

PRESS RELEASE

Asi@Connect project launched at national level in Bangladesh to help bridge the digital divide across Asia-Pacific

30th October 2017, Samson H. Chowdhury Centre, Dhaka Club – Over 55 million researchers, academics and students across the Asia-Pacific, including Bangladesh, are set to benefit from a new phase of dedicated research and education (R&E) networking - Asi@Connect - which was inaugurated today at event title Asi@Connect Bangladesh Launch Event 2017 in Bangladesh to seamlessly extend and further build on the successful Trans-Eurasia Information Network (TEIN) initiative.

Asi@Connect is the successor project to TEIN4, the most recent phase of the TEIN initiative. It currently supports 24 countries/economies by providing a regional high-capacity internet backbone for R&E collaborations within the Asia-Pacific and, its interconnection with the pan-European GÉANT network, and with other parts of the world.

The contract for Asi@Connect was signed in December 2016 between the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) and the Korea-based regional networking organisation TEIN*CC, which has been managing TEIN4. Asi@Connect relates closely to the core project objective of "digital connectivity".

With a substantial five-year EU co-funding commitment of € 20 Million up to 2021, Asi@Connect is designed to support capacity building and network-enabled applications with high societal impact, particularly in the least developed countries in the region. The project sets out to meet these objectives through Call for Proposals open to the wider R&E and networking community.

Following the formal inauguration of the project at regional level in February 2017 in New Delhi during APAN43, this national launch event in Bangladesh was hosted by the Asi@Connect partner BdREN, with representatives from Stakeholder Institutions and overseas RENs, Government officials, International Development Agency, who welcomed the national kick-off of the Asi@Connect project in Bangladesh and encouraged the R&E network community to build on achievements to date and further strengthen cooperation between Asia and Europe.

The main target of the launching event was to create awareness on Asi@connect project among the researchers, educationists, government officials and other stakeholders. Prof. Dr. Gowher Rizvi, International Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, was present at the ceremony as the chief guest with Prof. Abdul Mannan, Chairman, University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, in the chair. Professor Dr. Md. Akhtar Hossain, Member, UGC; Professor Dr. Syed Saad Andaleeb, Vice-chancellor, BRACU and also the representative of BdREN Board of Trustees; Md. Abdullah Al Hasan Chowdhury, Additional Secretary (University), Secondary and Higher Education Division, Ministry of Education; Dr Gauranga Chandra Mohanta ndc, Project Director of HEQEP; Dr. Md. Makhlesur Rahman, Senior Operations Officer, The World Bank; Dr. Simon C. Lin, Ex-chair, Asia Pacific Advanced Network; Rene Buch, Chief Executive Officer, NORDUnet; Bayani Benjamin R. Lara, Representative of PREGINET, Philippines; Dr. Chalernpol Charnsriapiyo, representative of ThaiREN, Thailand; Dr. ByungKyu Kim, Executive Officer, TEIN*CC, South Korea; and AKM Habibur Rahman, Chief Executive Officer of Bangladesh Research and Education Network spoke at the occasion.

The Chief Guest, Professor Dr. Gowher Rizvi stated, "Today knowledge is not local, whatever knowledge we produce, instantly it is accessible from anywhere around the world. Asia@connect enables us, facilitate us to be able to jointly produce knowledge in collaboration with all the different people. Just as a joint perspective, multiple perspectives are required for research."

BdREN connects to the regional TEIN backbone at speeds of 45Mbps, enabling closer collaboration between its researchers and educators and their colleagues around the globe. The process is ongoing to upgrade this capacity to 1 Gbps. Researchers in Bangladesh are relying on the advanced high-speed TEIN research network to collaborate with their colleagues in Asia Pacific & Europe in the field of Education & Research.

TEIN has created a pan-Asia-Pacific regional network with the largest geographical footprint in the world, and with a user community of over 50 million. This is of equal scale to Europe's user community served by the GÉANT network.

About BdREN

Bangladesh Research and Education Network (BdREN) is a high-speed data communication network established under Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) and designed to meet up specialized requirements of the academic and research communities. University Grants Commission of Bangladesh has been implementing this project with financing from The World Bank. Till today BdREN successfully connected 34 public universities and 4 private/international universities in the network.

About Asi@Connect

Asi@Connect marks the 4th phase of EU funding to the Trans-Eurasia Information Network (TEIN) programme which was launched as an Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) initiative in 200; it successfully established a regional research and education internet network from scratch in 2004 and progressively expanded its geographical footprint over the years. During this new phase, greater emphasis will be placed on delivering the project with increased involvement of additional partners within the Asia-Pacific R&E community.

Asi@Connect takes over the R&E backbone from TEIN4, the most recent phase in the TEIN initiative and will continue to connect regional researchers with their counterparts in Europe via GÉANT, the world's most advanced international research and education network, providing the Asia-Pacific countries with a gateway for global research collaboration. Asi@Connect receives €20 Million funding from the EU up to 2021 with additional financial contributions from the Asian partners. GÉANT (then DANTE) transferred responsibility for the TEIN programme to TEIN*CC in 2012 and has since provided consultancy advice. This advisory role will continue during Asi@Connect. To find out more visit www.tein.asia

The Asi@Connect partners are the National Research & Education Network associations (NRENs) of Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, The Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, and Vietnam. Bhutan, Myanmar and Mongolia are Asi@Connect partners but as yet without Internet connectivity.

About TEIN*CC

Asi@Connect is managed by the regional networking organisation TEIN*Cooperation Center (TEIN*CC). TEIN*CC was endorsed by the ASEM8 Summit in Brussels in October 2010. It was established in Seoul, Korea in August 2011 as a non-profit Foundation Corporation to take responsibility for the 4th phase of the TEIN project which started in April 2012. The Korean Government, the Ministry of ICT and Future Planning, supports TEIN*CC operation and management, and the Seoul Metropolitan Government is providing office facilities. TEIN*CC actively collaborated with other regional R&E network organisations around the world to provide better opportunities for research and education to TEIN community. For more information, please visit www.teincc.org, follow us on Twitter @AsiaConnectNews and Facebook @AsiaConnectProject

About GÉANT

GÉANT is Europe's leading collaboration on network and related infrastructure and services for the benefit of research and education, contributing to Europe's economic growth and

competitiveness. The organisation develops, delivers and promotes advanced network and associated e-infrastructure services, and supports innovation and knowledge-sharing amongst its members, partners and the wider research and education networking community. For more information visit www.geant.org, follow us on Twitter @GEANTnews and read our latest blog posts at <https://blog.geant.org>



Professor Dr. Gowher Rizvi



Professor Abdul Mannan



Dr. ByungKyu KIM