Govroam – the education perspective

What is govroam?

Govroam is eduroam for a wider public sector audience. It is designed to eliminate the overheads of offering, and (for full participants) making use of, seamless guest connectivity. It makes offsite connectivity simple while enhancing the control the employer has over staff roaming, all without requiring extensive investment in new infrastructure.

Eligibility for govroam is aimed at organisations that are >50% public funded, plus the charities and commercial entities that work extensively with them. Educational organisations are excluded from full participation in govroam, as they are served by eduroam, but we encourage eduroam sites to offer govroam as a visitor-only service to support their public sector visitors, and vice versa.

Govroam offers a trust fabric identical to that of eduroam. This allows you to offer appropriate guest network facilities without having to provide a support service onsite, check proof of identity, or help visitors modify the configuration of their mobile devices.

In the vast majority of cases, existing wireless deployments can be reconfigured to offer govroam in less than a day, and there is no subscription cost for offering visitor-only govroam.

eduroam + govroam = better collaboration

We encourage eduroam members to offer visitor-only govroam, and we also encourage public sector organisations – including NHS buildings – to offer eduroam where appropriate on-site.

If you’re in higher education or further education, enabling govroam lets you offer seamless internet access to visiting public-sector professionals. Applications for this include:

- Hosting public sector or cross-sector conferences, events and meetings
- Supporting community outreach initiatives operating on campus
- Supporting healthcare staff working on campus
- Blue-light services can easily connect to the internet in the event of an on-campus emergency

As with eduroam, institutions offering visitor-only govroam are able to:

- Derive additional benefit from existing WLAN infrastructure
- Meet the connectivity needs of visitors through a ‘zero-touch’ user-friendly approach
- Reduce/remove the need for customer-facing visitor support, cutting costs and freeing staff resources
- Reduce/remove the need for ‘temporary account’ processes, reducing the attack surface of the network
- Reduce the overheads of connectivity provision for meetings, conferences and events
You also get the reassurance of a real-time "member in good standing" check whenever you grant someone access to your govroam visitor network. Each guest’s home organisation will also have agreed to assist in the resolution of any incident arising from staff member’s use of govroam.

Get involved

1. Technical requirements

This is likely to be very familiar, as it closely matches the requirements of eduroam participation. The bare minimum you need is a guest network capable of 802.1X, and a standards-based RADIUS server.

To offer govroam, you need to have a guest network that is firewalled to allow standard email, web and VPN as a minimum. This is typically Wi-Fi, under the ‘govroam’ SSID, although wired is also possible. Access to this network should utilise 802.1X pass-through authentication to your local RADIUS infrastructure. Your RADIUS server(s) should be set up to proxy access requests from visitors up to Jisc’s national proxy servers. We exchange shared secrets with you to secure this transaction. The answer from the visitor’s home institution is proxy’ed back to you by Jisc, and you can use this information to permit or deny visitor access accordingly.

2. Policy requirements

As a govroam visited-only participant, we would ask you to:

- Offer the govroam SSID in relevant areas of your estate. It’s up to you whether this is just at specific publicly-accessible areas, or whether you do a blanket deployment. We would encourage you to use signage to indicate where govroam is accessible. Posters and window stickers from Jisc are available.

- Ensure that you have a technical contact for govroam which can be shared with the govroam community. This may be used by the tech support function of a visitor’s home organisation while troubleshooting. Note that the home organisation can solve the majority of reported issues without having to get in touch with the visited site.

- Agree to a lightweight set of terms and conditions with Jisc, aimed at ensuring you provide a good user experience to your visitors.

3. On-boarding

Once your guest network is configured and ready to go, we’ll run through the onboarding process over the phone. This involves the exchange of a shared secret; recording your technical contact(s); and setting you up on our mapping portal so that you can register where govroam is being offered (these locations will appear to end-users accessing the service map and/or govroam companion app). We also test that everything works using Jisc dummy credentials. When you are satisfied that all is up and working as expected, you issue Jisc with a ‘user acceptance certificate’ to indicate that the boarding process has completed successfully.

4. Ongoing support

Jisc’s govroam team are available to help with any issues related to the service — we can be reached during office hours via govroam@jisc.ac.uk. You also have access to our CSIRT team if ever required. Particularly demanding issues or development work may require a separate chargeable consultancy agreement.
Financial aspects

Participation in visitor-only govroam is free of charge.

You may need to dedicate some internal resource to getting it set up, but for institutions already familiar with eduroam it should take less than a half day of a suitable technical staff member’s time.

However, because you might find yourselves introducing govroam to local NHS, local government or blue light services, we’ve included the charging model below. These rates are accurate from September 2020 (all figures ex. VAT).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>One-off boarding charge</th>
<th>Monthly rate</th>
<th>Annual rate (discounted 5%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitor-only organisation (e.g. university)</td>
<td>An individual organisation that wishes to support govroam-enabled visitors from other organisations, but does not require roaming connectivity for their own staff.</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual organisation</td>
<td>A single organisation which signs an agreement with Jisc directly. An organisation may comprise multiple locations or servers</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
<td>£310</td>
<td>£3,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional federation</td>
<td>A group of organisations under a single regional federation operator (RFO); A federation may consist of between 2 to 25 organisations. Jisc deals directly with the RFO.</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td>£720</td>
<td>£8,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘super’ regional federation</td>
<td>A group of organisations under a single regional federation operator (RFO). Consists of 2 to 25 organisations. Jisc deals directly with the RFO.</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
<td>£3,080</td>
<td>£35,160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you find yourself discussing costs with an eligible participant, please let them know that they can join govroam either by approaching Jisc directly, or via the G-Cloud public procurement route. The latter option may be important to them as it offers a transparent government approved procurement route: Govroam’s G-cloud page: https://www.digitalmarketplace.service.gov.uk/g-cloud/services/274196668387668.

Next steps

If you want to learn more, or if you’re ready to onboard, please get in touch via govroam@jisc.ac.uk.

The service definition also provides more information: http://repository.jisc.ac.uk/6907/1/govroam-service-definition.pdf. However, note that this documentation is aimed primarily at full participants, not visitor-only sites.