



RESEARCH AND EDUCATION IN EMERGING NATIONS BOOSTED BY NETWORK EXTENSIONS

*Latin American and North African projects extended into 2007 following successful
global collaboration*

Cambridge 9th January: Research and development collaboration in Latin America and the Mediterranean/North African region has been safeguarded by the extension of European Union-funded networking projects into 2007.

The Latin American ALICE project and Mediterranean EUMEDCONNECT initiative provide links for researchers both within their regions and to their counterparts in Europe at speeds of up to 622 Mbps. Both projects are co-ordinated by research networking organisation DANTE and aim to bridge the digital divide to ensure that the emerging nations can collaborate in global research, benefiting both the education community and the wider public through improved ICT technology.

The Latin American RedCLARA network, created by the ALICE project connects regional researchers in 18 countries both to each other and to their counterparts in Europe via GÉANT2, the world's most advanced international research and education network. RedCLARA has been planned and built by DANTE in close cooperation with CLARA a consortium of Latin American national research networks, which also operates the RedCLARA network.

RedCLARA went live in 2004 and funding has now been extended to 31st March 2007. Its most recent connections have seen Ecuador, El Salvador and Guatemala join the network. ALICE has already enabled both educational and public-facing projects such as the T@lmed initiative. This provides e-health services to isolated regions of Brazil and Colombia, allowing doctors to remotely diagnose conditions and prescribe treatments to patients from thousands of kilometres away. Other projects to benefit from the network's link to Europe include AUGERACCESS and EELA, which both aim to develop shared e-Infrastructures between Latin America and Europe.

Radio-Astronomy in the region will be advanced by involvement in the EXPReS project, which will connect regional telescopes to sites in Europe and beyond.

“Bridging the digital divide is key if the wider global community is to reap the benefits of information technology,” commented Dai Davies, general manager, DANTE. “The contract extensions for ALICE and EUMEDCONNECT build on the strong successes these networks have already achieved and enable true collaboration between researchers across the globe. They demonstrate that the approach we pioneered with GÉANT in Europe can form the template for a worldwide research community.”

"We congratulate you on your achievements thus far and look forward to seeing the research and education communities of Latin America and Europe benefit from further strong results," said Riccardo Gambini, head of unit in EuropeAid, the European Co-operation Office, the body responsible for funding ALICE. "The development of new national networking organisations across the region and planned EU-Latin American research projects demonstrate the benefits that close collaboration has for both the higher education and wider communities."

EUMEDCONNECT has created a regional research community through building the first network to link countries in the Mediterranean and North African regions and to Europe via GÉANT2. It covers 11 countries, with funding now extended until July 2007 or later. Co-ordinated by DANTE, the network is supported by the national research networks of four European countries – RENATER (France), GRNET (Greece), GARR (Italy) and RedIRIS (Spain).

Current EUMEDCONNECT uses include the Strabon e-culture project, which brings together researchers, historians and archaeologists to support sustainable tourism, AVICENNA, which has created a virtual campus for open distance learning and the planned connection of Egypt's Alexandria Library to the network allowing the region's rich cultural history to be shared online.

In addition to funding from the European Union and the LA-NREN partners, ALICE has received generous support from both Global Crossing and Cisco. EUMEDCONNECT has benefited from additional support from Juniper Networks.

“EUMEDCONNECT is providing a real boost to Tunisia’s research and education sector,” added Mme Malika Zenati of project partner RFR in Tunisia. “It helps level the playing field in the global research race.”

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About ALICE

The ALICE project has created RedCLARA –the first regional research and education network for Latin America. It not only connects regional researchers to each other, but it also connects them with their counterparts in Europe via GÉANT2, the world’s most advanced international research and education network, for increased collaboration. RedCLARA went live in 2004 and has stimulated the development of many National Research and Education Networks in the region. Funding for the ALICE project has been extended until March 2007. For more information visit www.dante.net/alice

About EUMEDCONNECT:

The EUMEDCONNECT project has created the first research and education network for the Mediterranean region. As of October 2005, eleven project partners are connected and benefiting from a high capacity Internet network dedicated to users of the research and academic community. This new infrastructure will fight the digital divide that exists between the Mediterranean and European regions, and increase academic collaboration between the regions. It is co-funded by the European Commission’s EUMEDIS Programme, and has been extended until at least July 2007. Learn more at www.eumedconnect.net

About DANTE:

DANTE is a non-profit organisation whose primary mission is to plan, build and manage research and education networks on behalf of Europe’s National Research and Education Networks. Established in 1993, DANTE has been fundamental to the success of pan-European research and education networking. DANTE is currently building GÉANT2, which will upgrade the GÉANT network and will continue to provide the data communications infrastructure essential to the success of many research projects in Europe.

DANTE is involved in initiatives worldwide to interconnect countries in other regions to one another and to GÉANT2. DANTE is currently managing initiatives focused on the Mediterranean, Latin American and Asia-Pacific regions through the EUMEDCONNECT, ALICE and TEIN2 projects respectively. For more information please visit: www.dante.net

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