

# Russian Survey Vessel Explores 14,000km Cable Route Across Arctic Seabed



On 6 August 2020, the *Professor Logachev* survey ship set out from Kirkenes, Norway on course for Russian Arctic waters. Over the next three months, the ship and its crew sailed 6,500km along the north Russian coast and the idea was that the Norwegian border town would become a hub for an almost 14,000km-long telecom cable between Asia and Europe. Researchers explored

the best route across the Arctic seabed.

Their mission was to look into the deep to examine the sea bottom. Their findings are crucial for the future of Arctic Connect, the project developed by the Finnish company Cinia together with Russia's MegaFon.

The cable connection between Kirkenes and Japan will bridge northern Europe with Russia, Japan and North America, and also meet growing needs in the Arctic region itself, project developers argue. It will have a transmission capacity of 200Tb/s, says MegaFon.

## Advanced Seabed Study

The *Professor Logachev* is owned and operated by the Polar Marine Geosurvey Expedition, a subsidiary of the state company Rosgeo. On board were some of Russia's best equipment and expertise on underwater surveys. The vessel was hired by MegaFon, following an [agreement](#) signed in July 2020.

According to the ship tracking service MarineTraffic, the *Professor Logachev* was due to arrive in Vladivostok on 16 November. Survey operations are continuing in 2021, and in 2023 the cable connection could be up and running, the CEO of MegaFon Gevorg Vermishyam says.

"The maritime surveys constitute the first phase in the project, and are necessary for the determination of a best possible cable route along the Russian Arctic zone, as well as the sites for branch lines to coastal territories," Vermishyam explained in a comment to the *St. Petersburg Vedomosti* newspaper.

The total length of the cable is estimated to be 13,800km.



The Arctic Connect project. (Map by Cinia)

## International Project

MegaFon and Cinia signed a cooperation agreement in early 2019 and subsequently established the joint venture Arctic Link Rus.

The project is believed to cost up to €1.2 billion. That sum will not be a problem, Gevorg Vermishyam argues and says investors from Norway, Germany and Japan are ready to contribute. "The main thing now is to convince investors about the possibility of laying the cable in the complicated Arctic conditions, something that has never before been done," he underlines.

Arctic Connect has been lobbied by Finnish authorities and was highlighted in a government report authored by former Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen in 2016. A telecommunications cable between Europe and Asia via the Northeast Passage would be politically and technologically feasible, the report reads.



Professor Logachev survey ship. (Courtesy: Polar Marine Geosurvey Expedition, pmge.ru)

# Hub in Kirkenes

The project has been met with enthusiasm in Kirkenes, the Norwegian town located only a few kilometres from the Russian border. It could help to revive the economy in the former mining town, business representatives hope.

“This is a very smart idea,” says Bernt Nilsen, director of the company Datakortet. “Kirkenes will then be a connecting hub for global data communication, which gives us the possibility to become a leading node for data centres in Europe, as we have seen in Luleå, northern Sweden,” Nilsen [told](#) the *Barents Observer* following the publication of the report in 2016.

“With the cold climate, renewable hydropower and possibilities for locations in old mines, all the infrastructure is here. The only thing we lack is a high-capacity fibre-optic cable,” Nilsen underlined.

**Source:** [Barents Observer](#).

---

<https://www.hydro-international.com/content/news/russian-survey-vessel-explores-14-000km-cable-route-across-arctic-seabed>

---