period.

EduVPN

Providing secure and privacy preserving access from public networks. Pending successful pilot, we plan to make this available to our clients.

Edugate

Edugate is HEAnet's federated single sign-on (SSO) service which deals with an average of 40 million authentications every year across our HEAnet network. There is continuing work on upgrading the underlying infrastructure supporting all Edugate services.

eduroam

eduroam is a Wi-Fi service that enables students, researchers and staff to securely access the internet at their home institution and also at other eduroam enabled locations.

We will continue to seek opportunities for further expansion of the eduroam service.

We will also support Educational Training Boards (ETBs) in adopting both Edugate and eduroam and support the Technological Universities in creating new and merging identity services.

Brokerage

HEAnet Brokerage, in partnership with the Department of Education and the Office of Government Procurement (OGP), will continue to assist clients in streamlining their ICT procurement process.

Our Brokerage team will endeavour to save our clients time, money and effort through:

- Running tender processes and creating framework agreements our HEAnet clients can use;

- Running aggregated procurements;

- Providing personal support to help clients through every step of the procurement process;

- Running mini tender competitions via the Office of Government Procurement;

- Collaborating with international partners such as GÉANT and other NRENs to share knowledge and run aggregated procurements;

- Providing advice and guidance to our clients.

All of these activities deliver significant savings in time, effort and money to the Irish education and research sector.

HEAnet will continue to show leadership in this field and collaborate with our counterparts throughout the EU.

Research Engagement

A key strategic goal for HEAnet is to develop a deeper engagement with the Irish research community, by collaborating with our research client base. We aim to further support the development of research infrastructures, foster collaborations and assist in accessing Irish and EU funding opportunities.

We will continue to raise awareness of HEAnet services with researchers and support them in leveraging funding and collaborating on topics of mutual interest.

HEAnet will contribute to the development of Open Science in Ireland by facilitating access to research opportunities presented by NORF[1] and EOSC Association[2] initiatives. HEAnet will also play a key supportive role to identify national contributions to the overarching EOSC vision.

In collaboration with our clients, we will conduct a pilot for shared storage for active research data, with the goal of defining a sustainable production service of national scale. HEAnet is a member of the Ireland EuroQCI[3] consortium and will continue to support proposals from researchers to gain EU funding for investment in quantum communications in Ireland.

We will be a key stakeholder in the EuroHPC JU[4] which is a joint initiative between the EU, European countries, and private partners to develop a World Class Supercomputing Ecosystem in Europe, by providing diverse 100 Gbit/s connectivity between the Irish EuroHPC supercomputer and the GÉANT network.

We will take a leadership role in RESIN[5] to bring together research IT, librarians, record data management and research support staff to share information and collaborate on topics including emerging researcher requirements, best practice development and training.

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[1] *The National Open Research Forum (NORF) was established in 2017 to drive the Irish agenda for open research.*

[2] *European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) is a high performing European Research and Innovative eco-system where researchers can publish, find and re-use data, tools and services, enabling them to better conduct their work.*

[3] *European Quantum Communication Infrastructure.*
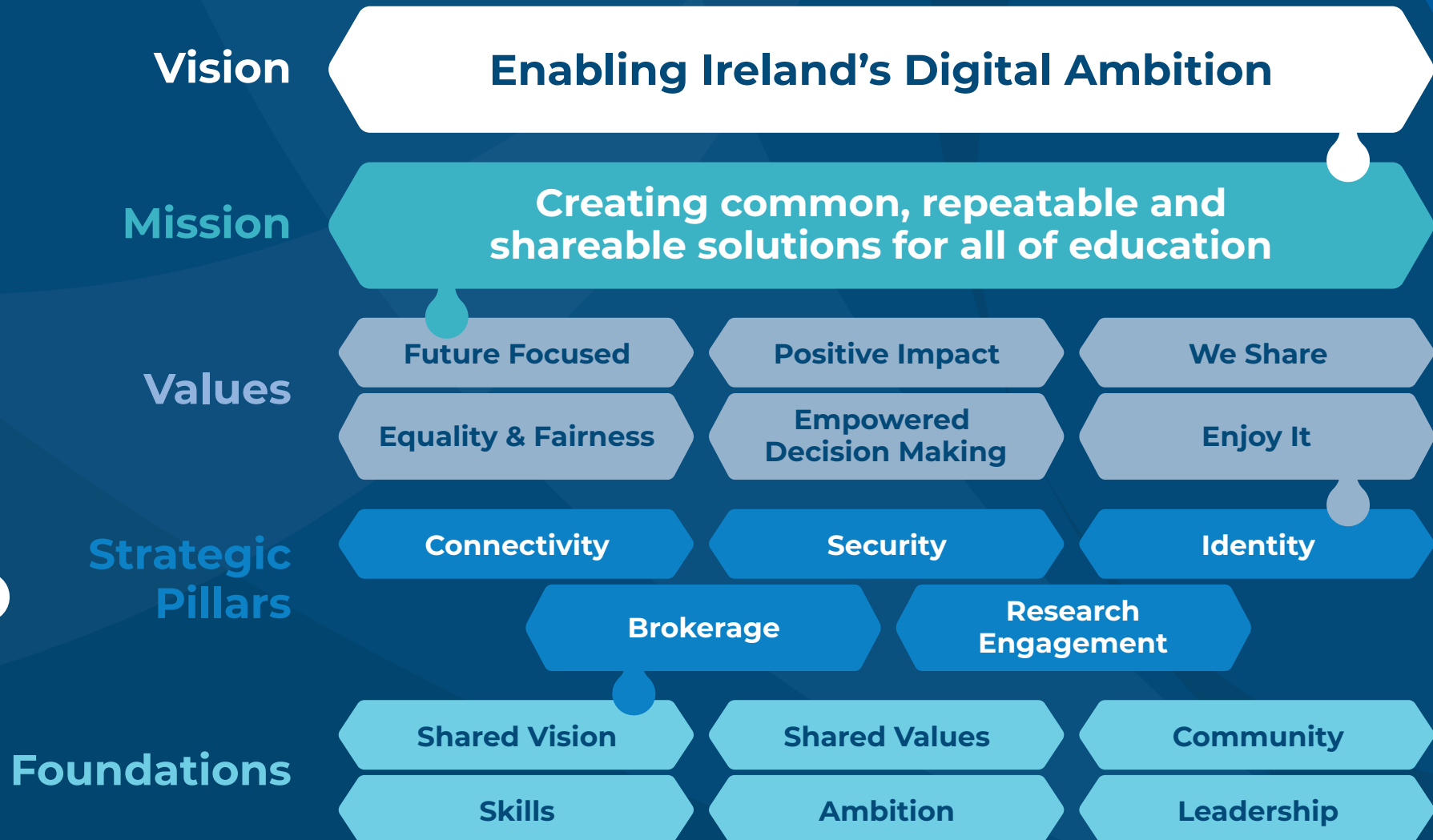
[4] *Euro HPC Joint Undertaking.*

[5] *National Research Service and Infrastructure Forum (RESIN).*

Our Foundations

Shared Values

Skills

Shared Vision

Community

Leadership

Ambition

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HEAnet Strategy

Vision
Enabling Ireland's Digital Ambition

Mission
Creating common, repeatable and shareable solutions for all of education

Values

Future Focused	Positive Impact	We Share
Equality & Fairness	Empowered Decision Making	Enjoy It

Strategic Pillars

Connectivity	Security	Identity
	Brokerage	Research Engagement

Foundations

Shared Vision	Shared Values	Community
Skills	Ambition	Leadership

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Stay connected with HEAnet

For any queries or to request further information, please email:
info@heanet.ie

www.heanet.ie

facebook.com/heanetclg

twitter.com/heanet

instagram.com/heanet_clg

linkedin.com/company/heanet-limited

HEAnet CLG

3rd Floor
North Dock Two
93/94 North Wall Quay
Dublin D01 V8Y6
Ireland

Tel: 01 660 9040
Fax: 01 660 3666
Email: info@heanet.ie

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Ireland's National Education & Research Network