

“ASREN is a non-profit company with limited liability (GmbH) and is officially registered in Germany, under the umbrella of the League of Arab States. The main goal is to connect Arab institutions among themselves and to the globe through high-speed data-communications networks. Such networks will enable sharing and access to a variety of R&E services and applications in addition to utilization of highly sophisticated and technologically advanced computing resources available only at very few institutions in the world.”

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e-AGE19 Conference - Groundbreaking Research and Education Networks

The image is a promotional graphic for the e-AGE19 conference. It features the ASREN logo (two overlapping hexagons, one blue and one orange) in the top left. The text 'e-AGE19' is prominently displayed in the center in a large, bold, orange and blue font. Below it, the phrase '“GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH & EDUCATION NETWORKS”' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the location and dates 'Abu Dhabi, UAE' and '11-12 December 2019' are listed in an orange, italicized font. The background of the graphic is a photograph of a modern city skyline at dusk or dawn, with several skyscrapers illuminated against a colorful sky. A large, stylized white arrow points from the left towards the right, partially overlapping the city image.

The e-AGE conference had established itself as an important venue for networking among experts and scientists. In 2019, e-AGE will be held at Khalifa University in Abu Dhabi, UAE during 11 - 12 December 2019. This year the focus will be on demonstrated successes in using research and education e-Infrastructures and a need for interoperable high speed networks at national, regional and international

levels. In short words, e-AGE19 is coming with “GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH AND EDUCATION NETWORKS” as the main theme of the conference.

e-AGE19 will include events, workshops and meetings centered around the following:

- e-AGE Annual Conference
- The 12th Event on Euro-Mediterranean e-Infrastructure
- The 9th annual shareholders meeting of ASREN
- EUMEDCONNECT3 Project meeting
- AfricaConnect2 Project meeting
- Internet2 Middle East SIG Meetings
- Workshops dedicated for e-Infrastructure users

Moreover, special sessions will be dedicated to specific domains, mainly focusing on experiences in connectivity and e-Infrastructure, applications and services across a variety of scientific domains. It is also important to show how research infrastructure creates tangible benefits to communities and collaborations. It is still critical to demonstrate how research connectivity can promote collaboration and innovation. Different discussions will be stimulated during e-AGE to drive outcomes and concrete results on practical steps towards developing a regional e-Infrastructure.

Authors were invited to submit full papers reporting on their original and unpublished research in e-Infrastructures and computational and data-intensive sciences. All papers were peer-reviewed for relevance, quality and originality of research.

Posters were also welcomed, featuring a poster at e-AGE served as an excellent advertisement for your work, and can act as a great conversation starter with e-AGE participants.

Topics of interest include, but not limited to:

- Scientific computing and data-intensive e-Science in areas related to energy, environment, health, climate, water, agriculture, biology, economy, medicine, as well as in social sciences and humanities.
- Perspectives on NRENs, including challenges, operation, sustainability, funding, governance, business models, security and services.
- Problem-solving environments, Virtual Research Environments, Science Gateways and collaborative tools, applications and services.
- Education and e-Learning Technologies, access to educational resources, repositories, libraries and contents, cloud, grids, parallel and distributed computing, and high performance computing.
- Internet technologies and trends, Internet of Things, Security, SDN and AAs.
- Artificial Intelligence tools, deep learning, big data, and open science platforms.

For more details, please visit the conference website at: <http://asrenorg.net/eage19/>

ASREN Upgrades its PoP in London and moves to Slough Data Center

With the support of the AfricaConenct2 Project, funded by the European Commission, ASREN has established a new Point of Presence in London at the data center premises of GEANT at Slough Data Center in London. ASREN recognizes the support of the GEANT technical team who worked hand in hand with ASREN team to operate and configure the new equipment smoothly and on time.

The new PoP is now equipped with the-state-of-the-art Cisco routing equipment that allows processing of research traffic up

to a speed of 40 Gbps. The PoP connects a 1 Gbps dedicated link from Amman - Jordan that interconnects SESAME to the European research and education institutions through GEANT network. The PoP also interconnects links from Tunis, Morocco, and Egypt through a tunneling solution at 1 Gbps speed.

It provides peering capabilities of incoming traffic not only to the European research and education network through GEANT but also to other regional networks including Internet2 in the US

and WACREN and UbuntuNet Alliance in Africa. It should be noted that ASREN PoP in London has been established in 2014 as an exchange point between the pan-Arab regional research and education network with its counterpart in Europe, Africa, and the US. Through this exchange point, scientists, faculty and students though out the region, have seamless access not only to high speed dedicated networks but also to computing facilities, data repositories, scientific applications, and educational resources of all types.

ASREN Participates in the inauguration of the North America Office of the Association of African Universities (AAU)

Represented by Dr. Salem Alagdash, and on behalf the African Regional Research and Education Networks, ASREN has participated in the inauguration of the North America Office of the Association of African Universities (AAU) at the premises of the African Union in Washington DC in the United States. The office will help to promote relations and academic collaborations between



universities in North America and their African counterparts. The inauguration has witnessed a gathering of representatives from African diplomatic missions, academic and professional

associations, ‘diasporans’ and key stakeholders of higher education in North America and Africa.

ASREN is strengthening its cooperation with the AAU in an effort to setup high-speed networks for research and education network across Africa and allow regional integration of e-Infrastructures in the context of the European



Commission funded AFRICACONNECT project, a third phase of which will commence in December 2019. The objective is to strengthen European and African scientific collaboration and empower African scientific communities with digital tools and high-speed e-Infrastructure technologies for a greater access to computing resources and data repositories. In cooperation with GEANT, ASREN, WACREN and UbuntuNet Alliance are launching a new phase of the AFRICACONNECT project through which cooperation with the telecom providers has been set as a priority to bring down costs of access to the African communities at large.

CONNECT Interview: David West – Helping Connect the R&E World

For almost two decades GÉANT’s David West has been helping shape the global R&E networking landscape by applying GÉANT’s experience to manage EU-funded networking projects for other world regions. In a role that needs a mix of business acumen, technical expertise and diplomacy, he has gained within our global community the reputation of being an influential and effective advocate of R&E networking. For his tireless efforts and achievements David was honoured by GÉANT’s CEO Erik Huizer at the TNC19 CEO dinner in Tallinn where he also announced his decision to scale back his work commitments. We met up with David to take stock of his career and find out about his plans for the future.

At the forefront of GÉANT’s international engagement since 2001... how did it all start?

Quite unpredictably actually. I had just joined what was then DANTE (before the merger to form GÉANT) after 15 years working for British Telecom’s international division; not quite sure what my new role was going to be. On my third day I accompanied Howard Davies, one of the General Managers, to a meeting in Brussels with the EC and NRENs from around the Mediterranean region



about starting a project to set up a regional R&E network there, like a mini version of GÉANT. Discussions on the first day were quite acrimonious and ended without any agreement, and I remember thinking it would never get off the ground. However, to my surprise, the EC were very creative overnight and on the following day secured consensus for setting up this new project with EU funding. Thus, EUMEDCONNECT was conceived, I was made its project manager and started working closely with European and the beneficiary NREN partners to coordinate it, and it is still going!

And then?

Although EUMEDCONNECT faced a lot of challenges in its early days, it broke new ground and the EC sufficiently liked what it was achieving to fund similar projects in other world regions.

My colleague Cathrin Stover started up the ALICE project in Latin America, which paved the way for RedCLARA; and subsequently AfricaConnect. I took on additional regional projects serving the Asia-Pacific region (TEIN), which was successfully transferred on to TEIN*CC and became Asi@Connect, and then also for Central Asia (CAREN).

Culturally and politically the regional projects are of course extremely diverse, but they have all faced similar major challenges. I am thinking of things like having to secure and manage EU and partner co-funding, forging good working relationships between project partners and troubleshooting where necessary, building and operating high-quality regional R&E networks, and planning ahead for longer-term sustainability by nurturing regional partners, whilst at all times keeping within EU auditing, tendering and contracting rules.

As you might imagine, my role as project manager from the outset has been extremely varied and I can honestly say there has never been a dull or quiet moment!

What do you consider your biggest achievement over all those years?

It has to be the fact that the projects I have worked on have connected for the first time over 25 countries, many of them at early stages of their socio-economic development, to GÉANT and the global R&E community. Of course, all these projects are team efforts with many colleagues in GÉANT and the European and regional R&E communities, but I am proud of my personal contributions to them all.

Any regrets?

In these projects, where things are so uncharted, there is not always a right or wrong way of doing things, so rather than regret what I have done, I simply try to learn and move on. Over the years the most frustrating thing for me has been the slow pace of telecoms market change which has kept connectivity prices way too high for many of the developing countries in our projects, and the difficulties of persuading governments and others to provide their co-funding necessary for them to benefit.

Since August you have reduced your working hours, how is continuity being ensured?

I am fortunate in having excellent colleagues in GÉANT's International Relations team who are taking over some of my project work. Veronika di Luna has taken on the CAREN project and she is already working closely with Eastern Partnership countries which share some similar challenges and she has the great advantage over me of speaking Russian fluently.

Helga Spitaler now manages EUMEDCONNECT and the North African part of AfricaConnect which she has been working with me on for several years, so is already very familiar with these projects. She and I will continue to work together with our Asia Pacific partners and to advise and support the Asi@Connect project run by TEIN*CC. All in all, I am confident 'my' projects remain in safe hands.

Needless to say, although I am going to work fewer hours in future, I remain a fully committed member of the GÉANT team.

How will you fill the extra time on your hands?

Although as project manager I have travelled to many countries, I rarely travel far beyond the airports and hotels, so I am looking forward to travelling at leisure to explore more of the world. At home I also plan to devote more time to my interests in walking, gardening and live music. And I have recently taken up the ancient sport of croquet and am already hooked.

As a Brighton resident, what is your message to prospective TNC20 attendees?

Don't miss it! For those who haven't been there, Brighton is a very exciting and 'full-on' city on the south coast of England, sometimes called 'London by the Sea' – it is going to make for a very lively backdrop for TNC20!

Source: <https://connect.geant.org/2019/10/30/david-west-helping-connect-the-re-world>



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