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SEEFIRE

South-East Europe Fibre Infrastructure for Research and Education



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Final Plan for Using and Disseminating Knowledge

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Abstract: SEEFIRE Deliverable D4.2v2 “Final Plan for Using and Disseminating Knowledge”

Due to the nature of SEEFIRE, knowledge dissemination and awareness raising play a key role during the lifetime of the project. In order for SEEFIRE to be successful, it is important to proactively raise awareness about providing interconnection facilities in southeast Europe among the various stakeholders of National Research and Education Networks (NRENs), governments, users and telecommunication operators.

The revision of the Plan for Using and Disseminating Knowledge builds on the original version written in month three; this revised and updated version of the document aims to highlight the achievements of the NA4 activity so far in the project (first nine months).

The SEEFIRE Project

The SEEFIRE Project is a special support action co-funded by the FP6 IST programme of the European Commission. SEEFIRE builds on the success of previous activities and projects, including SEEREN, to support research and education networks in southeast Europe and will provide input for preparing the next-generation networks for research and education in the region. The 12-month project started on 1 March 2005 and aims to:

- 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 policy-making levels.

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 several countries in southeast Europe, due in part to past political and economic circumstances.

The SEEFIRE Consortium consists of:	
TERENA (co-ordinating contractor)	The Netherlands
GRNET	Greece
CESNET	Czech Republic
NIIF/HUNGARNET	Hungary
AMREJ	Serbia and Montenegro
DANTE	United Kingdom
RoEduNet	Romania
ISTF	Bulgaria
MARNet	FYROM
ASA	Albania
BIHARNET	Bosnia and Herzegovina

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1. Executive Summary

The purpose of the revised Final Plan For Using and Disseminating Knowledge is to provide a formal planning document at month 9 of the project, to focus the dissemination activity for the remaining months. The plan has not changed since the first version of the deliverable produced at month 3. This plan is an update of the original plan written in month three [R2].

The Final Plan For Using and Disseminating Knowledge goes a step further than the SEEFIRE Technical Annex identifying precisely what needs to be done, when and why we need to do it, how it can be achieved and how we can measure our impact.

Responsibility

SEEFIRE Work Package 4 (WP4) defines the plans, the roles and responsibility of the partners for using and disseminating knowledge for the duration of the project. As stated in the technical annex “the activity of this workpackage will focus on two major items: raising awareness and disseminating information about the research networking in southeast Europe”.

The dissemination responsibility has been identified at the beginning of the project and has not changed since then: TERENA leads the workpackage, coordinates the PR activities and the organisation of the related SEEFIRE workshops. All other project partners at various degrees are actively involved in the dissemination activities.

Audiences

The audience was identified in the first version of this document [R2] and has not changed. The Dissemination Plan identifies the key audience for SEEFIRE as follows:

1. Politicians, government officials, regulators and other key decision-makers involved in policies and funding for funding research, education and telecommunication in the countries concerned.
2. Scientific users who will benefit from a better eInfrastructure and will be able to have more means to perform research and to participate in other European projects demanding high bandwidth (like Grids).
3. Potential new users: the availability of more bandwidth will give more users the possibility to make use of the digital information, also in the more remote areas.
4. Owners of fibre and equipment vendors, who will surely be interested in the deployment and lighting of the fibre.

Messages

The key messages to reach the SEEFIRE audience identified in the first version of this deliverable remain still valid and are listed below:

- What the project is about
- What are the project objectives
- Who is involved in the project
- What NRENS in the rest of Europe and other world regions are doing in this respect to these issues and why
- The importance of the project for the SEE and for the rest of Europe

Where are we now?

The project has been running for nine months and a number of activities to raise awareness about SEEFIRE and its findings have already taken place and some others are planned.

SEEFIRE Website

The SEEFIRE Website [R1] has been up and running since the beginning of the project and provides the first level of dissemination for the project and its objectives.

All public deliverables produced so far as well as news items are available online.

Publicity Material

The publicity material includes SEEFIRE power point template, SEEFIRE brochure and SEEFIRE fact sheet. Most of the publicity material was produced in the first months of the project following the SEEFIRE branding in order to make the project easily recognisable.

The publicity material can be found on the SEEFIRE web site at:

http://www.seefire.org/publicity_material.php?language=en

News Releases

A number of news releases have been generated covering the major milestone of the project namely: the official launch of the project; the SEEFIRE Technical Workshop; events where SEEFIRE has been presented so far and others.

The news releases and newsletter produced so far are available on the SEEFIRE website [R1].

SEEFIRE Technical Workshop

SEEFIRE committed to organise two workshops during the course of the project.

The first SEEFIRE Workshop was held in Sofia on 14 and 15 July 2005 and focused on technical and practical aspects of own dark fibre network deployment targeting technicians and managers of NRENs responsible for the network planning in the SEE.

The workshop was attended by 52 people coming both from the NRENs and the commercial environment.

The workshop represented a major milestone for the project. It was a way for the NRENs to make themselves known to the telecom operators and to describe their role in the research and education. The workshop widely emphasised why the acquisition of dark fibre is so important for the research community: it represents a cost effective way to provide high bandwidth at lower costs than what commercial provider can offer.

SEEFIRE presence at other events

SEEFIRE has been presented at many relevant events. A list of the events where SEEFIRE has been promoted is provided in this document.

What needs to be done

Only four months are left till the end of the project and still some major dissemination milestones are foreseen.

The **second SEEFIRE workshop** will take place in Bucharest on 17 January 2006. This workshop will be focused on the strategic and economic aspects of own fibre network infrastructure in SEE and will target end-users, university directors, telecommunication operators and other stakeholders of research networks as well as decision makers and representatives at the political level.

The **SEEFIRE white paper** summarising the SEEFIRE findings from a strategic perspective will be delivered at Month 12. The document will be a detailed summary about SEEFIRE studies and will address the digital divide and inhibitors factors of research and education networking in SEE countries as well as potential impact on NREN-initiated effort for dark-fibre acquisition.

Conclusions

Looking at what has been produced so far it seems clear that the dissemination is moving toward the right direction.

However it is also worth mentioning that SEEFIRE is just a small step for such a difficult region, where the political events still have a big impact on the NRENs stability. Furthermore although many countries are in the process to join the European Union there still a lot to do before the market will be fully liberalised and will allow for more competition.

2. Introduction

The SEEFIRE project builds on the results of previous IST projects (SEEREN, SERENATE and GN1) and aims to produce studies on the options available for acquiring an optical fibre network infrastructure and strategies for the development of research and education networking in southeast Europe, with a specific emphasis on Balkan countries. One of the goals of SEEFIRE is to provide countries in southeast Europe (SEE) with a set of useful reports and guidelines about (dark) fibre acquisition by NRENs, deployment of optical transmission technologies, regulatory, legal, economical and strategic issues of acquiring (dark) fibre by NRENs in the region.

Disseminating knowledge and results is a crucial part of a project like SEEFIRE, as in order to be successful it is important to raise awareness about the objectives of the project and attract interest from various scientific communities, vendors and governments.

The current document is a revision of the first version of the Final Plan for Using and Disseminating Knowledge, which was produced at Month 3 [R2] of the project with the purpose of providing a strategy for using and disseminating knowledge throughout the project and to complement what had been already described in the Technical Annex. The initial plan highlighted the key messages, potential audiences, roles and responsibilities, the methods of communication to be used and measures for success.

The main target audience for this document remain the project partners, in particular, those involved in the dissemination activity and the decision makers that play an important role to assure funding to support the NRENs.

3. Responsibilities for the Dissemination Activity

As stated in the technical annex the activities of workpackage 4 focus on two major items: “raising awareness and disseminating information about the research networking in southeast Europe”.

The SEEFIRE vision is to eventually create a southeast European fibre backbone fostering collaboration of researchers and students in a region where the development of research and education networking, as well as the information society as a whole have suffered from years of political unrest and relative isolation from the rest of the European continent.

The roles and responsibilities of the project partners were defined in the first three months of the project (March – May 2005) and consolidated in the following months. TERENA as the leading partner coordinates the dissemination activities, as described in the initial version of the Dissemination Plan, and with the support of all the partners is responsible for keeping the project web site up-to-date. TERENA is also responsible for the organisation of the SEEFIRE Workshops.

All the partners, using the PR material produced at the very beginning of the project are in charge of disseminating the project at local level, which also include getting in touch with the right decision makers in their country.

The expected results described in the Final Plan For Using and Disseminating Knowledge that the WP4 aimed to achieve are listed below:

- Making the project known across Europe, particularly in southeast Europe;
- demonstrating that the deployment of the fibre is a cost-effective way to increase the capacity of the network backbone and therefore to reduce the digital divide;
- raising awareness about the possibility of providing the southeast European region with higher network capacity;
- raising awareness about NRENs in southeast Europe amongst key stakeholders (users and governments) and the general public.

These items are being targeted and still remain the core activity of the WP4.

4. Audiences

Over the last years there has been an increasing interest in the use of optical networking technologies to provide high bandwidth at reduced costs. The SEEFIRE project is working to reveal the fibre distribution in the southeast Europe and to identify regulatory and legal issues related to the ownership of fibre network infrastructure. SEEFIRE aims to play an important role in raising awareness about the technical feasibility, the cost-effectiveness and the strategic importance of (dark) fibre deployment in the southeast Europe.

The dissemination target four major groups:

1. Politicians, government officials, regulators and other key decision-makers involved in policies and funding for research, education and telecommunication in the countries concerned.
2. Scientific users who will benefit from a better e-Infrastructure and will be able to have more means to perform research and to participate in other European projects demanding high bandwidth (like Grids).
3. Potential new users: the availability of more bandwidth will give more users the possibility to make use of the digital information, also in the more remote areas.
4. Owners of fibre and equipment vendors, who will be interested in the deployment and lighting of the fibre.

The target audience remains the same as described in the first iteration of this deliverable.

End-users are and will remain till the end of the project an important audience to make them aware of the benefits that a better e-Infrastructure would bring them.

Many NRENs in other regions are in the process of using fibres to increase the capacity of their national backbone and have faced similar problems as the countries that constitute the main target of SEEFIRE. Those countries represent an implicit audience and for this reason the results of the project will be available for them and disseminated beyond the southeast European region as well.

The first half of the project lifetime has concentrated more on the technical side of the dark fibre and has tried to reach out telecom operators to introduce them to what an NRENs is, why NRENs should be regarded as special users and why it is important for NRENs to acquire fibres.

The last part of the project will reach out the stakeholders and the decision makers involved in the research funding. This will be achieved through a policy workshop that will take place in January 2006.

5. Messages

For a project as short as SEEFIRE, it was important to clearly identify at the beginning of the project the messages to bring across. The key messages that the dissemination activity is highlighting are as follows:

- What the project is about
- What are the project objectives
- Who is involved in the project
- What NRENS in the rest of Europe and other world regions are doing in this respect to these issues and why
- The importance of the project for the SEE and for the rest of Europe

The bullets listed above are already being addressed through the SEEFIRE web site, the promotional package prepared at the very beginning of the project and the SEEFIRE press releases.

In the remaining months of the project the dissemination activity will promote results and findings of SEEFIRE, in terms of deliverable produced as well as the impact that the project might have on dark fibre acquisition in southeast Europe.

6. Where are we now?

The project has been running for nine months. It is difficult to say exactly how many of the potential targets have been reached so far, but awareness about SEEFIRE and its objectives has been raised by using different communication methods.

The communication methods used so far are described below.

6.1. SEEFIRE Web site

The SEEFIRE public web site available at <http://www.seefire.org> is up and running since the beginning of the project. The web site contains all the information about the project as well as the deliverables produced so far. The web site provides also links to other related events.

An FTP area, available at <http://www.seefire.org/engine>, has been also up and running and it is used only by the SEEFIRE partners to exchange documents and as a working project library.

Both the SEEFIRE public website and the SEEFIRE FTP website follow the SEEFIRE branding, which was detailed in the first version available on line at:

<http://www.seefire.org/publications.php?language=english>

The Web and FTP site together with the mailing lists, documents templates and communication rules constitute the communication infrastructure of the SEEFIRE consortium.

TERENA and GRNET work together to make sure that the information on the website is kept up-to-date.

6.2. Publicity Material

The publicity material includes SEEFIRE power point template, SEEFIRE brochure and SEEFIRE fact sheet. Most of the publicity material was produced in the first months of the project following the SEEFIRE branding in order to make the project easily recognisable.

The **SEEFIRE fact sheet** was produced at the beginning of the project to provide a first leaflet about the SEEFIRE objectives, its action plan, its international aspect and the impact on the region.

A **SEEFIRE brochure** to highlight the objectives of the project has been produced and it is being used to promote the project during external events. The SEEFIRE brochure aims to attract interest of international organizations that are actively involved in the SEE region, the governments of the countries that participate in the project, the industrial world and the research and education communities in Europe. It also contributes to ensuring the viability of SEEFIRE beyond the project's lifetime.

The generic **SEEFIRE Power Point presentation** developed at Month1 is being used by all partners to disseminate the project objectives, its status and the expected results. It currently details the structure of the project in terms of budget, objectives and main results that the project aims to achieve.

The publicity material can be downloaded from the SEEFIRE website:

http://www.seefire.org/publicity_material.php?language=en .

6.3. News Releases

A number of news releases have been generated covering the major milestone of the project namely: the official launch of the project; the SEEFIRE Technical Workshop; events where SEEFIRE has been presented so far and others.

TERENA has also published the relevant news items on the TERENA Executive Newsletter, issued once per month and addressed to members of the TERENA General Assembly.

TERENA has also published SEEFIRE news items on Pear News Agency :

<http://www.terena.nl/news/pr/agency/posts.php> , which enables collaboration between research and education networking organisations in Europe in the areas of public relations and information dissemination.

The table below lists all the SEEFIRE news items issued so far.

News item/press release	Date	Issued by
SEEFIRE Project launched http://www.seefire.org/news/press.php?language=en	March 1st, 2005	TERENA
SEEFIRE Project http://www.ces.net/doc/press/2005/pr050314.html	March 14th, 2005	CESNET
Početak projekta SEEFIRE http://www.carnet.hr/medjunarodna-suradnja/novosti/?newsId=415	March 23rd, 2005	CARNET
SEEFIRE Newsletter, Issue No1	July 2005	GRNET
SEEFIRE Workshop Opens Doors to Acquisition of Dark Fibres in South East Europe	July 28th, 2005	TERENA
SEEFIRE Technical Workshop Breifing	August 10th, 2005	TERENA

Table 1: List of the news items and press releases issued as of November 2005

6.4. SEEFIRE Technical Workshop

SEEFIRE committed to organise two workshops during the duration of the project.

The first SEEFIRE Workshop was held in Sofia on 14 and 15 July 2005 and focused on technical and practical aspects of own dark fibre network deployment targeting technicians and managers of NRENs responsible for the network planning in the SEE.

The objective of the workshop was to highlight the optical technologies and equipment that are needed to implement optical networks and how this can be a solution to reduce the digital divide in the Balkan region. Experiences from countries currently running an optical network were also reported.

The workshop attracted 52 people coming from the National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) and industrial worlds.

The workshop proceedings, including the programme, the presentation material and the list of attendees are available online at:

<http://www.seefire.org/schedule.php?ctn=1&language=en> .

The workshop provided a way for the NRENs to present their work and to describe why their role is important to support research and development in the academic environment. During the workshop it was many times emphasised that NRENs are not competitors of commercial ISPs and telecom operators, but should rather be seen as collaborators, complementing them in the provision of a reliable infrastructure for the research and education community as well as acting as a national drive in the design and deployment of advanced and innovative projects.

In the specific context of dark fibre, the main motivation for NRENs to acquire dark fibre is to provide the bandwidth needed for advanced services not available on the market. Such services, like for instance Grid applications, require high capacity which is not affordable to an NREN other than by owning its fibre infrastructure. NRENs in the region have proved to have sufficient knowledge to run and operate optical networks.

During the workshop the following topics were discussed:

- ways for industry and NRENS to establish more closer relationships;
- ways for the NRENs to make their work known outside the academic environment and therefore make sure that it is clear to anybody that they have no intention to compete with commercial companies
- the importance of an advanced network to promote research and development for the southeast European region.

Although some of the operators who attended the workshop appeared initially rather sceptical about the need for owning a fibre infrastructure by NREN, the discussion during the workshop showed an increase of interest on their side to understand the rationale for the deployment of (dark) fibre in the region. In particular alternative telecom operators appeared to well receive the problematic and seemed keen to have further discussions to allow NRENs to acquire dark fibres.

6.5. SEEFIRE Presence at Relevant Events

Another way to make the project known is to ensure that SEEFIRE is presented at events attended by possible target audiences.

All partners are keeping track of the events they are attending and a complete list will be reported in the next version of this deliverable. The events attended to date are listed in the table 2.

Event – Dates and Location	Type	Type of audience	Attended by
Customer Empowered Fibre Networks workshop 16-18 May 2005 – Prague, Czech Republic	Workshop	Research	Valentino Cavalli –TERENA, Jorge-A. Sanchez-P and Afroditi Sevasti – GRNET
ROEDUNET Conference, 20-22 May 2005 - Sovata, Romania	Conference	Research- Academic	Octavian Rusu - RoEduNet
Hypermedia and Grid Systems Conference 30 May- 3 June 2005 – Zagreb, Croatia	Conference	Research- Academic	A. Jorge, P. Sanchez, N. Vogiatzis – GRNET
TERENA Conference 6-9 June 2005 – Poznan, Poland	Conference	Research	Valentino Cavalli – TERENA, Jorge-A. Sanchez-P, Thanassis Liakopoulos – GRNET
African Research & Education Networking 25-27 September 2005 CERN - Geneva, Switzerland	Conference	Research- Academic	Jorge-A Sanchez-P. - GRNET
GridNet2005 6-7 October 2005 – Boston, (MA) USA	Workshop	Research- Industry	Licia Florio – TERENA
CARnet Internet Users Conference 21-23 November 2005 - Dubrovnik, Croatia	Conference	Academic	Valentino Cavalli – TERENA

Table 2: Updated table of SEEFIRE related presentations

7. What needs to be done

This section describes the events that will be used to further disseminate the SEEFIRE project.

7.1. SEEFIRE Policy Workshops

Science, research and technological development are essential for the future growth of countries in southeast Europe. Most of the countries in the region have established National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) in some form, in order to provide research users with networking services. However their existence is not secured and in some cases they are not able to keep up with the progresses of the technology.

The second SEEFIRE workshop will be held on 17 January of 2006, in Bucharest, a few months before the end of the project.

This workshop will focus on the strategic and economic aspects of own fibre network infrastructure in SEE and will target end-users, university directors, telecommunication operators and other stakeholders of research networks as well as decision makers and representatives at the political level.

The objectives of the workshop are inline with the SEEFIRE project objectives, to promote the importance of an advanced network to support research and development in the SEE region. Furthermore the workshop wants to raise awareness on the dark fibre network as a cost effective way to allow the National Research and Education Networks in the region to provide high bandwidth at reduced costs.

The political support is essential for the NRENs in these countries to obtain stability of financial and human resources to sustain their activities. Therefore the workshop will address the political class in order to raise awareness on the role on the NRENs, the importance for NRENs to access (dark) fibre and why dark fibre is so crucial and the importance for the region to participate in international joint research projects.

The proceeding of the workshops will be available at the end of the workshop on the SEEFIRE website. The link will be provided to the Commission in the next revision of this deliverable.

7.2. SEEFIRE White Paper

One of the major goals of SEEFIRE is to raise awareness among key-players such as politicians and government officials responsible for policies and funding of research and education in the various countries. One of the key messages that SEEFIRE wants to bring across is that cost-effective higher bandwidth (such as the one based on fibre) available for research and education networks will allow more users to obtain high-standard services and will contribute significantly in building the Information Society in the region and in bringing it closer to the rest of Europe.

To help achieve this, a white paper summarising the SEEFIRE findings from a strategic perspective will be delivered at Month 12. The document will be an executive summary about the SEEFIRE studies and will address the digital divide and inhibitors factors of research and education networking in SEE countries as well as potential impact on NREN-initiated effort for dark-fibre acquisition.

TERENA will coordinate this activity, with contributions from all partners.

7.3. Media Relations

Maintaining media relations is normally a key dissemination method and can assist in raising the profile of a project, especially in the early stages. However considering the nature of the project media relations are expected to be very limited.

Most of the partners involved in SEEFIRE have already gained experience working on other European projects and have used local media to promote past or ongoing projects. Therefore they will be expected to utilise the media contacts they already have, and if they do not have any, to build a media contact list to target with news about SEEFIRE.

Whenever a news item is produced by the project, the partners should be able to translate the material (adapting it to a local audience if necessary) and dispatch it to the media contacts.

SEEFIRE partners are also encouraged to create publicity about the project at local level, providing the messages are in line with the overall messages of the project. Partners are also requested to keep track of all publicity created at local level and to inform TERENA about all coverage in order to detail this information in the next version of this deliverable.

Partners are requested to provide TERENA with information about:

- Publication news item appeared in (online and traditional) magazines
- country
- language
- title of cutting
- date of the publication

8. SEEFIRE Exploitation

The exploitation side of SEEFIRE can be defined as knowledge that has been acquired by the project partners and that can have a potential impact for other research activities and/or for the owners of fibre and equipment vendors.

Activities related to the objectives of SEEFIRE have been taking place in America and in other regions in Europe for a few years and a number of initiatives for building fibre networks are ongoing. Although SEEFIRE targets specifically the SEE region, it is expected to promote dark-fibre deployment activities in SEE area and beyond.

SEEFIRE is producing a number of extremely useful documents, including templates for procurement, comparative analysis and evaluation of technologies, a fibre-availability database and a number of strategic reports. All documents and results are and will remain available on the SEEFIRE web site in order to be transferred to existing projects in Southeast Europe and other world regions, like EUMEDCONNECT, ALICE and TEIN2.

One of the exploitable results of SEEFIRE will be the introduction of the SEE countries to open market practices, such as public invitation to tender for the provision of the necessary telecommunication elements and network management services. NREs, by moving towards owned fibre infrastructure, will play an important role to break the monopoly situation that has prevented the development of an appropriate network infrastructure.

Not all countries in the SEE region are part of SEEFIRE, but it is envisaged that also the countries that are not part of the project (like Turkey or Croatia for example), but are experiencing similar situations, will exploit SEEFIRE results or in any case find them useful for their future plans.

9. Conclusion

For such a short project it was important since the very beginning to have clear in mind what disseminating knowledge should be about.

The dissemination activity is at full speed and the SEEFIRE web site contains some useful information about what has been achieved so far. Most of the information is publicly available, with the exclusion of a few documents, which are not meant to be distributed to a general audience and that are only available on the private area of the project.

However it is also worth mentioning that SEEFIRE is just a small step for such a difficult region, where the political events still have a big impact on the NRENs stability. Furthermore although many countries are in the process to join the European Union there still a lot to do before the market will be fully liberalised and will allow for more competition.

The major dissemination effort in the remaining months will be the promotion of the project results and the preparation of the Policy Workshop in January 2006.

Liaisons with existing projects in Southeast Europe (SEEREN) and in other world regions will make sure that the findings of SEEFIRE will be useful to countries that for different reasons are suffering from the digital divide.

10. References

- [R1] <http://www.seefire.org/> SEEFIRE Website
- [R2] [Final Plan for Using and Disseminating Knowledge v1](#) First iteration of the Dissemination Plan