

TAPPING THE POTENTIAL OF THE ASIAN R&E COMMUNITY



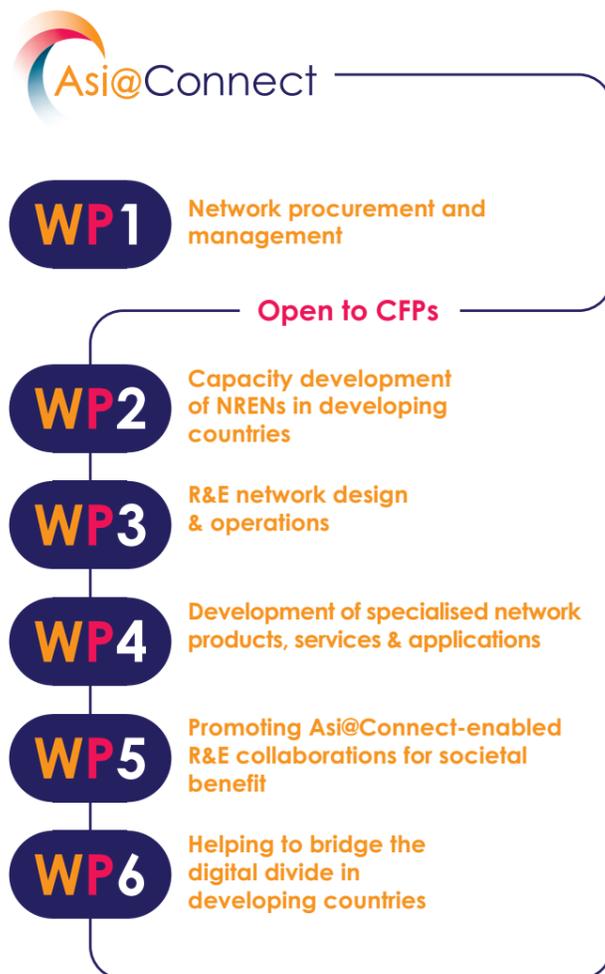
Asia@Connect marks the 4th phase of EU funding to the TEIN programme that successfully established a high-capacity regional network across Asia-Pacific in 2006 and has progressively expanded its geographical footprint over the years. Today the TEIN network is the world's largest regional backbone, connecting over 55 million users in 21 countries.

With a further substantial five-year EU-funding commitment of €20M until 2021, the focus during the current project phase has shifted towards capacity building, application programmes to promote and increase network utilisation and towards new initiatives to tackle the digital divide in emerging countries – scaling up significantly similar activities initiated during previous project phases.

The winning formula: Call for Proposals

Creating such a vibrant R&E networking ecosystem relies on involving the wider community in delivering and, by extension, benefitting from Asi@Connect. But how can local resources best be mobilised? Simple: providing funding opportunities through Call for Proposals (CFPs).

To date, 2 CFPs were issued in 2017, which were met with an enthusiastic response by the R&E community in Asia and further afield: in total, 114 proposals were submitted and, following a rigorous evaluation process by the Asi@Connect review committee, 29 awards were made across 5 of the 6 Work Packages (WP) that capture the core impact objectives of the Asi@Connect project, with a substantial funding investment of over €5m so far.



1st call

52 proposals submitted
12 awarded

2nd call

64 proposals submitted
17 awarded

investment

over €5M

training

over 200 engineers

from 17 Asian countries



Unleashing (creative) potential

And the results to date are impressive.

- The 1st CFPs generated a series of **human capacity building and knowledge exchange workshops** which have already trained over 200 engineers from 17 developing Asian countries in areas such as campus networking, network security, network management etc. These include workshops in Afghanistan to support the development of AfgREN, the Afghan NREN.

“My motivation to participate in this workshop was to acquire new skills to optimize our contributions to the Institute and, therefore, to increase its reputation. Interacting with other engineer colleagues and meeting experts face-to-face is a great learning experience. I have already started to put by new knowledge around routing and switching into practice back home.”

Abdul Ahmad Ahmadi, IT Manager at Ghor Institute of Higher Education in Afghanistan who attended the workshop for AfgREN Network Engineers in Kabul in July 2017.

- AARNet (Australia's Academic Network) is leading a project to **extend the eduroam footprint in Asia**, training network engineers from 9 new participating countries to provide them with the skills they need and ongoing support in order to deploy and manage eduroam in their home countries.
- Dr Shimizu and his TEMDEC team at Kyushu University Hospital in Japan endeavour to **scale up telemedicine activities** in the least developed Asian countries, whilst the Korea-based Next organisation is dedicated to providing the **expertise for a vibrant e-culture community** to flourish in South and South-East Asian countries, such as India, Bangladesh and Vietnam.
- By the end of this year, ICT4D in Nepal is committed to **extending broadband internet services to rural communities in the Mt. Everest region**, thus providing remote learning and tele-consultations at local schools and hospitals.
- Finally, Soundscape – a Taiwan-led project – sets out to use the TEIN network to transmit acoustic data for **ecological and biodiversity monitoring** across South-East Asia.

The selected 2nd CFPs projects are equally diverse – even if at an early stage - with further 8 capacity building workshops to support the Asi@Connect beneficiary countries, programmes for cloud and federated identity platform deployment as well as community building projects in areas such as disaster mitigation, nuclear medicine and development of distance learning platforms.

Asian partners in the driving seat

All proposals are contracted with and supported by TEIN*CC, the Korea-based organisation that manages the Asi@Connect project up to 2021. The Asi@Connect Steering Committee (SC) plays a vital role in ensuring that this complex process runs smoothly and is transparent.



“It is fair to say, when the first CFPs closed in January 2017, the SC members were confronted with an amazing, but equally overwhelming result, with a steep learning curve ahead. However, they rolled up their sleeves, set up review committees and eventually went on to recommend 12 solid proposals to the Asi@Connect Governors”.

Jie An, Chair of Asi@Connect Steering Committee; CERNET, China

Most selected projects are managed by Asian partners from both developed and developing countries. From the European side, GÉANT is running a series of TRANSIT, CSIRT and federated identity workshops, while NORDUNET is supporting the Bangladeshi NREN (BdREN) improve distance learning capabilities.

CFPs have established themselves as an effective delivery mechanism of Asi@Connect. Further calls are expected over the remaining project duration – so watch this space!

To find out more about Asi@Connect and CFPs visit www.tein.asia

Picture Participants in AfgREN workshop in Kabul, July 2017