Dutch e-infrastructure outreach activities
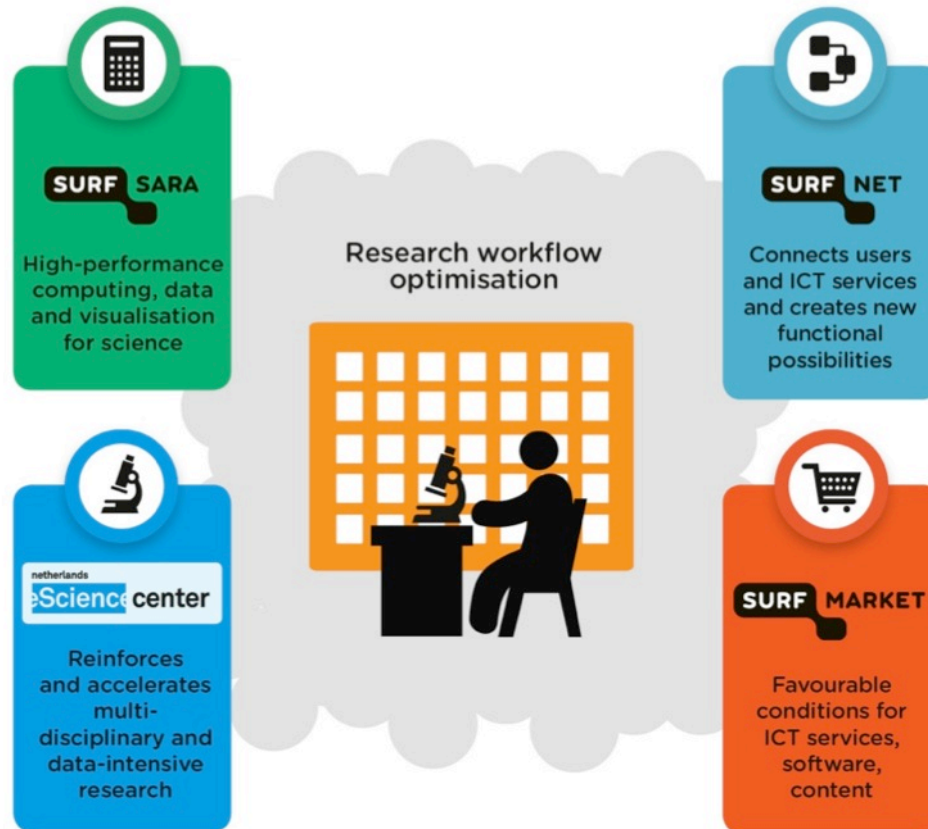
Jan Bot, SURFsara

15 November 2016

Bratislava, Slovakia

SURF

Goals, scope & background of this presentation

- Goals
  - Provide an example of e-infrastructure outreach on national level
  - Translate lessons learned to European level

- Scope
  - ICT Research support
  - Not dealing with outreach to SMEs

- Background
  - National activities
  - Research Engagement session during Digital Infrastructures for Research conference (DI4R)
  - Design your own infrastructure workshop @DI4R
  - EUDAT outreach task
  - Work for EGI Competence Centres

SURF

About SURF

SURF SARA — High-performance computing, data and visualisation for science

SURF NET — Connects users and ICT services and creates new functional possibilities

netherlands eScience center — Reinforces and accelerates multi-disciplinary and data-intensive research

SURF MARKET — Favourable conditions for ICT services, software, content

Research workflow optimisation

SURF

SURF - Research Service Portfolio
overview

COMPUTE: high-end solutions 1000 times more powerful than your PC

DATA SERVICES: easily accessible storage on disk or tape

VISUALIZE: advanced solutions and support to create visualisations

CONNECTIVITY: fast end-to-end connections tailored to your research needs

COLLABORATION INFRA: single sign-on access to many services

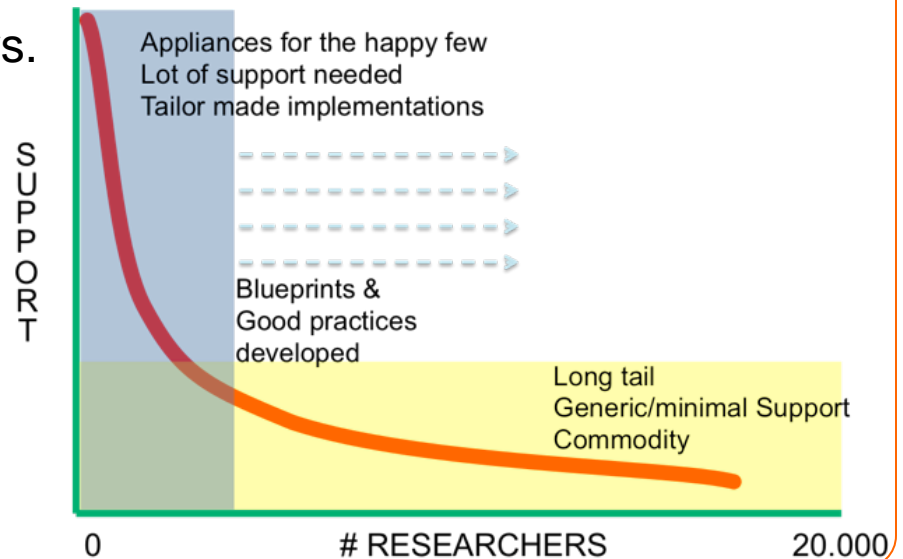**DIGITALLY ENHANCED SCIENCE**: digital tools tailored for the specific needs of researchers

MARKET: reseller of content, cloud solutions, software and hardware
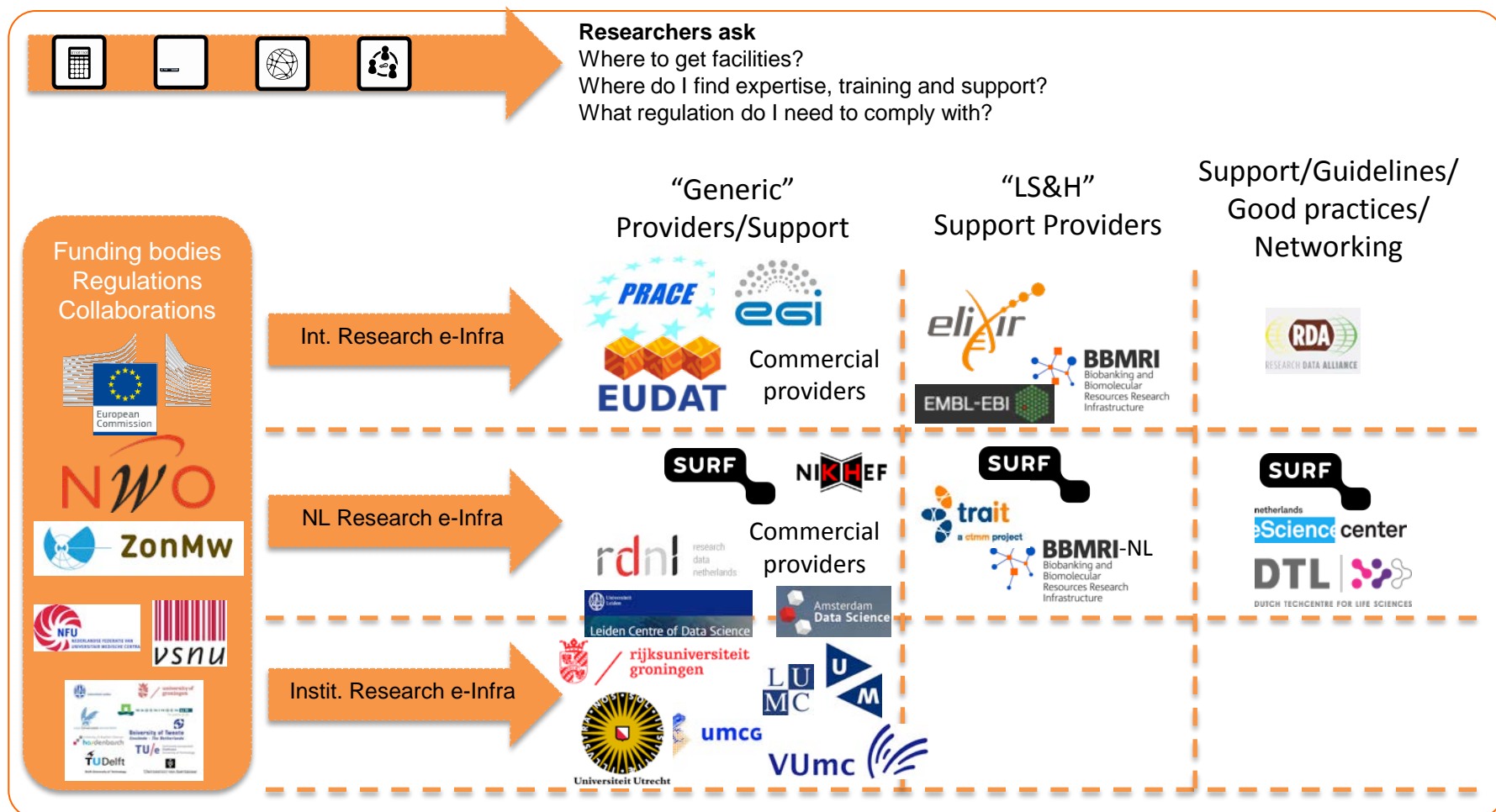
Challenges for SURF

Integration of ICT, Innovation and research

- Only a small group knows how to find us

- Support model does not scale for LoS

- Position of SURF: local vs. national vs. international e-infrastructures

- Access to resources found to be complicated

SUPPORT

Appliances for the happy few
Lot of support needed
Tailor made implementations

Blueprints &
Good practices
developed

Long tail
Generic/minimal Support
Commodity

0   # RESEARCHERS   20.000

SURF

Research Services & Support Context
Example: the life sciences

Researchers ask
Where to get facilities?
Where do I find expertise, training and support?
What regulation do I need to comply with?

"Generic" Providers/Support

"LS&H" Support Providers

Support/Guidelines/ Good practices/ Networking

Funding bodies Regulations Collaborations

Int. Research e-Infra

NL Research e-Infra

Instit. Research e-Infra

Commercial providers

Commercial providers

* Project based services

ICT support

Local ICT support

Advice, training, hands-on support

Train-the-trainer

Shape collaboration

scientist

SURF

Advice, training, hands-on support

SURF

Complexity of ICT support at research institutes
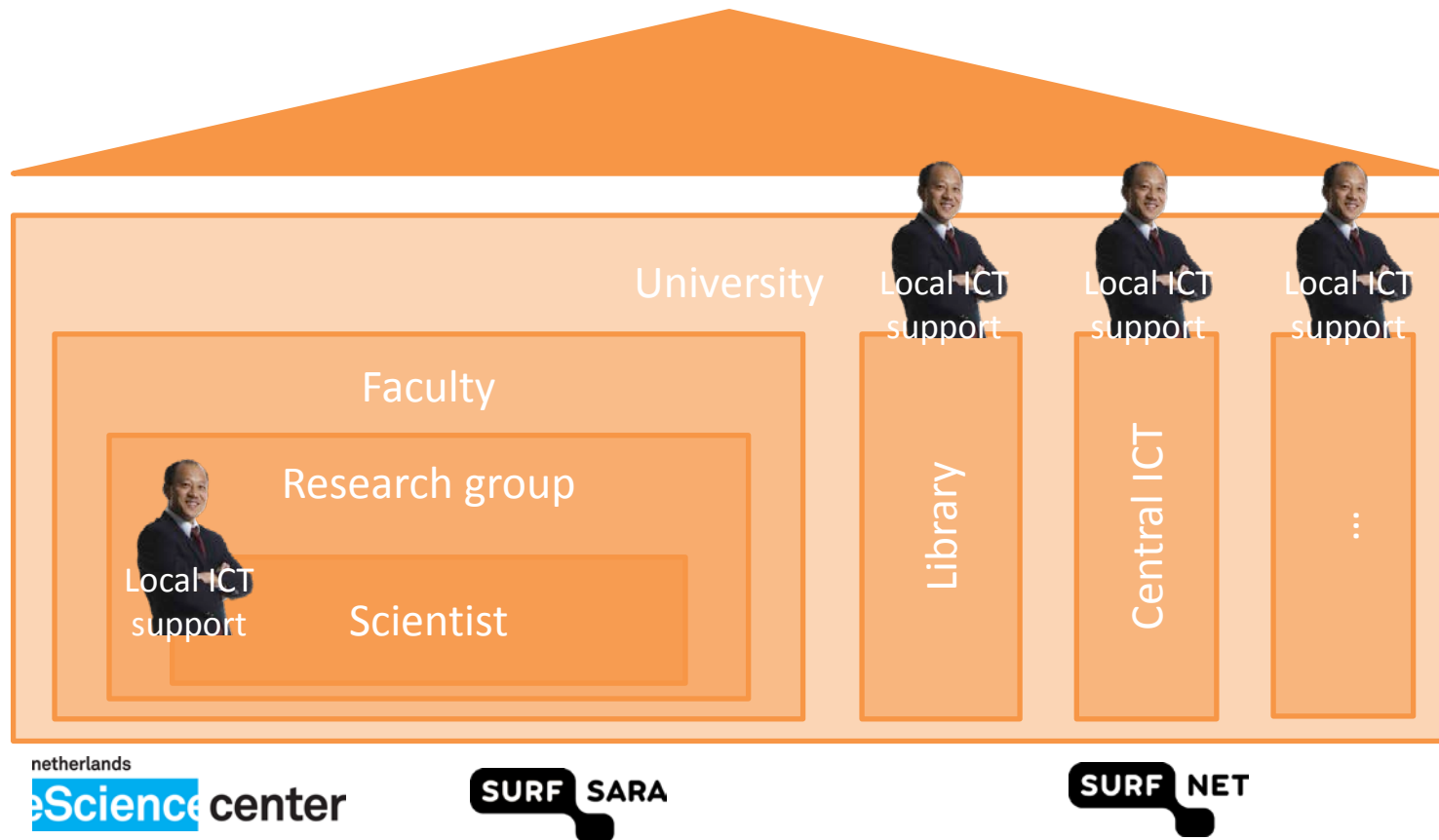
Support4research

Support4research: A four year cross subsidiary project to engage research supporters and to further tailor the Dutch national e-infrastructure to the needs of scientists.

Activities 2015 & 2016

- Regular visits (14 universities + 8 University Medical Centres)
- Structured portfolio of services & integration of portfolio in institute websites
- Structured portfolio of courses & organisation of training events
- Yearly national research support event targeting senior support staff
- Collection of use cases and best practices
- Report on research support in the Netherlands
  (EN version available: https://www.surf.nl/en/knowledge-base/2016/report-research-support-in-the-netherlands.html)

SURF

Lessons learned

- Research ICT support being worked on everywhere
    - Degrees of funding and proficiency vary
- Most local ICT groups want to be involved in e-infrastructure support
    - Stick to 'local first' principle
    - Institutes with own e-infrastructure see a role for themselves on the (inter-)national level
- No interest in single point solutions: e-infrastructure should be offered as a whole with a single helpdesk
    - Viable alternative: no-wrong-door policy
- The perceived value of (inter-)national e-infrastructure providers is in expertise, not in machines
- Training is required, both for research supporters and scientists
    - e-Infrastructure related
    - Generic ICT skills (basic programming, version control, Unix proficiency, *etc.*)

SURF

Involvement of research funders & policy makers

- Research funders require input on research data management, could something similar be done for e-infrastructure?

- Few institutes have ICT support policies in place which leads to anxiety and lack of commitment.

Visit: surf.nl/support4research

Transition to Europe

Outreach translated

- Target audience
  - Outreach to LToS has had limited success
  - More successful when user communities are directly involved (*e.g.* EGI Competence Centres, EUDAT Pilot Projects)

- What exactly is the role of EU e-infrastructures when engaging individual scientists?
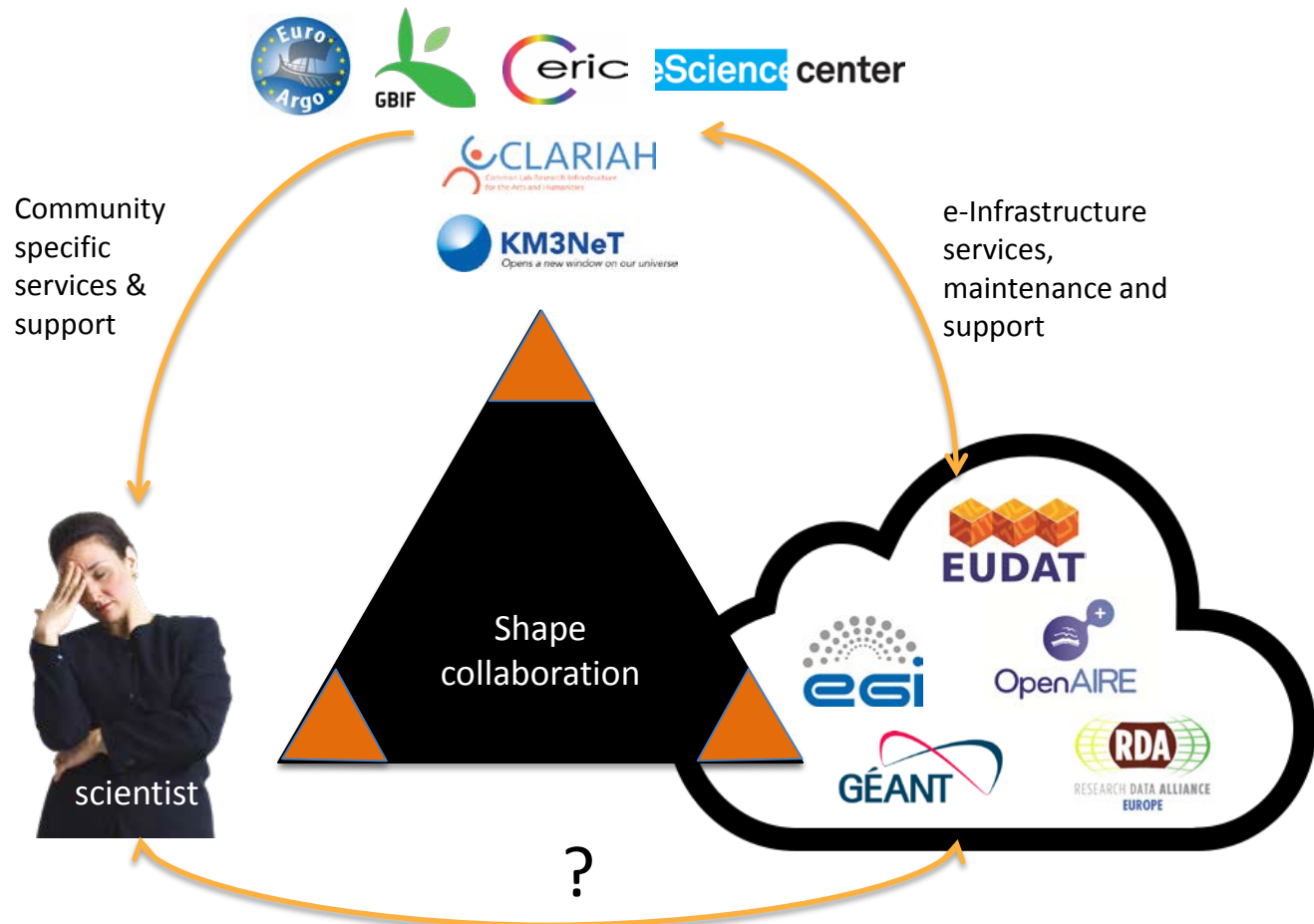
DI4R session: Research engagement across e-Infrastructures - Towards an integrated approach
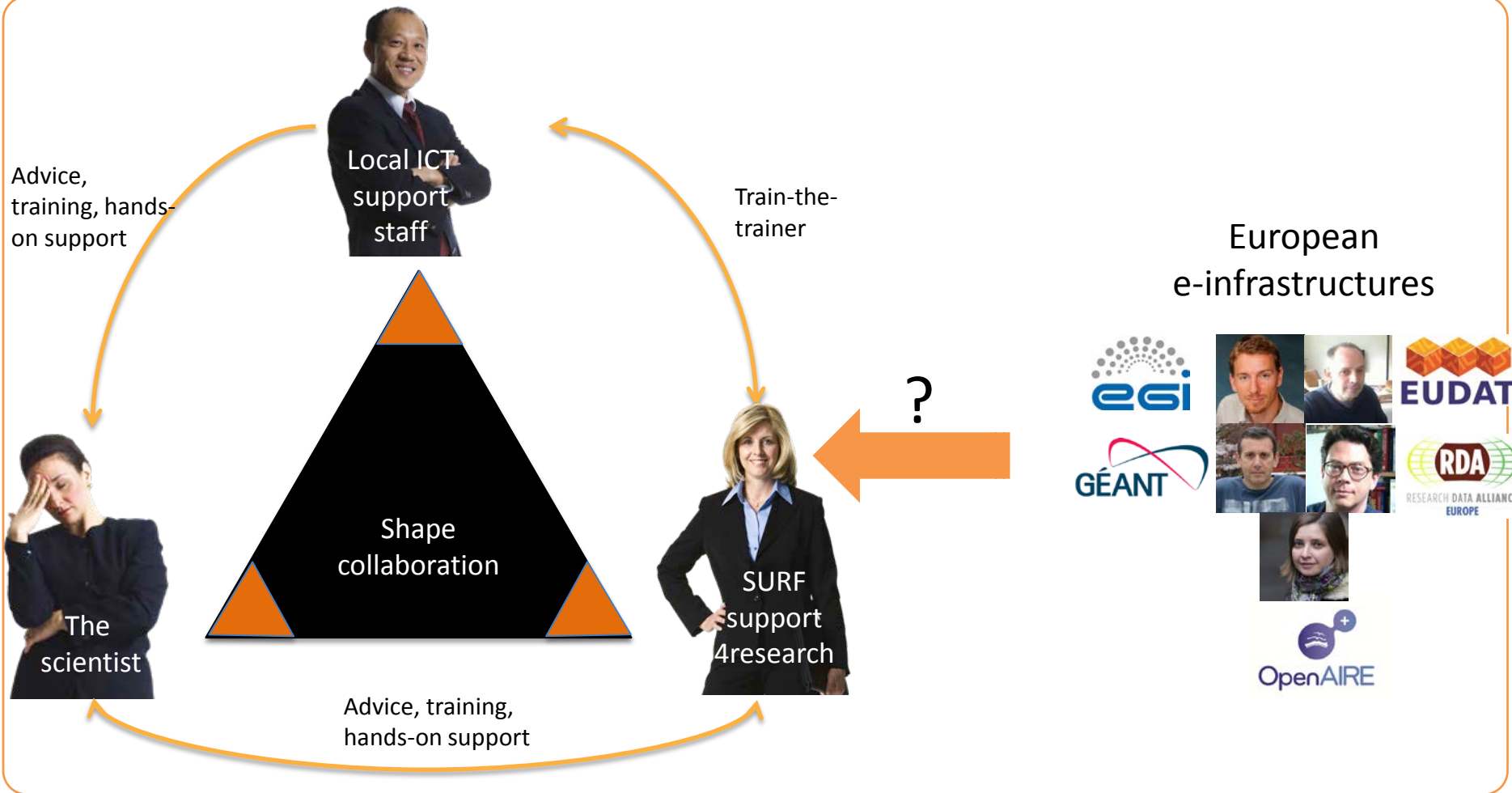
Session outcome: Possible path to EU wide e-infrastructure collaboration

- One, complete, service portfolio, carried & advertised by all e-infrastructures
- Shared training portfolio & training activities
- Shared helpdesk / no-wrong-door policy
- Participation in user community conferences, provide training, e-infrastructure highlights *etc.*

SURF

Research engagement 2017?

Community specific services & support

e-Infrastructure services, maintenance and support

Shape collaboration

scientist

?

To conclude

- e-Infrastructure providers should define their 'target audience'
- Focus on collaboration in a pan-European and cross-discipline context
- Research Infrastructures should be motivated to adopt European e-infrastructures
- Part of the responsibility for providing, maintaining and supporting e-infrastructures should be taken up by the Ris; Facilitate knowledge exchange between them.

SURF

Thanks!

More info?

www.surf.nl

jan.bot@surfsara.nl

WHAT SURF CAN DO