

## **SABER PUBLISHES VITAL INFORMATION TO HELP EUROPE SOLVE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

*The publications support the EC focus on encouraging better take-up of satellite broadband for the 4.5% of the population not covered by basic fixed broadband*

London, UK. 24 June 2013

The SABER project today published important, practical information to help national and regional governments help close the European Digital Divide by using satellite broadband technology. The information follows the publication of the latest European Commission Digital Agenda Scoreboard, which reported that many residents were still missing out on the benefits of broadband connection and that the Commission would now focus on encouraging better take-up of satellite broadband services for the 4.5% of the population not covered by basic fixed broadband.

SABER (Satellite Broadband for European Regions), the EU-funded Thematic Network, has published its first three reports detailing:

- How satellite broadband can assist in meeting the 2013 Digital Agenda for Europe objective of providing basic broadband for all.
- International success stories from the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Norway and Greece demonstrating where regions have successfully commissioned and deployed satellite broadband solutions.
- Guidelines for public administrations wishing to implement satellite broadband procurement programmes and secure existing EU funding.

“With satellite broadband the only viable solution for many of the 25m EU citizens currently trapped in the Digital Divide, these first three publications provide vital information to national and regional governments wishing to implement programmes to guarantee genuine broadband-for-all in their regions,” said Stefano Agnelli, Director of European Institutional Affairs, at Eutelsat. “With the latest generation of satellites able to deliver speeds of 2-20 Mbps across Europe today, SABER’s role is to help regional authorities understand how to benefit from this solution and to provide advice on how best to deploy it in the most effective way for their communities. Our first reports have also been submitted to the European Commission for review and we have asked for our findings to be endorsed, adopted and publicised by the Commission to its members. In view of the scattered nature of the digitally-divided areas across Europe and the absence of a Single Digital Market, we have recommended that the Commission should foster a harmonization of demand through the use of common rules and tools in procurement.”

The first report on Satellite Broadband as an Option for Regions intends to raise awareness about satellite broadband by providing technical and economic insight, looking at potential barriers and hidden obstacles to deployment and recommending solutions. It also contains the most comprehensive review of satellite broadband offers currently available across Europe, providing easy access for public administrations wishing to compare the quality and costs of services on the market. This reference table will be maintained and updated by SABER as part of its ongoing project.

The second report looks at a comprehensive collection of successful satellite implementation case studies in EU Regions. This document details and identifies the important critical success factors in these programmes.

The third document provides Early Guidelines on Satellite Services Procurement. In this report, SABER assists the European Regions that want to effectively meet the 2013 Digital Agenda for Europe target by developing preliminary procurement guidelines for satellite broadband procurement and advice on how to secure some of the yet unspent EU 2007-2013 funds for broadband provision (more than 1 billion euro at the end of 2012). This funding will be lost if not allocated by the year-end.

Led by CSI Piemonte, the 24-month SABER project is partially EU-funded and involves 26 partners including Eutelsat, SES Broadband Services, Astrium, and 21 regional authorities and ICT public and private organizations supporting regions in broadband deployment representing 13 countries.

The next workshop of the SABER project will be held in Turin, Italy, on 27 June.

The three SABER reports are available upon request from [info@project-saber.eu](mailto:info@project-saber.eu).

For further information visit: [www.project-saber.eu](http://www.project-saber.eu)

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