Newsletter

seera-ei
South East European
Research Area
for eInfrastructures

SEERA-EI Joint Regional Action Plan for e-Infrastructures in South East Europe

The SEERA-EI regional action plan, defining measures in order to design and implement programme managers' collaborative activities in South East Europe, has been successfully completed. The document describes a set of short-term and mid-term policy actions, as well as preparatory activities for long-term actions, with the aim to establish long-term commitment to the common regional vision and strategy set by SEERA-EI.

The short term actions consist of:

- grouping of national-level programmes and their mutual reinforcement
- guidelines for cross-evaluation of national programmes
- joint dissemination and training activities
- actual post-evaluation of national programmes
- plan for making of the joint database of experts/advisors
- plan for short-term exchange of staff and stimulation of bi-lateral activities

The Short-term policy-level actions include:

- cooperation agreements and MoUs for resource sharing
- drafting of the joint common vision and regional strategy for e-Infrastructures
- sustainability analysis, in terms of exploration of funding models for longer term
- analysis of forecast national budgets and identification of complementary funding opportunities for the region as a whole
- striving to put the eInfrastructure on the agendas of the ministries, aiming at explicit inclusion of eInfrastructure concepts in open science calls
- possibility of the formulation of a joint SEE Initiative
- challenges encountered in trying to implement trans-national activities

The document also provides a high-level plan for long-term actions, in order to define common strategy and vision, and to support the planning of joint activities beyond the duration of the project in the long term, aiming to optimize and rationalize investments in research programs and infrastructures in the SEE region.

The joint regional action plan will be endorsed by a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed by programme owners participating in the project, thus aiming to ensure commitment and long-term cooperation.

SEERA-EI Comparative Analysis of National Programmes and Identification of Regional Collaboration Areas

SEERA-EI compiled an in-depth comparative analysis of national programmes, and national & regional eInfrastructures, with the aim to identify both the gaps in eInfrastructure development and related programmes on the national level; as well as to identify regional collaboration areas.

SEERA-EI will use the outputs from the analysis to formulate national best practices, taking into account the comparative analysis gaps identified regarding the regional collaboration areas, and will use it as the technical input/content for its joint actions.

This document provides an overview of the theoretical framework for e-Infrastructures in terms of main constituents of e-Infrastructures and regional and Pan-European collaborations, as well as strategic directions. It also includes a comparative analysis of national programmes, using specific programme management metrics.

The technological priorities and potential areas for future regional collaboration have been identified and consist of:

- the stability and sustainability of network operations, specifically dark fibres
- the emerging computing paradigms, such as High Performance Computing, Cloud computing and Green IT
- transnational access and regional end-user applications
- ESFRI integrations
- softer actions focused on training and human capital enforcement.

Integration of e-infrastructures in South East Europe was Discussed in Sarajevo with Bosnia & Herzegovina Government and RCC support

The SEERA-EI Open day, organized by the Ministry of Communication and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina and hosted by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat, took place in Sarajevo on 26 January.

During the event, programmes and strategies related to e-Infrastructure in South East Europe were presented. The event also provided a platform for open dialogue between the parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina for setting up the National Research and Education Network and strengthening the National Grid Initiative. The Bulgarian case was presented as a role model for focused NRN and NGI development.

The event was opened by Mr. Rudo Vidovic, Minister of Communications & Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mr. Hido Biscevic, RCC Secretary General (photo below). Mr. Kostas Glinos, Head of Unit, GEANT & Infrastructures, European Commission presented the EC vision regarding eInfrastructures.

The meeting brought together representatives of national authorities and partners from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, FYR of Macedonia and Turkey, who implement e-Infrastructure strategies and operate the programmes in their respective countries.

Following the open discussion, the participants from 10 SEE countries reviewed and evaluated programme progress, and assessed developments in building a platform for long-term sustainable cooperation in the region, and in designing and implementing concrete short-term and long-term guidelines, best practices and actions at the regional level on e-Infrastructures.

Regional conference 2010: Supercomputing New Challenge for Science and Industry

The first regional conference on supercomputing and the supercomputing applications in the science and economics took place on 9-10 December 2010 in Sofia, Bulgaria. The conference program included presentations of the EU and regional HPC activities, given by the PRACE director Prof. Thomas Lippert (Head of Juelich Supercomputing Centre, Germany) and the HP-SEE technical coordinator Ioannis Liabotis (GRNET, Greece). The Bulgarian National Roadmap for RIs was presented by Dr. Albena Vutsova, director of directorate Science in the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Bulgaria, and the current status of regional eInfrastructure programs (SEERA-EI project) was given by Prof. Aneta Karaivanova (IICT-BAS). In the scope of scientific program, the most recent achievements in the field of supercomputer architectures and applications for studying processes and phenomena in physics, medicine, pharmacy, estimations of the seismic risk and the pollution of the atmosphere, were presented.

The conference agenda included Welcoming address by Mr. Georgy Parvanov, President of Republic of Bulgaria, and Opening address by Mr. Parvan Rusinov, Deputy Minister of Transport, Information Technology and Communications. The conference was attended by more than 200 people, including representation of the Bulgarian government.

Aneta Karaivanova presented SEE eInfrastructure activities in general and SEERA-EI project in particular, with emphasis on the importance of the SEE

initiatives that have established very concrete results regarding infrastructure, which is available to researchers and can and should be shared. SEERA-EI has established a platform for eInfrastructure issues for the region and its focus is on the wider technical area, which includes HPC and supercomputing in particular.

Forum on Research for Innovation in ICT for the Western Balkan Countries

The Forum on research for Innovation in ICT for the Western Balkan Countries was organized in Belgrade on 30 November, 2010. The event was co-hosted by the Ministry of Science & Technological Development and the Ministry of Telecommunications & Information Society of Serbia, and opened policy dialogue for the adoption of regional ICT priorities and common reso-lutions for tackling problems hindering research co-operation, with the aim to advance coordination of national policies & strategies among Western Balkan countries. The conference was attended by relevant deputy ministers, state secretaries, and other similar-level officials. SEERA-EI was presented together with other SEE eInfrastructure activities, with emphasis on the concrete results regarding eInfrastructures in the region, which is available to researchers and can be shared. The event led to the adoption of a Joint Declaration among delegates, with eInfrastructures explicitly included in it, correlated by also a provi-sional Roadmap.

SEERA-EI National Dissemination Meeting in Podgorica

SEERA-EI organized a national dissemination meeting on 2 November 2010 in Podgorica. High level policy makers in Montenegro that participated to the event were informed about the SEERA-EI activities, as well as past and current eInfrastructure activities in Montenegro.

Representatives also discussed about sustainability of financing of MREN, the national network of Montene-gro, about the creation of new programme to support eInfrastructure projects for its development, as well as future activities. New legislation has been de-scribed, and programmes which will be financed and for which MREN can apply and participate.

The event was attended by the Deputy Minister for Science, Research and Technological Development, the Deputy Minister for promotion of information society, the Secretary of the Minister for the Informa-tion Society, the Adviser to the Minister for ICT at the Ministry of Education and Science, the Head of ICT department at the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as SEERA-EI partners from the Ministry of Education & Science and the University of Montene-gro.

eInfrastructure Initiatives in SEE were Presented at the 2010 Euro-Africa e-Infrastructures

SEERA-EI and other SEE e Infrastructure projects were presented on December 9, 2010, during the 2010 Euro-Africa e-Infrastructures Conference which took place in Helsinki. The presentation was focused on combined SEE initiatives that have become a role-model for regional eInfrastructure development, fully engaged in European eInfrastructure activities, that address the needs of a wide range of user communi-ties. The event has successfully set up a framework for discussions and debates, networking opportuni-ties, and knowledge-sharing among all key stake-holders in the field of e-Infrastructures.

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About SEERA-EI

SEERA-EI will provide an open forum for national-level programme owners in order to enable the coordination of na-tional programmes in the field of electronic infrastructures. The initiative brings together 19 partners from 10 countries in the South-East European region and will set the framework for the adoption of a common regional agenda for eInfra-structure. **SEERA-EI receives EC support through FP7 under the "Research Infrastructures" action.**

The project will gather and exchange information regarding current e- Infrastructure programmes, and a state-of-the-art analysis will be carried out. Through the analysis, a set of best practices and guidelines for national eInfrastructure programmes will be produced, and areas for joint regional activities will be identified, ranging from short-term soft actions, mid-term policy level actions, to preparatory activities for long-term actions.

SEERA-EI is coordinated by the Greek Research & Technology Network (GRNET) and the partnership consists of 10 pro-gramme owners – Ministries and Research councils involved in national funding of electronic infrastructures, and 9 "operational" partners, typically implementing the programmes strategy and operational issues.

SEERA-EI will ensure local commitment and a harmonized approach towards national-level initiatives in electronic infra-structures. The initiative will pave the way towards common regional vision, strategy and sustainable cooperation, which will give the region a common voice on European and international stage and strengthen the ERA as a whole, enabling collaborative high-quality research across a spectrum of scientific fields.