

## SEEFIRE PROJECT LAUNCHED ON 1 MARCH 2005

TERENA coordinates the SEEFIRE Project, a special support action benefiting from 350,000 euro funding from the European Commission. The project will build on the success of the SEEREN Project and prepare for the next generation of networks for research and education in southeast European countries. The project started on 1 March 2005 and by its end in February 2006 will:

- establish a benchmark of existing and potentially available optical fibre for NRENs in the region;
- make an analysis of the technical options available for the deployment of dark fibre and the management of optical transmission by NRENs in the region;
- report on economic aspects and regulations;
- disseminate information and increase awareness about dark-fibre deployment both at technical and policymaking levels.

Connectivity of NRENs in Europe and the backbone of the pan-European Research Network (GÉANT) has traditionally been based upon individual point-to-point circuits obtained through leases from telecom operators. The SEEREN network is based on connectivity services contracts with these operators, which ran until the end of 2004.

With the contribution of GN2, some of those connections have been extended into 2005. Without the financial support of the European Commission, NRENs in this region could not afford these services. For the next generation of this network to be self-sustainable, more affordable alternatives for NRENs in the region need to be explored, such as the acquisition of their own optical fibre infrastructure.

The recent progress in technology for optical transmission at high speed has made the deployment of owned or leased fibre networks a reality for NRENs. SEEFIRE will make a first step in the direction of a cost-effective gigabit network in southeast Europe, connecting researchers and universities in the region with other research users in Europe and worldwide. In doing so, the project will contribute to reducing the digital divide that affects many countries in southeast Europe, due in part to past political and economic circumstances.

### SEEFIRE PROJECT PARTNERS

TERENA (project coordinator), GRNET, Greece, CESNET, Czech Republic, NIIF/Hungarnet, Hungary, The University of Belgrade (AMREJ, the NREN of Serbia and Montenegro), DANTE, RoEduNet, Romania IST Foundation (the NREN of Bulgaria), The Ss. Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje (MARnet, the NREN of FYROM), The Academy of Sciences of Albania (INIMA), BIHARNET, the NREN of Bosnia and Herzegovina

For more information please see: <http://www.seefire.org/>

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