

Taking a Step Back to Move Forward...

The LFN Board has spoken and the CNTT/OPNFV Meld work has started in earnest. Targeted for completion in January 2021 (seems like in just a blink of an eye), the initial kickoff meeting of the Oversight Committee (OC) and several other committees supporting this effort are off to a great start. I, for one, am super excited about the upcoming set of Meld Workshops as we work on the organizational transformation needed to create a new and better entity that will engage in the work that both the soon to be former CNTT and OPNFV groups did. With that introduction I want to step back for a minute to talk about why we have gotten to this point and more importantly, why it is so important to the future of the Telecom Industry in general that these efforts in better defining Telecom SDN infrastructure need to continue, and even, dare I say, expand.

First a bit of history...

OPNFV, which has been a part of LFN as a formal project for a few years now, started as a separate project and community that facilitates a common NFVI, continuous integration (CI) with upstream projects, stand-alone testing toolsets, and a compliance and verification program for industry-wide testing and integration to accelerate the transformation of enterprise and service provider networks. It merged in under the LFN umbrella as the "testing" arm of the organization. To date, OPNFV has contributed significant bodies of test frameworks to support a common NFVI. However, it never really had any "standard" reference models to develop to.

The Cloud Infrastructure Telco Taskforce (CNTT), a more recent addition to the efforts, was incubated starting in early 2019 through a [partnership](#) between GSMA and the [Linux Foundation](#) as a global open source taskforce comprised of industry-leading CSPs and NFVI/VNF suppliers. Its mission was to identify and quantify standardized infrastructures for both virtual machine-based and cloud native network functions, making it possible to deploy multiple network functions without having to create new infrastructures for each. To date, CNTT has created a reference model for Telecom cloud infrastructures to support SDN workloads, and two reference models (OpenStack based and Container based). The intent was to flow these definition and requirements documents to a group that had the resources and expertise to turn these architectures into implementations, which could then be tested and recognized in the community in some way as a "standard".

So where will we be going from here...

As became obvious over the past 9 months or so, shortly after we all met at the LFN Workshop in Prague (ah for the days we will be able to travel again), both CNTT and OPNFV are really two sides of the same coin. Both groups needed each other's expertise and resources, but we didn't know it. That is, while the outputs and perspectives are different, the goals are very much in alignment. The next steps are to take these two groups and meld them into a new and more powerful whole. Ultimately, we are looking for the same thing, a way to bring a standard understanding and capability across the Telecom Industry of the infrastructures that are needed to support our future. Everyone benefits, vendors don't have to build one-off architectures for every single telecom customer, and the telecoms, who don't have to devote resources to building potentially unsupportable infrastructures. I encourage any and all from the Telecom community to join in the efforts.