

The AfricaConnect project is coordinated by DANTE (Delivery of Advanced Network Technology to Europe) and partnered by the UbuntuNet Alliance, representing the NRENs of East and Southern Africa (DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia), European NRENs (Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal) and WACREN, the West and Central Africa regional REN representing the emerging west and central African NRENs.

DANTE

DANTE is a not-for-profit organisation that operates GÉANT, the pan-European research network which provides the data communications infrastructure essential to the success of many research projects in Europe. Established in 1993, DANTE has been fundamental to the success of pan-European research and education networking. DANTE is involved in worldwide initiatives to interconnect countries in the other regions to one another and to GÉANT. DANTE currently manages projects focussed on the Mediterranean, Asia-Pacific and Central Asia regions through the EUMEDCONNECT, TEIN and CAREN projects respectively.

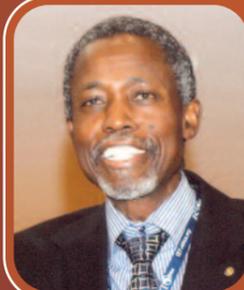
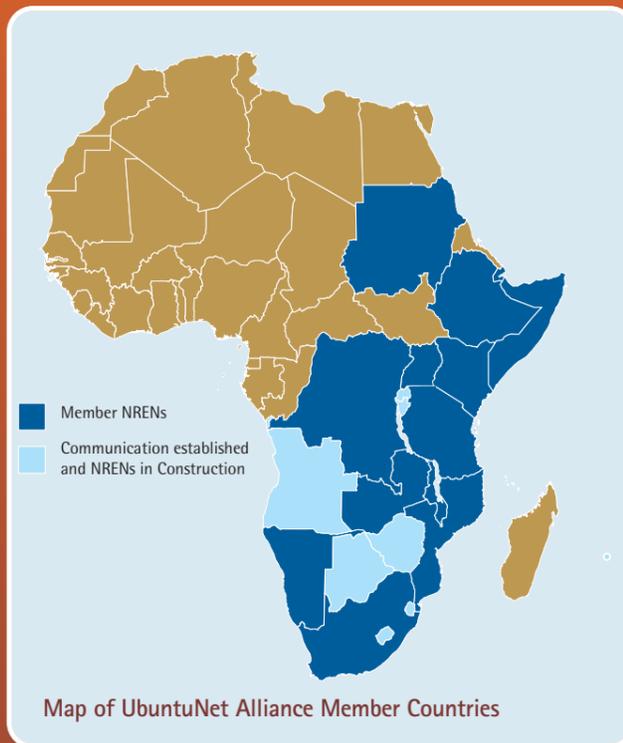
THE UBUNTUNET ALLIANCE

The UbuntuNet Alliance is a not-for-profit regional association of NRENs in Africa, primarily in East and Southern Africa. It was established in the latter half of 2005 by five established and emerging NRENs in the region and now has a total of thirteen NREN members. The Alliance aims to interconnect African NRENs to each other and connect them to other regional RENs and to the Internet at high speeds to enable researchers, educators and students to collaborate effectively and participate in global research and education networking activities.

UbuntuNet Alliance is a commitment and movement by member NRENs to unlocking Africa's intellectual potential by ensuring that African researchers and educators achieve equity with the rest of the world in terms of ease and cost of access to the global information infrastructure as well as opportunities for research collaboration.

WACREN

WACREN is a not-for-profit regional research and education network covering Western and Central Africa. The first member NRENs are GARNET (Ghana) and SnRER, Senegal. It was registered in 2010 and aims to promote the establishment of interconnections between NRENs in West and Central Africa to form a regional research and education network, and interconnect with other regional and continental networks.



'The resource demands for achieving our dreams will be high, but the returns in terms of the development of our people are even higher. We see AfricaConnect as the precursor, the primary explosion that will trigger the bigger explosion of investment from both our governments and friends around the world. It is an initiative we welcome and an initiative we must build on.'

Dr FF Tsubira, CEO UbuntuNet Alliance

Visit the AfricaConnect Website

Further information can be found on the AfricaConnect project, visit www.africaconnect.eu. Here you can find the latest news on the project as well as links to partner sites.

www.africaconnect.eu | www.ubuntunet.net | www.dante.net | www.geant.net | www.wacren.net



AfricaConnect

Implementing a Research and Education Network for Southern and Eastern Africa



Connecting sub-Saharan Africa



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A research and education network for sub-Saharan Africa

The AfricaConnect project aims to establish UbuntuNet, a high-capacity regional data network for research and education in Eastern and Southern Africa, and to improve the volume and reliability of connectivity to the global research and education community. This will complement the existing interconnection between the region and GÉANT, the pan-European research and education data network, enabling researchers and academics in Africa to collaborate seamlessly with each other and with research and education institutions around the world.

AfricaConnect will also support capacity building for the relevant personnel in National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) in sub-Saharan countries, enabling those that are operational to improve performance, and those that are not operational by the start of the project to get to a level where they can join the network at a later date. The project has a first phase of up to twelve months for planning and procurement of the network, and a second phase of up to thirty six months to roll out the regional network.

The progress of this project is shaped both by DANTE's experience of setting up other research and education networks outside Europe such as EUMEDCONNECT in the Southern Mediterranean, TEIN in Asia and ALICE in South and Central America; and the UbuntuNet Alliance's knowledge of the regional telecommunications markets and experience in promoting research and education networking in Eastern and Southern Africa. Planning and implementation are grounded in the need to create a self-sustaining research network infrastructure, financed and managed by the regional and national research organisations.



"Peace, stability and development across the African continent can never be tackled in the right way unless we give education and research more attention and focus. With AfricaConnect in place, we can declare that we are creating the future of Africa."

Dr Iman Abuel Maaly Abdelrahman – CEO, Administration for Information Technology and Networks, University of Khartoum

Who will be the users of the data network established by AfricaConnect?

The data network, UbuntuNet, will support data-intensive, time-critical applications between collaborating partners, but can equally be used to provide fast access to conventional web-based resources from all over the Southern and Eastern African region and beyond.

There is pent up demand for the use of the network for collaborative applications. UbuntuNet will provide Southern and Eastern Africa with a gateway for global collaboration, enabling users at research centres and universities across the region to participate in joint projects with their peers in Europe and other parts of the world.

Societal Objectives

While AfricaConnect is aimed at establishing an operational and sustainable data network, the societal objective is supporting the fulfilment of the region's Millennium Development Goals. AfricaConnect aims to foster the development of cooperative research programmes between the African and the European research and education communities by providing the infrastructure that supports the development and deployment of the applications exploiting work done in Europe relating to the Information Society.



"The vision of the African Union is for a peaceful, integrated, prosperous Africa, driven by its own citizens to take up its rightful place in the global community. Infrastructure development including e-infrastructures plays an important role in attaining the African Union vision: this brings Access to SUCCESS!"

Vera Brenda Ngosi, Director of Human Resources, Science and Technology at the African Union Commission (AUC)

Although internet penetration is increasing at a rapid rate due to the growing availability of fibre infrastructure, there is a major challenge in the shortage of skilled technical, operational and managerial staff available in the region. Therefore, the project seeks to develop staff capacity at all levels in the existing and emerging African NRENs, duly taking into account their immediate needs.

The project's purpose is to open up the research activities in the region and build co-operation with researchers in the rest of the world. Specific research application areas cover the fields of: Health, Climate, Agriculture, Education and Environment.

APPLICATIONS – New research and education possibilities for sub-Saharan Africa

AfricaConnect will make a fundamental contribution to the ability of researchers and academic institutions in sub-Saharan Africa to collaborate in research projects around the world, helping to overcome the digital divide that has held back their progress in the past. The AfricaConnect network will transform the way the region's researchers work, allowing them to collaborate with colleagues all over the world.



"With the arrival of AfricaConnect, all researchers working on medicinal plants in sub-Saharan African countries, members of NAPRECA, will be connected to each other as well as with their colleagues throughout the world; they will build a virtual community, share resources and collaborate in a clever way to speed up phytomedicines' discovery through grid computing."

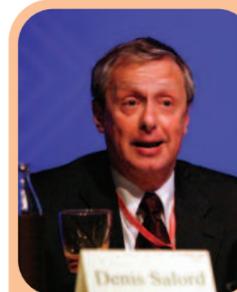
Dibungi T. Kalenda, CEO of eb@le, Director of UbuntuNet Alliance, President of NAPRECA (Natural Products Research Network for Eastern and Central Africa) DR Congo

Geographic Scope

While the primary focus of AfricaConnect is to develop the UbuntuNet network that covers Southern and Eastern Africa, the project will also foster the development of NRENs right across sub-Saharan Africa through capacity building. Thus, AfricaConnect will stimulate the establishment and growth of new NRENs in West and Central Africa. The NRENs there have access to WACREN, the regional research and education network for West and Central Africa. This will enable WACREN and its members to participate in future regional networking projects.

Funding and Organisation

The total budget for AfricaConnect is €14.75m over a period of four years, with 80% of funding provided by the EDF (European Development Fund) following an agreement between the African Caribbean Pacific Islands (ACP) Secretariat and the European Commission (DEVCO). The remaining funds (€2.95m) are being provided by the African partners on the basis of a cost-sharing model.



"The European Commission is pleased to contribute to the development of this important regional higher education and research network. I am confident that African researchers will soon have an additional instrument to improve communication and exchange information among them and with their colleagues in Europe. Increased connectivity is our common goal. Together with the ACP Secretariat, we are doing our best to succeed."

Denis Salord, Head of Unit, Regional Programmes sub-Saharan Africa and ACP wide (Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid) European Commission