

Pays Chartrain

French utility extends the reach of fibre access to digitally disposed rural communities

Régie Syndicat Electrique Intercommunal Pays Chartrain (SEIPC) builds a FTTH open access network covering more than 70 municipalities with 18 service providers in Pays Chartrain and Eure-et-Loir.

Syndicat Electrique Intercommunal Pays Chartrain (SEIPC) has been in operation for over 80 years, providing electricity services for 71 municipalities South of the French cathedral town of Chartres. The municipalities between them have a population of around 190,000 people, largely rural.

General Information

Infrastructure owner:

Syndicat Electrique Intercommunal Pays Chartrain (SEIPC) owns the network, which is operated by an affiliate organisation, the Régie Intercommunale.

Location:

The network initially covered 71 municipalities in the Pays Chartrain, an area South of the city of Chartres, but now takes in other locations in the Department of Eure-et-Loir.

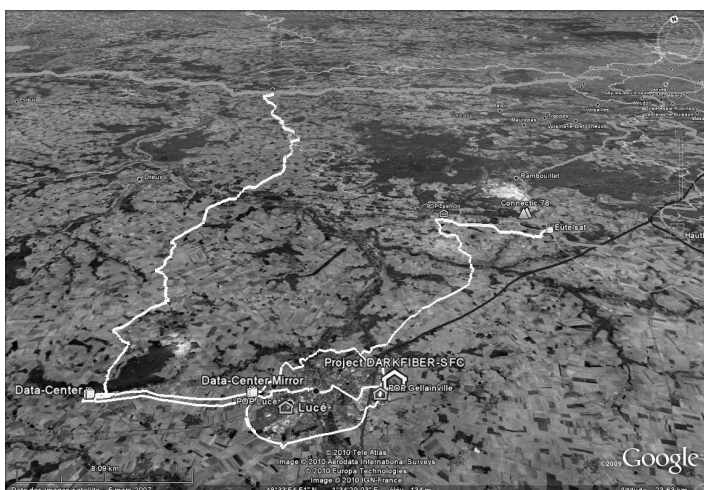
Network status:

Operational, and continuing to expand.

Service Providers:

A total of 18 service providers use the Céliéno network.

Around 75% of the region's electricity network is underground, and for much of its length is coupled with telephone cable. As long ago as 1997, the SEIPC started to look into the feasibility of upgrading its communications network to meet the needs of the digital age.



To push plans forward, a separate entity was created, the *Régie Intercommunale*, which had the aim of modernising network infrastructure across the region.

In 2005, the SEIPC undertook a technical and economic study, focusing particularly on the remoter parts of the region where needs were being least met. It became

apparent that optical fibre delivered directly to homes and businesses was the only way to meet all these needs.

In 2006, the *Régie Intercommunale* set about planning a coherent strategy to bring fibre to the whole of the Pays Chartrain, resulting in the Céliéno network, which continues to be developed and implemented. Operated on an open access basis, it is available to a number of telecoms service providers to develop offers for homes and businesses.



Increasing coverage, growing support

The remit of the *Régie* has grown to embrace not only the municipalities covered by the SEIPC, but also a significant number of other municipalities outside that territory. The Céliéno network has thus won lasting support from around the Department of Eure-et-Loir, where it has helped to connect many rural communities.

Deployment

Size of network:

The Céliéno network covers 25% of Eure-et-Loir, and within this region is available to 90% of 4,500 homes.

Technology/architecture:

passive infrastructure (fibre, twisted pair, powerline).

Network speed: up to 100 Mbps – 1Gbps.

The mission of the *Régie Intercommunale* has broadened in other ways, now encapsulating, in addition to the interconnection of various municipal fibre networks that cover the region, the development of a high speed Internet transit to a Paris network node, the selling of dark fibre to other telecoms companies, and the building of Wireless Local Loop connections to serve the least connected parts of the community.

The principle all along has been to operate as a body that is part of the local economy, focused on local economic activity and whose profits are reinvested locally.

The plan established by the *Régie* and funded by the SEIPC is for:

- Fibre to the Building (FTTB), offering access speeds of 45 Mbps in areas of economic activity
- A minimum rate of 2 Mbps symmetric using wireless local loop (WLL) for regions most on the wrong side of the 'digital divide'
- Services for the various municipalities covered by the SEIPC

Business Case

Investment:

30 Million Euros over 10 years.

Number of years to ROI:

8 to 20 years depending on the area.

Business model:

Open access.

Customers:

All French national operators for dark fibre, and local operators for subscribers.

Citizens in the region have gained in many ways, says Alain Guillotin, Operations Director.



"For the same price they pay for ADSL, they can have the far more attractive option of fibre," he says. "Fibre connections are more reliable, with less interruptions to service. You get a clearer line for voice calls, and faster connections for data. You can also get a bundled TV offer, necessitating fewer satellite dishes on balconies."

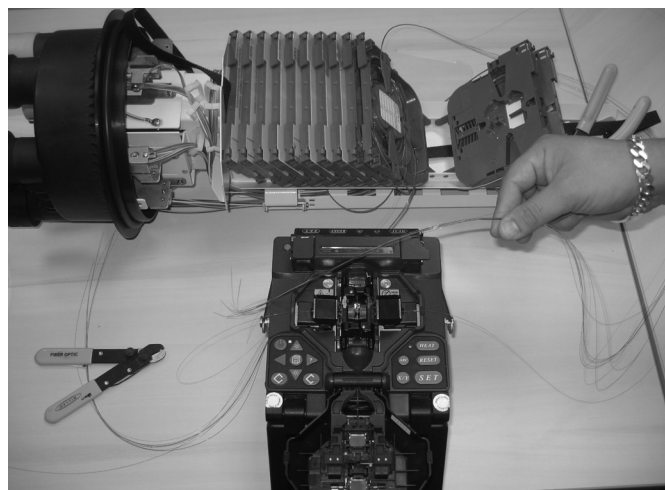
He sees service offers evolving towards more interactive applications that need increasingly high bandwidth, such as video links for communications with family members around the world.

"We're seeing new services for residential customers such as video on demand, eLearning, home working, local TV channels, multi-dwelling property management services," he says. "More will appear, now there's no constraint being imposed on the volume of data."

As for the region's enterprises, they've benefited too, says Guillotin. So far, nearly 100 companies have been directly connected to the Internet with fibre, some small businesses, some with multiple premises.

"They're enjoying new services, such as telemedicine, remote surveillance, video surveillance, thanks to fibre, which is already changing the way people work," he

says. "A company doesn't have to move locations, if it has an easy and cheap way to reach services. They can now settle in an agricultural area of Eure-et-Loir and be connected to the entire world. There's no need to be in the centre of Paris to have a fibre connection."



He says businesses are finding fibre refreshingly reliable, as well as faster and smoother: "Guaranteed restoration time of four to eight hours is much appreciated, particularly by service industry companies. And in a world that is changing faster by the day, businesses find that their ability to react increases once essential information runs over a reliable fibre network. Moreover, the more digital they are, the more paper they save, and the more they use videoconferencing, the more they save on travel."

End-user Services

Services:

Infrastructure services for operators, sold also as dark fibre, so they can develop services to residents and businesses. These operators are free to offer their customers services such as Internet, VoIP, VoD, IPTV.

IP services for the municipalities, to connect buildings.

Compared with the short-term solution of DSL, a business knows that with fibre it is investing in its future. This is reassuring for CEOs and those with control of finances, he says: "The companies we have spoken to say they are ready for tomorrow's services and applications, and are eager to adopt them."

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