






the independent networks cooperative association

Annual Review 2010-11

| Mission | Members | Activities | Big Society Broadband | Member Services | Future Activities |
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| <p><i>INCA's mission: bringing together organisations in the public, private and community sectors building next generation broadband networks</i></p> | <p>257 subscribers 96 voluntary & community Special Interest Group members 19 full members</p> | <p>Policy Projects Publications Communications</p>  |  <p>Partnership Knowledge Base Supporting Local Projects</p> | <p>Policy & Regulation Quality Marque Open Access Platform Promoting the sector</p> | <p>Member Services Public Policy Wider Engagement on Next Gen broadband issues</p>  |

Mission

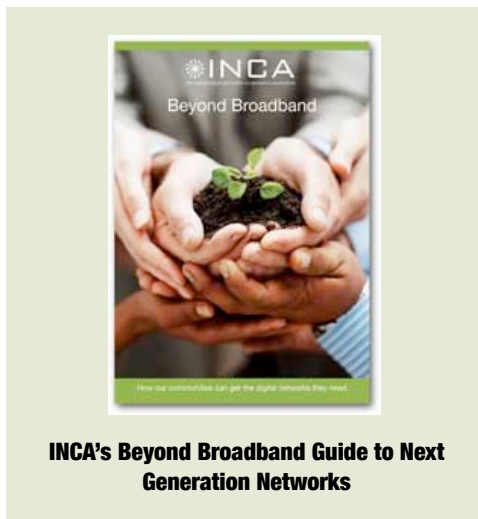
The members of the Independent Networks Cooperative Association (INCA) are supporting, planning, building and operating sustainable, independent and interconnected networks that advance the economic and social development of the communities they serve and permit the provision of applications and services through open competition, innovation and diversity. They are working together to create cohesive interconnected next generation networks.

Since its launch in 2010 INCA has established itself as an important player on the UK broadband stage. Working on behalf of its members and supporters it has made representations to government, developed projects of mutual benefit and established a media presence and voice for those working to build a truly 'next generation' broadband Britain.

Members

INCA's membership encompasses a wide range of organisations in the private, public and community sectors.

- 257 people subscribe to INCA's lists
- 96 groups belong to the Voluntary & Community sector special interest group



- 19 organisations are full members paying the annual subscription

Activities

INCA was set up at the beginning of 2010 with a £150,000 grant from the Department of Business Innovation and Skills.

The funding enabled the organisation to get established and supported a work programme including open access platform development, policy and regulation, the Next Gen events programme and the publication of 'Beyond

Broadband', a popular and effective guide to next generation broadband issues. Beyond Broadband has been widely read by government and local officials, community organisations and businesses involved in the next gen space.

In 2011 INCA's activities fall broadly into two categories: the Big Society Broadband Project; Membership and Service development, policy & regulation

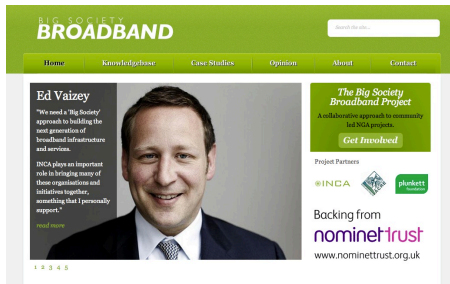
Big Society Broadband Project

In late 2010 INCA was successful in obtaining a grant from the Nominet Trust to launch the 'Big Society Broadband Project' in partnership with the Plunkett Foundation and ACRE, two organisations with tremendous expertise in rural development.

The project aims to:

- Create innovative models that can scale & replicate
- Establish sustainable partnerships for next generation broadband
- Promote social & digital inclusion

The first phase of the Project involved creating an online knowledge based developed from the core text of the Beyond Broadband guide. We commissioned expert contributions and a series of case studies, aiming to provide a valuable resource to engage project promoters.



The second phase is to support local schemes, working with project partners. This has proved more challenging given the evolution of national policy and funding through Broadband Delivery UK. BDUK's approach favours gap-funded, county-wide procurements, drawn from a proposed national framework of suppliers and taking BT's FTTC roll-out as its baseline.

In tandem with the major procurement exercise the Government has announced the creation of a £20m Community Broadband Fund, to be launched in November, offering funding opportunities for community-based projects in the final 10% not covered by the main county procurements.

The Big Society Broadband Project partners are developing information resources, community broadband models, a quality marque for local schemes and examples of different funding mechanisms that can all help to create sustainable projects.

The third element of the project, Digital Inclusion, has started through developing links with Race Online and Citizens. Local community broadband schemes usually place a strong emphasis on digital inclusion, an approach that INCA encourages.

Member Services

Policy & Regulation

The biggest policy challenge confronting INCA members in the course of 2011 has been the development of BDUK and its policies for rolling out basic 2mbps broadband and next generation broadband to the 'final third' of the population. The Government has made a major and welcome funding commitment of £530m, though far more funding needs to be found to provide fully future-proofed next generation broadband throughout the UK.

Significant concerns have been expressed about how level the playing field is for the non-incumbent suppliers, the inherent approach to technology and the likelihood that innovative financing and community engagement approaches will be by-passed in standardised, gap-funding, county procurements.

In 2011 INCA has held two workshops to discuss the evolution of the national approach in February and July. Following the July workshop we made representations to Government on behalf of smaller, innovative providers (particularly those rolling out FTTH solutions) who are likely to be

excluded from the supplier framework, except as part of a larger supply chain. We have expressed strong concerns about lack of access to existing passive infrastructure and these have been echoed by Jeremy Hunt, the Secretary of State.

Some local authorities working on next generation broadband projects (both urban and rural) are taking a broader economic development view of the issue. They understand that the national funding available, even when matched by local funding and private sector contributions, falls well short of the resources necessary to create the sort of next generation digital networks that citizens, businesses and the public sector will need in the future. Unfortunately current BDUK guidance and the gap-funding approach leaves little room for manoeuvre by those taking a wider view. We are also concerned that local community projects seeking to address their own broadband challenges, might end up reducing the funding pot available to their counties, which would be a perverse outcome.

INCA and its members are committed to working with the government and local authorities to address these concerns. The UK has an opportunity to harness a wealth of expertise in the private, public and community sectors that together can bring about the type of next generation networks that will make us world leaders.

Projects

The Big Society Broadband Project has provided INCA with the bulk of its funding and consequently consumed most of INCA's attention over the course of 2011.

Two other projects, led by INCA members, are underway and could have a significant impact on the development of broadband in the UK.

Quality Cloud Systems

Quality Cloud Systems is an INCA project to develop a 'Quality Marque' for local schemes led by Daniel Heery of Alston Cybermoor, with support from INCA board members and others. By developing the Quality Marque, promoters of broadband projects, whether from the public, private or community sectors will have a set of standards against which their schemes can be developed, commissioned and/or funded. The project has been supported financially by the Technology Strategy Board and will be launched

formally at the TSB Conference 'Collaboration Nation' in October 2011.

Open Access Platform

Developing 'open access platforms' for local projects is an important objective. INCA members Magdalene and Net Admin Systems, working with Fluid Data are developing an Open Access platform enabling third party service providers to connect with users of local networks. This overcomes one of the challenges in developing of next generation broadband networks – i.e. that their customers should have a choice of service providers where possible.

Promotion

Since the last AGM INCA has run two events for members, in February 2011 and July 2011. The first event attracted 30 people, the second more than 60.

INCA also participates and sponsors the 'Next Gen' events programme of roadshows and the two-day annual conference, this year scheduled for November in Bristol.

INCA participated in the Plunkett AGM and spoke at ACRE's conference for development workers. INCA has also spoken at numerous national and regional conferences.

Media & Communications

INCA has established its name in the media covering broadband issues. We have been invited to comment on both national TV and radio, and in the online and print media on broadband issues.

Future Activities

INCA's members and board determine the future activities and priorities of the organisation. Key issues for the coming year include:

- Developing new projects and services of value to INCA's members and supporters.
- Engaging with the government and regulator.
- Promoting the inclusive, Big Society Broadband, approach to next generation networks - in both rural and urban areas.
- Engaging with a wider audience to promote the value of next generation broadband and the impact that new services it facilitates will have on our lives.