

Ericsson to launch mobile Innovation Center in Africa

Ericsson (NASDAQ:ERIC) today announced it will establish an Innovation Center in sub-Saharan Africa to develop mobile applications that will benefit society as a whole, but with a special focus on meeting the needs of poor and rural populations. The initiative will focus on solutions in health, education, agriculture and small business development, and is another important step in Ericsson's ongoing commitment to support the achievement of the UN's Millennium Development Goals.

The Ericsson Innovation Center will include three application development hubs, in Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya. At first, the Innovation Center will concentrate on mobile applications, such as m-health, where great efficiency gains stand to be made. These applications will, for example, enable health workers to gather, monitor and share data on things like births, deaths and epidemics, and to use smart mobile decision support tools in their daily work. Other applications will relate to education, agriculture, business development, finance, government services and the overall improvement of communication capabilities.

The Innovation Center will also develop business cases that enable network operators to introduce and expand mobile broadband services in Africa and other emerging markets, with an emphasis on developing affordable, sustainable applications and services for rural communities.

The Innovation Center aims to stimulate local entrepreneurship and business development by providing tools for local developer communities in and around the three new hubs to create their own applications. The innovation center should also foster a good environment for the creation of new small businesses throughout Africa.

Jan Embro, President of Ericsson in sub-Saharan Africa, says: "Mobile communication significantly improves quality of life, providing the tools to deliver enormous socio-economic benefits to people in developing countries. Connectivity helps to offset a lack of resources, particularly in rural areas, and provides access to a range of services, including education and healthcare.

"More than 90 percent of new mobile subscriber growth will be in emerging markets. The Innovation Center will employ local expertise, and encourage the creation of sustainable business models and applications relevant to Africa and other emerging markets."

The annual growth rate in mobile subscribers in Africa in 2007 was more than 40 percent, with more than 80 million new subscribers. Increased mobile penetration boosts economic activity, and recent studies show that increase in mobile penetration can lead to a one to five percent increase in the annual growth rate in a country's GDP.

A new report assessing m-content in Uganda and India by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), in cooperation with Ericsson, reveals that the demand for services is not being fully met. The report also shows that, in the future, healthcare and job-related services will top the list of in-demand services in Uganda, while internet over mobile, remittances and m-banking may also be in high demand in the coming years.

This initiative extends Ericsson's ongoing commitment to international projects, including the Millennium Villages, an initiative reaching over half a million people across 10 countries that aims to lift rural African communities out of extreme poverty. Ericsson has committed to bringing voice and internet connectivity to each of the Millennium villages sites. In addition to providing the telecom infrastructure, Ericsson is working to provide mobile applications that will help improve residents' livelihoods and help communities get on the path to self-sustaining growth.

One of the initial focus areas of the Innovation Center will be to develop applications to support the Millennium Villages, with the goal of scaling up the successful applications and associated learning to other relevant parts of Africa and globally.

The Innovation Center also builds on Ericsson's global experience from the Gramjyoti project, which brought a range of services including telemedicine, m-learning and m-governance to rural communities in India, as well as the Alokito Bangladesh project, which brought high-speed, internet-enabled mobile learning and healthcare to the region of the capital, Dhaka.

Notes to editors:

Assessment of m-content requirements in India and Uganda; A study by CTO, in cooperation with Ericsson: www.ericsson.com/telecomexpansion/pdf/india.pdf

Photos – Ericsson in Millennium Villages project:
www.ericsson.com/ericsson/press/photos/millennium_vilages.shtml

Background material on Ericsson's commitment to Corporate Responsibility:
www.ericsson.com/ericsson/press/facts_figures/doc/cr.pdf

Ericsson's standard multimedia content is available at the broadcast room:
www.ericsson.com/broadcast_room

Ericsson is the world's leading provider of technology and services to telecom operators. The market leader in 2G and 3G mobile technologies, Ericsson supplies communications services and manages networks that serve more than 195 million subscribers. The company's portfolio comprises mobile and fixed network infrastructure, and broadband and multimedia solutions for operators, enterprises and developers. The Sony Ericsson joint venture provides consumers with feature-rich personal mobile devices.

Ericsson is advancing its vision of 'communication for all' through innovation, technology, and sustainable business solutions. Working in 175 countries, more than 70,000 employees generated revenue of USD 27.9 billion (SEK 188 billion) in 2007. Founded in 1876 and headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, Ericsson is listed on OMX Nordic Exchange Stockholm and NASDAQ.

For more information, visit www.ericsson.com or www.ericsson.mobi.

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About The Millennium Villages

The Millennium Villages project is a partnership between the Earth Institute, Millennium Promise and the United Nations Development Program that provides an innovative model to help rural African communities lift themselves out of poverty. The project forms part of the initiative for rural Africa to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – global targets for reducing extreme poverty by half and improving education, health, gender equality and environmental sustainability by 2015.