

Silk News Letter Issue 2 February 2

**Silk News Letter
Issue 2
February 2003**

1. Introduction

This second issue of the Silk News Letter reaches you only shortly after the second Silk Board meeting and brings you some items that were discussed during this meeting. Further an update of the implementation status in the eight Silk countries is given. And there is news regarding a logo contest.

As a pilot until the next Silk Board meeting this News Letter will be translated into Russian. The translation will soon be available on the Silk web site.

2. Silk Board meeting Istanbul

The second Silk Board meeting was held in Istanbul on February 21 and 22. All Silk Board members and various guests from other organisations (e.g. EurasiaSat, Kalitel, World Bank, OSI, UNDP, University of Alberta, ..) attended the meeting. An overview of items that are of interest:

The Silk Task Force will probably be replaced by a Silk Executive Committee (Silk ExCo). A proposal for the Terms of Reference of the Silk management structure was discussed. Although the proposal still has to be ratified, it is more than probable that the Silk ExCo will consist of representatives of Silk NRENs, Silk donors and Silk management. The TOR will appear on the web as soon as possible.

In order to improve the accessibility of Silk information important documents will be translated in to Russian and made available. This News Letter is one of these documents.

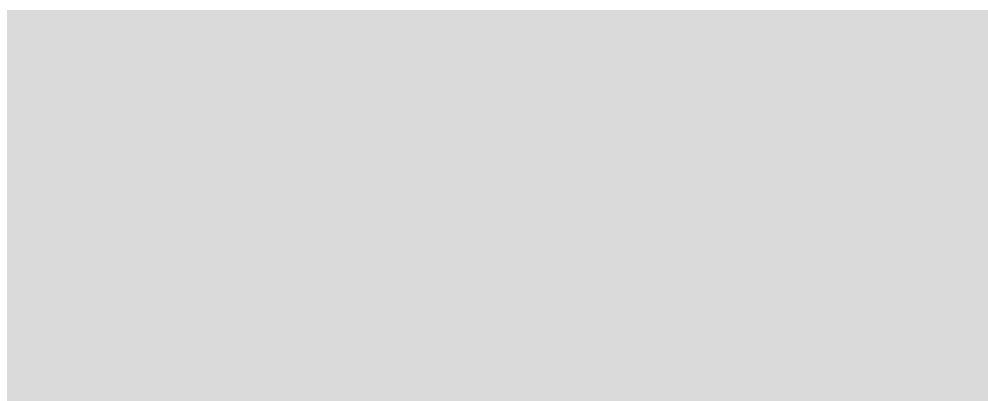
During the Silk Board meeting the ratio between up and down stream of the satellite bandwidth has been discussed. In the original project plan calculations were done with a ratio of 1:4 (up from local node : down to local node). In practice this ratio proves to be insufficient, mainly due to the fact that the band Silk countries can access more than the bandwidth that is allocated to them in the Committed Information rate (CIR). Upgrading the uplink will enlighten the situation, but is also very costly. This issue will be visited again after more Silk countries become truly operational.

The next Silk News Letter will bring more about the issues discussed

at the Silk Board meeting (after approval of the minutes).

3. Status Silk infrastructure

At the time of the Silk Board meeting four of the eight countries were connected and in operation (between brackets the uplink east to west bandwidth): Georgia (700 kbps), Uzbekistan (400 kbps), Kyrgyzstan (600 kbps) and Tajikistan (128 kbps). The total bandwidth going (west to east) to these four countries is 3.5 Mbps. A graph of the total downstream bitstream starting January 1, 2003 until February 26, 2003 follows (some email agents might not display this graph):



Kyrgyzstan is not on this overview due to technical problems after the installation of the Silk dish. Tashkent was out of operation for nearly a week in January due to problems with the licence for operation. This problem has been resolved for the time being. Dushanbe is still in test operation and not visible on this graph.

The status of the other four countries is as follows:

Armenia

The equipment has been delivered and the system has been installed in the week of February 24.

Azerbaijan

The equipment is being transported to Baku and will be installed after the Armenia installation. As custom procedures take more than a week installation will commence in the second week of March.

Kazakhstan

The customs procedure for Kazakhstan is very tedious and needs to be simplified before transportation can take place. This might take a few weeks.

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan will be the last of the Silk countries to connect to the Silk infrastructure. Final discussions concerning the location of the

dish are taking place and the expectation is that by the mid of March transportation can commence.

As things stand now the Silk infrastructure could be fully operational by the end of March 2003. The excellent work done by the team of Sergey Berezhnev have resulted in an operating infrastructure ahead of the original time frame.

4. Silk extensions

Now that Silk is becoming truly operational, several organisations are approaching the Silk Task Force with suggestions for co-operation. This News Letter will keep you informed of any serious requests that are being considered.

World Bank: Representatives of the World Bank have been in discussion with the Silk Task Force for several months now with regard use of the the Silk infrastructure in the CAKSI project (Central Asia Knowledge Sharing Initiative). The CAKSI project needs bandwidth to the Central Asian countries for video conferencing activities in distance learning projects. Technical tests are being held at the moment and if successful a tender procedure will be initiated. Co-operation will result in extra bandwidth for Silk. The University of Central Asia of the Aga Khan Foundation has approached the Silk Task Force and discussions have started. At the next Silk Board meeting co- operation will be on the agenda. Co-operation might result in additional dishes for regional connectivity. A project proposal has been submitted to the US State Department requesting budget for extra regional dishes in the Central Asian region and for additional bandwidth.

5. Silk logo contest

Silk is in need of a logo in order to identify itself. The Silk Board has initiated a contest for the most applying logo. The logo should represent the ideas underlying the Silk project, such as Information Technology for Education and Science and regional co- operation. Suggestions should be submitted before April 1 2003. Guidelines for the contest are on the Silk web site.

6. Next issue

The next issue of this bulletin will be circulated at the end of march. Please feel free to send any interesting copy to the contact mentioned below.

Silk project contact information:

Web page at: www.silkproject.org

Copy suggestions to: R.F.Janz@RC.RUG.NL

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