

“ASREN is a non-profit company with limited liability (GmbH) and is officially registered in Germany, under the umbrella of the League of Arab States. The main goal is to connect Arab institutions among themselves and to the globe through high-speed data-communications networks. Such networks will enable sharing and access to a variety of R&E services and applications in addition to utilization of highly sophisticated and technologically advanced computing resources available only at very few institutions in the world.”

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The AAU and the RRENs Call for strengthening of campus network infrastructure for African Higher Education Institutions to cope with COVID-19 disruptions



Amidst the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, many academic and research communities have resolved to work remotely for health and safety reasons. This situation has proved the importance of building strong communications infrastructures for higher education and research institutions, able to support advanced services delivered through high-speed telecommunications networks.

The Association of African Universities (AAU), the Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN), the UbuntuNet Alliance (UA), the West and Central Africa Research and Education Network (WACREN) and the National Research and Education Networks (NRENs)

in Africa are therefore calling for investments to support the development and strengthening of campus networks & research and education networks infrastructure and provision of online/remote teaching and learning platforms/tools for African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The campus networks, supported by the national and regional research and education networks, are fundamental in transforming methods of teaching, learning and research as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic that has led to the closure of a large majority of African Higher Education Institutions.

This is the opportune time for all of us to come together to support our African HEIs keep their doors of learning, teaching and research open. As a consortium, we appeal to African Governments, Development and Funding Partners and Private Sector to support (financially & in terms of human resources) the development of strong campus networks and the strengthening of National Research & Education Networks so that African HEIs can effectively provide all types of digital services for remote teaching. We especially appeal to African Governments to prioritize the ‘last mile’ solutions in the African

countries so that the rural areas have equal access to the internet as those in the urban areas. We appeal to telecommunications companies in Africa to design affordable internet access packages for students as well as staff. We also ask all humanity to support each other to protect our communities and fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

Founded in 1967, the Association of African Universities is composed of 400 member Higher Education Institutions from the 5 regions of Africa. The AAU is the Voice of Higher Education in Africa.

ASREN is the Arab States Research and Education Network and is the association of 22 Arab region National Research and Education Networks (NRENs), as well as their strategic partners.

UbuntuNet Alliance is a regional association of 16 National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) in Eastern and Southern Africa.

WACREN is the West and Central African Research and Education Network of 15 National Research and Education Networks (NRENs).

Oman Research Repository “Shuaa”: a new service in OMREN

Oman Research and Education Network (OMREN) added an important service to its collections of valuable resource to the research and education community in the sultanate of Oman. The new service, Shuaa, is a digital repository of Oman’s related multi-disciplinary publications.

The repository project helps organizing, managing, and representing the outcomes of Omani academic research innovations in order to increase the exposure and impact of Oman’s scientific research contribution. Shuaa is built on open source repository management database, hosted and



supported by OMERN. Although it follows open access standard, it uses OMREN Federation to allow authenticated access. Shuaa contributes significantly to scientific research in the Sultanate and offers a great opportunity to provide value-added services to the research community by providing free of charge sources online.

The project steering committee consists of members from Sultan Qaboos University and the research council which did a great achievement by signing collaboration MoUs with major universities, research centres and libraries in the sultanate to enrich the repository with valuable publications and resources of documents, video, audio and graphic files.

OMER Director, Dr. Abdulmonem Al Kharusi sees Shuaa as another great addition to OMREN's services: "Shuaa provides the Sultanate researchers with a better exposure and further promote scientific collaboration and innovation. OMREN's community is pleased to have a central archive for intellectual production. Many thanks to the Application Department at OMREN for making this initiative live in a relatively short time."

eduroam successfully deployed across Morocco



Rabat - The Moroccan Academic and Research Wide Area Network (MARWAN) held a workshop to further advance the deployment of eduroam and federation identities in Morocco from the 10th to 14th February 2020. The workshop was in the form of a deployment, where members of MARWAN network prepared machines in their home institutions on which they worked remotely to deploy these services.

This five-day workshop was conducted with the attendance of fourteen representatives of seven research and education institutions and universities in Morocco, all of whom either network or systems engineers. At the end of the deployment, five additional members successfully deployed eduroam and joined the eduIDM (and thus eduGAIN) federation bringing the total number of eduroam deployments in Morocco to 10 and eduIDM members to 6 institutions.

Redouane Merrouch, Director of MARWAN said: “MARWAN will continue to support its member institutions to deploy further services and to deploy eduroam and eduGAIN at all universities”.

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