ASREN

Arab States Research and Education Network

ASREN *Newsletter*

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*"**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."*

In this issue

A Virtual Workshop on Collaboration between AfriGEO & AfricaConnect3

With the support of AfricaConnect3, the Arab states Research and education Networks (ASREN) and the African Group on Earth Observation (AfriGEO) are coordinating a virtual workshop to provide insight on potential collaboration between African Regional Research and Education Networks (RRENs) and AfriGEO member institutions.

Representing sister African RRENs (UbuntuNet Alliance and WACREN), ASREN will cooperate with AfriGEO to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide AfriGEO with insight on research and education networks and their role in supporting the developments of research and education.
- Assess the GEO and AfriGEO community needs

and demands in terms of connectivity, access to resources, computing and storage etc.
- Present the services provided by research and education networks to support the collaboration between research and education communities, like eduroam and eduGAIN.
- Present the AfricaConnect3 project with a focus on supporting and engaging with research and education communities especially AfriGEO.
- Discuss collaboration opportunities.
- Prepare the AfriGEO community to the survey on the status of connectivity and services provided by NRENs and the actual needs and demands for connectivity, services and capacities.

For more details and registration please visit: http://asrenorg.net/?q=content/virtual-workshop-collaboration-between-afrigeo-africaconnect3

Call for papers is open for e-AGE20

e-AGE20, the 10th edition of the International Platform on Integrating Arab e-Infrastructure in a Global Environment will be held in Tunis, Tunisia during 14-15 December 2020. Its focus will be on the role of e-Infrastructures in the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. e-AGE20 is also supported by the EU co-funded projects AfricaConnect3 and EUMEDCONNECT3.

e-AGE20 will be a forum to share practices and experiences that go beyond teaching online courses and sharing resources in today's unprecedented isolation. NRENs and e-Infrastructures provide essential means to stay connected and to meet the new challenges of research and education.

ASREN
10 Years
CELEBRATING A DECADE OF SUCCESS

e-AGE20

"Power of e-Infrastructures –
Shaping the Future of Online
Research and Education"

Tunis, Tunisia
14 - 15 December 2020

Renowned speakers, experts and scientists are invited to share their experiences and debate on the complex global phenomenon and scientific challenges of COVID-19 pandemic. Topics of interest include, but not limited to:
- Roles of NRENs in the COVID-19 crisis
- Resources for Research and Education in COVID-19 Outbreaks
- Scientific computing and data-intensive e-Science in COVID-19 pandemic
- NREN services challenges, sustainability and business models
- Problem-solving environments in a global research

- Online teaching and learning: technologies, content, collaboration and assessment
- Open access, repository and content and open science platforms and policies
- Software defined networks and emerging technologies in AI

For more information and submission guidelines please visit: http://asrenorg.net/eage20/submission-guidelines

EUN supports higher education system amid coronavirus pandemic

With the advent of the present Covid-19 pandemic, the Egyptian universities have resorted to e-learning platforms and online classes. In an effort to remove all obstacles for students, the Egyptian Universities Network (EUN), partner in AfricaConnect3, carried out several activities to support the remote delivery of education.

EUN has coordinated with major IT vendors in relation to university support services, to provide a unified communication platform and smart web conferencing and videoconferencing applications, which create an interactive online classroom to deliver better student experiences.

EUN has also collaborated with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Egypt to apply and maximize the benefits of Learning Management Systems software application (LMS), already used at most Egyptian universities, for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting and delivery of educational courses, in order to sustain a more knowledgeable and productive remote delivery of educational content.

Prof. Ibrahim Fathy, Director of Knowledge and Services Centre (EKSC) at the Supreme Council of Universities (SCU) said: "Our mission has remained unchanged since 1987, to improve the higher education system, providing value-added services, and to foster coordination and linkage between the Egyptian universities to maximize the utilization of the available resources. Today, amidst the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, that mission is more important than ever."

"Early this year, EUN and the Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN) have signed an agreement, with the support of the EU co-funded AfricaConnect3 project, under which ASREN will provide a high bandwidth link between EUN and the pan-European GÉANT network, connecting EUN to the global research and education network fabric. This pandemic has emphasized the necessity of building such strong communications infrastructures, to be able to support advanced services delivered through high-speed links, to better serve the higher R&E institutions in Egypt."

Egyptian Higher Education and ICT ministers sign protocol to implement digital transformation and automation projects in Higher Education Ministry

Cairo - The Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Khaled Abdel Ghaffar and the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Amr Talaat have signed a cooperation protocol between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) to implement the automated testing system project and smart university applications, and develop the infrastructure and the technological systems at the Ministry of Higher Education.

The five-year protocol, with a total budget of EGP 722 million, comprises implementing 11 projects, where the two ministries will collaborate to provide smart university applications and apply the Learning Management System (LMS). This is in addition to implementing the innovative educational content initiative, applying the follow-up systems for national projects and providing applications to connect incubators, Intensive Care Units (ICU) beds and blood banks in university hospitals.

The protocol also stipulates that the two sides cooperate in establishing technology hubs and Internet of Things (IoT) specialized labs in universities, as well as automating services in the education and missions sectors at the Ministry of Higher Education.

The Minister of Higher Education stated that the protocol reflects the State's efforts for achieving the digital transformation, and comes in line with his Ministry's strategy that focuses on implementing projects for developing digital transformation skills.

It also reflects the Ministry's keenness to develop its infrastructure and information infrastructure, automate services and establish IoT specialized labs in universities, said Abdel Ghaffar, stressing the significance of taking all precautionary measures and regulations to follow up on students' attendance at the technology labs, before the start of the new academic year.

He also underlined the significance of rendering electronic services to students, represented in uploading curricula online and carrying out monthly assessments electronically.

For his part, the ICT Minister highlighted that the protocol enhances cooperation between the two ministries and helps complete the implementation of the joint projects, with the aim to transform Egyptian universities into digital universities and develop their ICT infrastructure to meet their needs to achieve the digital transformation. This is in addition to enhancing cooperation in developing the technological systems at the Ministry of Higher Education to enable providing excellent digital services, within the framework of synergizing the efforts of the State sectors to build Digital Egypt.

Talaat added that the cooperation includes building capacities, developing digital skills and promoting entrepreneurship among youth through establishing technology innovation clusters and IoT specialized labs in universities. He stated that a number of joint projects are underway to keep up with the global technological developments. This has resulted in developing the national strategy for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and establishing the first ICT specialized university in Africa and the Middle East, at the Knowledge City in the New Administrative Capital.

The signing ceremony was attended by the Assistant Minister of Higher Education for Digital Transformation Hesham Farouk, the Director of the Electronic and Knowledge Services Center (EKSC) at the Supreme Council of Universities Ibrahim Moawad, the Deputy ICT Minister for Administrative Development, Digital Transformation and Automation Khaled El Attar, the Deputy ICT Minister for Infrastructure and the Director of the Telecommunication and Infrastructure Sector at MCIT Raafat Hindy and a number of officials from the two ministries.

Source: http://www.mcit.gov.eg/Media_Center/Press_Room/Press_Releases/46793