

TELETIMES MEDIA LLC

INTERNATIONAL teletimes

Issue 238
MWC Special

2025

The latest in Telecom, ICT and SatCom sectors of the Middle East, Asia and Africa



MWC Barcelona 2025

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20th YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Recipient of

"MEA Business Award 2021 for Best Telecom Publication"

"Best IT & Telecoms News Outlet Award 2020"

"International Arch of Europe Award for Quality"

"Teradata ICT Excellence Award for Media"



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TELETIMES MEDIA LLC.
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Media Partner to:



	US\$	AED	SAR	PKR	€	GBP
Price per copy	8	25	25	500	7	5
One year	80	250	250	5000	70	50

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Editor's Note



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of Teletimes! As the world gathers in Barcelona for the most influential connectivity event of the year, we are thrilled to bring you exclusive insights, thought leadership, and the latest technological innovations shaping our digital future.

With MWC 2025 themed around "Converge. Connect. Create.", this year's event serves as a global platform for industry pioneers, innovators, and visionaries to redefine the landscape of mobile, AI, and next-generation connectivity. In this issue, we delve deep into cutting-edge advancements in 5G, AI, fintech, smart industries, and beyond, providing you with an in-depth analysis of how these technologies are driving global transformation.

This edition highlights the remarkable contributions of startups, policymakers, and thought leaders, ensuring that the discussions at MWC 2025 go beyond the event itself, shaping the future of connectivity for years to come. We cover key announcements, industry partnerships, and groundbreaking solutions unveiled at the conference, providing you with a front-row seat to the most exciting developments in the tech world.

At Teletimes International, we remain committed to bringing you the most relevant stories from the heart of the industry. As we step into a new era of digital transformation, we invite you to engage with us, share your insights, and be a part of this evolving conversation.

I will be personally attending and covering the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona and look forward to seeing our partners and supporters there. Feel free to connect with me on khalidathar@teletimesinternational.com

Enjoy this issue of Teletimes!

Khalid Athar

Chief Editor



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MWC Barcelona 2025, set for March 3–6 at Fira Gran Via, is positioned to be the most influential connectivity event of the year. Under the theme "Converge. Connect. Create.", the event will unite industry leaders, innovators, policymakers, and startups to shape the future of technology and connectivity.

This theme highlights MWC's role as a global hub for social policy, business leadership, and digital innovation, reinforcing its influence in shaping the technological landscape.

As the 19th edition of this flagship event, MWC25 Barcelona will present a dynamic mix of exhibitions, conferences, and startup platforms. The event is expected to surpass previous attendance records, welcoming over 101,000 attendees, 2,700 exhibitors, and 1,200 speakers from more than 205 countries and territories. Discussions will focus on AI, 5G, fintech, and smart industries, addressing technology's role in tackling social,



political, and economic challenges.

Keynote Speakers

MWC25 Barcelona will feature an impressive lineup of industry pioneers and tech visionaries, including:

- Ray Kurzweil – AI Visionary

- Naveen Rao – Chief AI Officer, Databricks

- Teresa Ribera – Executive Vice President, European Commission

- Brendan Carr – Chairman, US Federal Communications Commission

- Hatem Dowidar – Group CEO, e&

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- Kate Ryder – Founder & CEO, Maven
- Arthur Mensch – CEO & Co-founder, Mistral AI
- Euan Blair – CEO & Founder, Multiverse
- Aravind Srinivas – CEO, Perplexity
- Scott Galloway – Co-host, Pivot Podcast & NYU Professor
- Dr. Alessandra Sala – Senior Director of AI & Data Science, Shutterstock

These thought leaders will offer invaluable insights into the latest trends shaping the technology landscape.

Mats Granryd, GSMA's Director General, states: "There's real excitement in the air for MWC25 Barcelona; that same disruptive energy we saw with the growth of mobile is here again in the AI era. From AI to 5G Advance to the rich potential for digital services unleashed by GSMA Open Gateway, only at MWC will we first see the products and ideas that embody this spirit of innovation set to reshape our digital future."

5G Inside

The next phase of 5G rollouts, Release 17 and beyond, will drive the evolution of 5G into a more versatile, reliable, and ubiquitous network. This development will support an expanding range of applications, catering to diverse industries and user segments.

MWC25 will explore 5G's return on investment (ROI) through new revenue-generating services, cost reductions, strategic partnerships, and spectrum management. By harnessing the unique capabilities of 5G, network operators can transform industries, optimize business models, and unlock new opportunities.

Connect X

With IoT devices expected to exceed 15 billion in two years, MWC25 will examine



how the mobile ecosystem can collaborate better. Industry leaders, including cloud hyperscalers, systems integrators, AI innovators, robotics, automation firms, and telecom providers, will discuss how to build dynamic, automated, and cost-efficient networks for businesses and consumers.

AI+

While Generative AI continues to dominate headlines, MWC25 will focus on practical deployment and real-world impact. Discussions will delve into:

- AI-driven process optimization in networks

and cloud infrastructure.

- Enhancing human-computer interactions for personalized experiences.

- Data management and ethical AI considerations, including security, bias, and talent development.

Enterprise Re-invented

Enterprises must continuously evolve to keep pace with the rapid convergence of AI, 5G, Edge Computing, Cloud, Quantum Computing, Blockchain, and Computer Vision. Agility is paramount in an era of



accelerating digital transformation.

Game Changers

MWC25 will spotlight groundbreaking technologies set to reshape industries, including:

- Quantum computing, solving problems up to 100 million times faster.
- Extended reality (XR), redefining human

interaction.

- AI-driven automation, revolutionizing operations across sectors.

Digital DNA

The shift from digital evolution to ecological transformation is underway. Companies must realign priorities to emphasize sustainability, gender equality, and social responsibility.

Lara Dewar, GSMA's Chief Marketing Officer, notes: "MWC25 Barcelona is shaping up to be one of the most thought-provoking and insightful editions yet. Discussions at MWC resonate far beyond its walls, bringing together the industry's most iconic thinkers to redefine technology's role in our societies."

Connected Industries

By 2026, digital transformation in manufacturing is projected to reach \$767.8 billion. Connected Industries leverage IoT, AI, cloud computing, and 5G to enable real-time data exchange, predictive maintenance, and operational efficiencies across manufacturing, logistics, energy, and healthcare.

Industry 4.0—featuring smart factories, cyber-physical systems, and autonomous operations—will be a key focus at MWC Barcelona.

Diversity4Tech

Diversity is a business imperative in the AI era. Companies with strong DE&I programs report a 36% rise in profits and 50% higher retention.

Diversity4Tech (D4T) serves as a platform to champion inclusive leadership, innovation, and workplace equity.

Sports Tomorrow Congress

Technology is revolutionizing sports. With data-driven insights transforming athlete performance and fan engagement, leading clubs like FC Barcelona are pioneering tech adoption in sports.

Co-located with MWC25, Sports Tomorrow Congress will bring together sports executives, investors, and tech leaders to explore emerging trends and innovations in personalized experiences, performance analytics, and immersive fan engagement.

Talent Arena

Talent Arena will serve as a hub for developers, tech leaders, and educational institutions, offering:

- Workshops, live demos, and hackathons spanning three days.
- 200+ expert speakers on AI, cybersecurity, cloud computing, and future technologies like Quantum Computing, Microchips, and NewSpace.

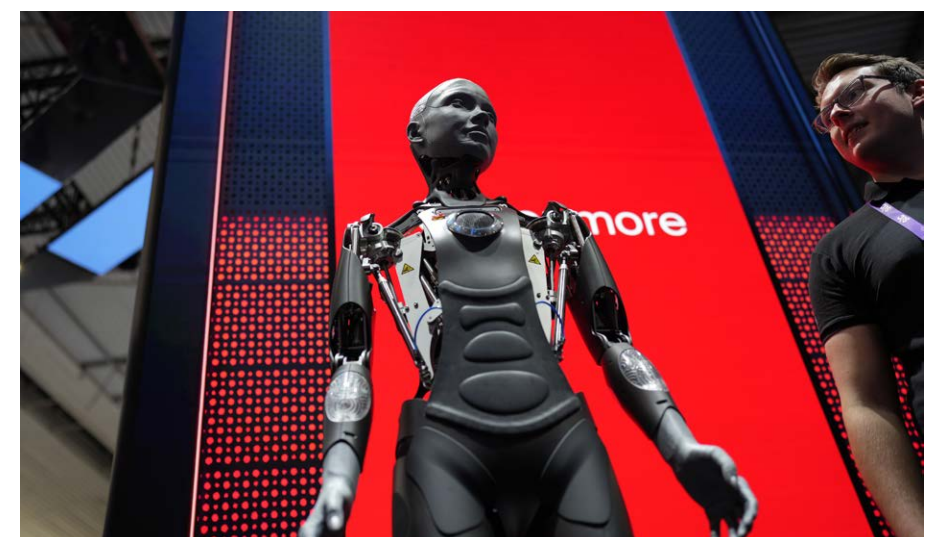
MWC Capital aims to position Barcelona as a premier global destination for digital talent, leveraging its 122,185+ ICT professionals and 140+ tech hubs.

4YFN & GSMA Initiatives

4YFN will connect startups, investors, and corporates, featuring top VCs and tech leaders. Highlights include:

- Banco Sabadell stage, hosting renowned startup figures, including Juergen Schmidhuber, the father of modern AI.
- GSMA Open Gateway showcase, demonstrating network APIs for vertical industries, including remote vehicle operation in Finland.
- European Space Agency (ESA) Pavilion, showcasing terrestrial-satellite communications breakthroughs.

The GSMA Ministerial Programme will bring



together industry leaders and policymakers to discuss AI governance, energy efficiency, and spectrum allocation.

MWC Barcelona 2025 promises to be a transformative event, converging diverse

industries to connect and create the future of technology. With its comprehensive agenda, esteemed speakers, and innovative platforms, attendees can expect an enriching experience that will shape the digital landscape for years to come. ■



Telecom in 2025

TRENDS, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The State of Telecom in 2025: Trends, Challenges, and the Road Ahead

Gulraiz Khalid

As we move through 2025, the telecommunications industry is experiencing a period of unprecedented transformation. From the rapid expansion of 5G networks and the emergence of Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTNs) to the rise of Generative AI and industry consolidation, telecom providers must navigate a complex landscape of innovation, competition, and regulatory scrutiny.

With global connectivity demands increasing, telecom operators are under pressure to modernize their infrastructure, optimize operational efficiency, and develop new revenue streams. This article explores the major trends shaping the telecom industry in 2025 and what the future holds

for the sector.

Generative AI Reshaping the Telecom Landscape

Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly Generative AI, is revolutionizing how telecom companies operate, engage with customers, and enhance efficiency. By leveraging AI-driven automation and predictive analytics, telecom providers can optimize network performance, reduce operational costs, and improve customer service experiences.

The Rise of AI-Driven Services

AI-driven advancements are influencing telecom operators' Business Support Systems (BSS) and Operational Support

Systems (OSS), enabling seamless integration of digital tools for enhanced service delivery. One major area of AI adoption is predictive maintenance, where machine learning algorithms analyze network data to anticipate and prevent outages before they occur.

Additionally, Generative AI is transforming customer interactions. AI-powered virtual assistants are now capable of handling complex inquiries, reducing reliance on human support agents, and improving response times. Salesforce reports that while 56% of telecom companies are still exploring AI's applications, those that have implemented AI-driven solutions have seen notable improvements in revenue and customer satisfaction.

Challenges and Ethical Considerations

Despite its advantages, AI adoption in telecom is not without challenges. Concerns over data privacy, algorithmic bias, and regulatory compliance remain key issues for telecom providers. Furthermore, the integration of AI into network management and customer interactions must be handled carefully to avoid alienating users who prefer human-assisted services.

As AI becomes more embedded in telecom operations, companies must balance efficiency with ethical responsibility. Transparency in AI decision-making processes and adherence to global data protection standards will be crucial for maintaining customer trust.

5G Expansion and the Evolution of Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTNs)

5G Growth and Global Adoption

The global deployment of 5G continues at a steady pace, with more operators investing in standalone 5G networks. GSMA predicts that by 2029, 5G connections will represent

GSMA predicts that by 2029, 5G connections will represent 51% of all mobile connections worldwide.

infrastructure investments have been substantial, finding profitable business models remains a hurdle. To address this, operators are exploring new revenue streams, such as private 5G networks for enterprises and enhanced IoT applications.

The Role of Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTNs)

One of the most exciting developments in telecom is the rise of NTNs, which leverage satellite technology to provide global connectivity. NTNs play a crucial role in extending mobile coverage to remote locations, improving IoT capabilities, and enhancing emergency communication services.

Similarly, Ericsson, in collaboration with Oesia Group and the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, showcased the potential of using LEO satellites for 5G backhaul in remote areas. This innovation ensures that even the most geographically challenging locations can benefit from high-speed mobile connectivity.

Challenges and Opportunities in NTN Expansion

While NTNs present a promising solution to connectivity challenges, there are still obstacles to widespread adoption. The cost of deploying and maintaining satellite infrastructure remains high, and interoperability between terrestrial and satellite networks requires further standardization.

Additionally, regulatory frameworks must evolve to accommodate satellite-based mobile services. Spectrum allocation, cross-border coordination, and fair competition with traditional mobile operators are key issues that policymakers need to address.

Despite these challenges, NTNs hold immense potential for bridging the global digital divide. By 2035, GSMA Intelligence estimates that NTNs could unlock a \$30 billion market opportunity, driven by new subscriber revenues and extended roaming capabilities.

Industry Consolidation and Strategic Partnerships

Telecom Mergers and Market Restructuring

The telecom industry is experiencing a

Ericsson, in collaboration with Oesia Group and the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, showcased the potential of using LEO satellites for 5G backhaul in remote areas.

51% of all mobile connections worldwide. However, the expansion of 5G is not just about urban connectivity; it is also a critical factor in bridging the digital divide in remote and underserved regions.

A significant challenge facing telecom providers is the monetization of 5G. While

Just recently, Eutelsat, MediaTek, and Airbus Defense and Space conducted the world's first 5G NTN trial using OneWeb's low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites. This groundbreaking test demonstrated the feasibility of seamless satellite-to-terrestrial connectivity, paving the way for a more integrated global network.

wave of consolidation as companies seek to strengthen their market positions. Deloitte predicts an acceleration of telecom mergers in 2025, particularly in Europe, where regulatory pressures and competitive dynamics are driving operators to combine forces.

Consolidation allows telecom providers to achieve economies of scale, reduce operational costs, and invest in next-generation infrastructure. However, it also raises concerns about market competition and consumer pricing. Regulatory bodies will need to carefully assess the impact of mergers to ensure that industry

cloud-based networks also facilitates the rollout of edge computing, which reduces latency and improves network efficiency.

The Future of Customer Experience in Telecom

Personalized Services Through AI and Data Analytics

With customer expectations evolving, telecom providers are leveraging AI and big data analytics to deliver hyper-personalized services. From predictive billing solutions to AI-driven content recommendations, telecom companies are investing heavily

bundled services, including cloud storage, entertainment content, and IoT device management.

This shift mirrors the broader trend seen in the software industry, where Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) models have become the norm. By adopting similar strategies, telecom operators can create new revenue streams and increase customer loyalty.

The Road Ahead: Telecom's Outlook Beyond 2025

Looking beyond 2025, the telecom industry is poised for continued evolution. Key areas to watch include:

- **6G Research and Development:** While 5G is still expanding, research into 6G technologies is already underway. Expected to launch in the 2030s, 6G will bring unprecedented speeds, ultra-low latency, and AI-powered network optimizations.
- **Quantum Computing in Telecom:** The integration of quantum computing into telecom networks could revolutionize encryption, cybersecurity, and data processing capabilities.
- **Sustainability and Green Telecom:** With increasing regulatory focus on carbon neutrality, telecom operators are investing in renewable energy solutions, energy-efficient network infrastructure, and sustainable device recycling programs.
- **The Expansion of Smart Cities:** 5G and IoT advancements will further drive the growth of smart cities, enabling enhanced public services, real-time traffic management, and connected infrastructure.

As the telecom industry embraces these transformative trends, operators must remain agile, innovative, and customer-centric. The future of telecom is not just about faster networks—it's about building a more connected, intelligent, and inclusive digital world. ■

G42 and Microsoft launch Responsible AI Foundation

The new entity, formed with research partner MBZUAI, will advance responsible AI in the Middle East and Global South

During the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit taking place in Paris, G42 and Microsoft have officially launched a Responsible AI Foundation, the first center of its kind in the Middle East. Along with the support of research partner Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), the Responsible AI Foundation aims to promote responsible AI standards and best practices in the Middle East and Global South. Inception, a G42 company, will serve as the institution's Program Lead to help advance its mission. In collaboration with G42, Microsoft also announced the expansion of its AI for Good Lab to Abu Dhabi.

The Responsible AI Foundation is launching with two focus areas:

1. **Responsible AI Research:** Advancing both technical and ethical elements of Responsible AI through cutting-edge research. This includes developing AI safety methodologies, bias mitigation techniques, and explainability tools, while fostering collaboration with global and regional research institutions to set new standards for AI fairness, transparency, and accountability.
2. **Responsible AI Implementation & Governance:** Developing frameworks to ensure ethical development and deployment of AI systems, accounting for cultural diversity. This will involve designing risk assessment models, external ethics boards, technical audit tools, and adaptable governance guidelines that account for regional needs, ensuring AI adoption is both responsible and inclusive.

Dr. Andrew Jackson, Group Responsible



AI Officer at G42, said, "The launch of a Responsible AI Foundation marks a defining moment in shaping the future of Responsible AI. By bringing together leading minds in research, policy, and industry, we are building a foundation that will drive ethical AI development at a global scale. Our mission is to translate principles into practice, developing actionable frameworks that ensure AI is safe, fair, and aligned with societal values. We are excited to embark on this journey and look forward to collaborating with partners to create AI systems that truly serve humanity."

Natasha Crampton, Vice President, Chief Responsible AI Officer at Microsoft, said, "A Responsible AI Foundation and AI for Good Lab in Abu Dhabi will help ensure that AI serves humanity, not just in the West, but people around the globe. By sharing insights and expertise from our eight years of work in responsible AI governance, Microsoft is committed to helping build a robust, competitive AI economy grounded in good governance and safe, trustworthy, and ethical AI practices."

Eric Xing, President, Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence, remarked, "A Responsible AI Foundation is a transformative step in ensuring AI addresses critical societal challenges while adhering to ethical standards. Our collaboration with the Foundation highlights MBZUAI's commitment to advancing innovative

research that pushes the boundaries of AI technology and ensures its responsible application. By contributing our expertise, we are proud to support the UAE's leadership in fostering a culture of responsibility, excellence, and global progress in ethical AI development."

Dr. Laura Haaber Ihle, Vice President of Governance, Policy & Ethics, is the first hire of the Responsible AI Foundation, bringing extensive expertise in AI governance and ethics. A Fellow at Harvard's Department of Philosophy, she focuses on responsible AI frameworks and knowledge environments. Previously, she was a researcher at Northeastern University's Institute for Experiential AI, where she worked on advancing collaborative research, stakeholder engagement, and the establishment of industry best practices.

The AI for Good Lab in Abu Dhabi, a regional hub of Microsoft's AI for Good Lab, will work with NGOs and governmental organizations to leverage AI to address societal challenges, with a focus on projects in the Middle East and Global South. The first researchers at the Abu Dhabi hub will begin work in March of this year.

With the establishment of the Responsible AI Foundation, and a Microsoft AI for Good Lab outpost, G42 and the United Arab Emirates are cementing themselves as a global hub for responsible AI development. ■

GSMA Intelligence estimates that NTN could unlock a \$30 billion market opportunity, driven by new subscriber revenues and extended roaming capabilities.

consolidation does not lead to monopolistic behavior.

The Rise of Telecom-Tech Collaborations

Beyond traditional mergers, telecom companies are increasingly forming strategic partnerships with technology firms to enhance their service offerings. For example, collaborations with hyperscalers like Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google Cloud, and Microsoft Azure enable telecom operators to leverage cloud computing and AI capabilities.

Hybrid cloud strategies, combining in-house infrastructure with hyperscaler partnerships, are becoming the preferred model for telecom companies looking to scale their digital services. The adoption of

in technologies that enhance user experiences.

For example, AI-powered chatbots are now capable of resolving billing disputes, troubleshooting network issues, and even recommending tailored data plans based on usage patterns. By integrating AI into customer interactions, telecom companies can improve satisfaction rates while reducing operational costs.

The Shift Towards Subscription-Based Models

Another trend gaining traction in 2025 is the shift toward subscription-based telecom services. Instead of traditional pay-per-use models, providers are exploring tiered subscription plans that offer

LEAP 2025: A global tech phenomenon cementing Saudi Arabia's AI leadership



LEAP 2025, Saudi Arabia's award-winning global tech event, concluded with a record-breaking US \$21.03 billion in new Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technology investments, further solidifying the Kingdom's status as a world-leading AI hub. Held at the Riyadh International Exhibition and Convention Centre in Malham, the event brought together innovators, investors, and thought leaders from around the globe to showcase groundbreaking announcements, futuristic innovations, and strategic collaborations. The event underscored Saudi Arabia's rapid ascent as a global tech powerhouse and its commitment to driving innovation under Vision 2030.

The event opened with a series of monumental announcements, including US \$14.9 billion in new AI investments.

These commitments brought the total technology-related infrastructure investments in Saudi Arabia to over US \$42.4 billion since LEAP's inception in 2022. Among the key highlights was a US \$1.5 billion partnership between Groq and Aramco Digital to expand AI-powered inference infrastructure and cloud computing capabilities. This collaboration aims to enhance the Kingdom's AI ecosystem, enabling faster and more efficient data processing for industries ranging from energy to healthcare.

Another significant announcement came from ALAT and Lenovo, who committed US \$2 billion to establish an advanced manufacturing and technology centre integrating AI and robotics. This initiative is expected to create thousands of jobs and position Saudi Arabia as a regional

hub for high-tech manufacturing. Google also made waves by introducing new AI-driven digital infrastructure and launching a powerful computing cluster to meet growing regional and global demand for cloud services. Qualcomm, meanwhile, confirmed the availability of its ALLAM language model on Qualcomm AI Cloud, further expanding the Kingdom's AI capabilities.

Alibaba Cloud contributed to the momentum with the launch of its AI Enablement Programme, which includes collaborations with Tuwaiq Academy and stc Academy to train national talent. This initiative aligns with Saudi Arabia's broader goals of developing a skilled workforce capable of driving the next wave of technological innovation. Other notable announcements included



Databricks' US \$300 million investment in integrated PaaS (Platform as a Service) solutions, SambaNova's US \$140 million commitment to building advanced AI infrastructure, and KKR's strategic partnership with Gulf Data Hub to develop data centres with a total capacity of up to 300 megawatts.

His Excellency Eng. Abdullah Alswaha, Saudi Minister of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), set the tone for the event with a keynote

address that emphasized the Kingdom's commitment to becoming a global beacon for innovation.

"LEAP 2025 is a defining moment," he declared. "Technology has catalysed Saudi Arabia as the biggest success story in youth and female empowerment in the 21st Century. The intelligence age is here, and in partnership with you, we are going to take that leap together."

Building on the momentum of the

opening announcements, additional investments totalling US \$6.13 billion were unveiled, further propelling Saudi Arabia's tech ecosystem. Among the highlights was a US \$5 billion partnership between DataVolt and NEOM to establish the first fully sustainable AI data centre in Oxagon, the floating industrial city being developed in the Red Sea. This project aims to set new standards for green technology and sustainable infrastructure, aligning with the Kingdom's broader environmental goals.

Mobily, the Saudi Arabian telecommunications services company, announced a US \$911 million investment in strategic projects to develop digital infrastructure, including submarine cable projects and the development of data centres across the Kingdom. Zoom also made a significant commitment, pledging US \$75 million to boost AI innovation and establish new data centres to support technology companies and government entities. These investments reflect the growing demand for robust digital infrastructure as Saudi Arabia continues its digital transformation journey.

Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) announced a US \$51 million investment in private fibre-optic networks, highlighting the importance of connectivity in driving economic growth. Meanwhile, SKYFive, the leading telecommunications and internet services provider for aircraft, revealed a US \$100 million investment in non-terrestrial communications services. This initiative is expected to champion seamless connectivity for passengers and businesses alike.

Michael Champion, CEO of Tahaluf, which co-organises LEAP with the Saudi Ministry for Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) and the Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming, and Drones (SAFCSPP), highlighted the event's significance.

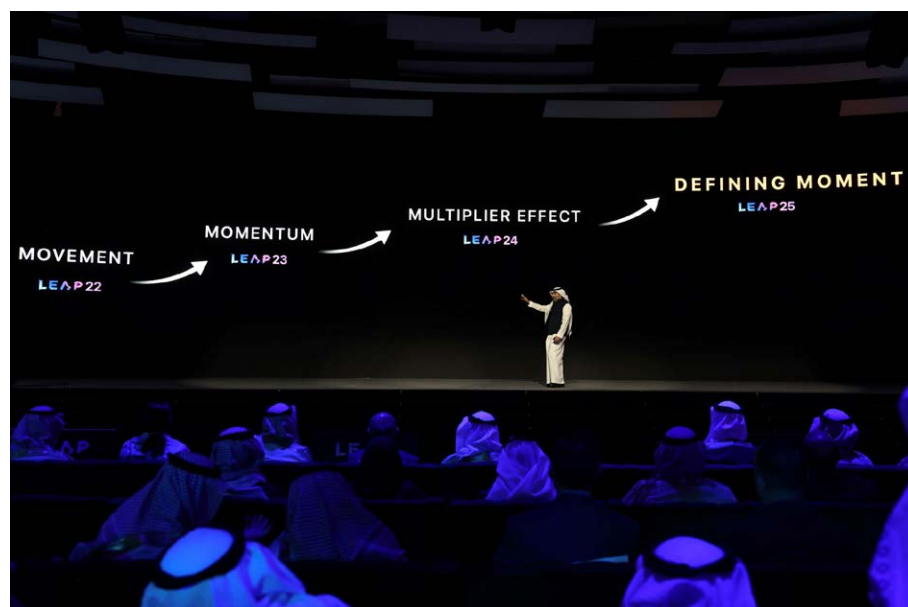
"We have already surpassed confirmed investments of previous editions, with

over US \$40 billion in total commitments since LEAP's launch. This year, we're seeing larger collaborations between local and international businesses, which is at the heart of what LEAP offers as a platform."

The event also featured the newly added Tech Arena, a dedicated space for showcasing cutting-edge innovations and futuristic technologies. Attendees were treated to live demonstrations of groundbreaking prototypes in robotics, AI, fashion tech, and mixed reality. One of the standout exhibits was Engine VR's Golden Gloves VR platform, which uses virtual reality technology to provide an immersive, gamified boxing experience. Aaron Sloan, the platform's Founder, shared the inspiring story behind its development, from the challenges of running a brick-and-mortar gym to leveraging VR technology to create a globally accessible fitness solution.

Another highlight was Adobe's Project Primrose, a wearable dress that merges fashion and technology. TJ Rhodes, the Senior Research Scientist and Engineer behind the project, explained how the dress uses non-emissive textiles to dynamically change its appearance, offering endless possibilities for fashion, advertising, and entertainment. "Imagine if Elsa from Frozen was able to transform her dress to match her actions in a live performance," said Rhodes. "We're still discovering the possibilities of what this technology can do."

Dr. Valentyn Volkov, Co-Founder of XPANCEO, captivated audiences with a glimpse into the future of smart contact lenses. These revolutionary devices, which are expected to be available by 2026, promise to deliver a full-screen, full-colour augmented reality experience, along with private health monitoring and enhanced vision capabilities. "The next step is not about making smart devices smaller; it's about ensuring seamless integration into our everyday lives," said Dr. Volkov. "This is no longer science fiction; it is almost ready-made reality."



The CODE Stage hosted discussions on Saudi Arabia's burgeoning gaming ecosystem, which is witnessing unprecedented growth as part of the Kingdom's efforts to diversify its economy under Vision 2030. Mohammed Robayan, Deputy Minister for Technology at MCIT, highlighted the potential of the US \$220 billion global gaming market to drive job creation and GDP growth. He also outlined initiatives like the Ignite Digital Content Programme and the Saudi Digital Academy, which have trained more than 1,500 people in digital skills, as well as the Gaming Sector Financing Programme, which offers SAR 300 million in funding to support small and medium enterprises in the gaming and esports sectors.

The transformative potential of AI and quantum computing was another focal point of the event. IBM's Chairman and CEO, Arvind Krishna, joined HE Alswaha on the Main Stage to discuss the future of quantum computing, predicting a breakthrough within three to five years. "Quantum computing will open up exciting opportunities in materials, energy, and pharmaceuticals—areas critical to the Kingdom's Vision 2030," said Krishna. He also highlighted IBM's ongoing collaboration with Saudi partners to advance quantum research

and development.

Accenture's Technology Vision 2025 report, unveiled during the event, provided further insights into the growing role of AI in driving business autonomy. The report emphasized the need for trust in AI's performance, with 65% of Saudi-based executives believing AI will reshape how technology systems are designed and operated.

Julie Sweet, Accenture's Chair and CEO, noted, "AI will act as a development partner, power robotic bodies, and foster a new symbiotic relationship with people. But unlocking its benefits will only be possible if leaders systematically develop trust in its performance and outcomes."

Over the course of the event, LEAP 2025 brought together more than 1,800 tech brands, 680 start-ups, and 1,000 expert speakers across 15 stages.

As the curtains closed on another successful edition, the world looked forward to the next leap in the Kingdom's tech journey. With record-breaking investments, groundbreaking innovations, and a steadfast commitment to Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia is poised to lead the global tech revolution in the years to come. ■

AI Action Summit 2025

Global leaders focus on AI-driven growth, investments, and sustainability



The AI Action Summit 2025 took place at the Grand Palais, Paris, France, from February 10 to 11, 2025. The summit was co-chaired by French President Emmanuel Macron and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This summit followed the 2023 AI Safety Summit held in Bletchley Park, UK, and the 2024 AI Seoul Summit in South Korea. Unlike its predecessors, which primarily focused on AI safety, the 2025 summit emphasized economic opportunities and actionable policies for AI adoption.

The 2025 AI Action Summit was a significantly larger event compared to its predecessors. With over 1,000 participants from more than 100 countries, the summit saw representation from government leaders, international organizations, academia, private enterprises, and civil society.

Prior to the summit, the First International AI Safety Report, published on January 29, 2025, highlighted risks and threats posed

by general-purpose AI. However, the 2025 summit moved away from a dominant focus on safety, incorporating it under a broader theme called "Trust in AI", while the primary focus remained on leveraging AI for economic growth and global competitiveness.

In a notable pre-summit event, President Emmanuel Macron posted a compilation of AI-generated deepfake videos of himself on Instagram on February 9, 2025, showcasing AI's capabilities and the importance of its responsible use.

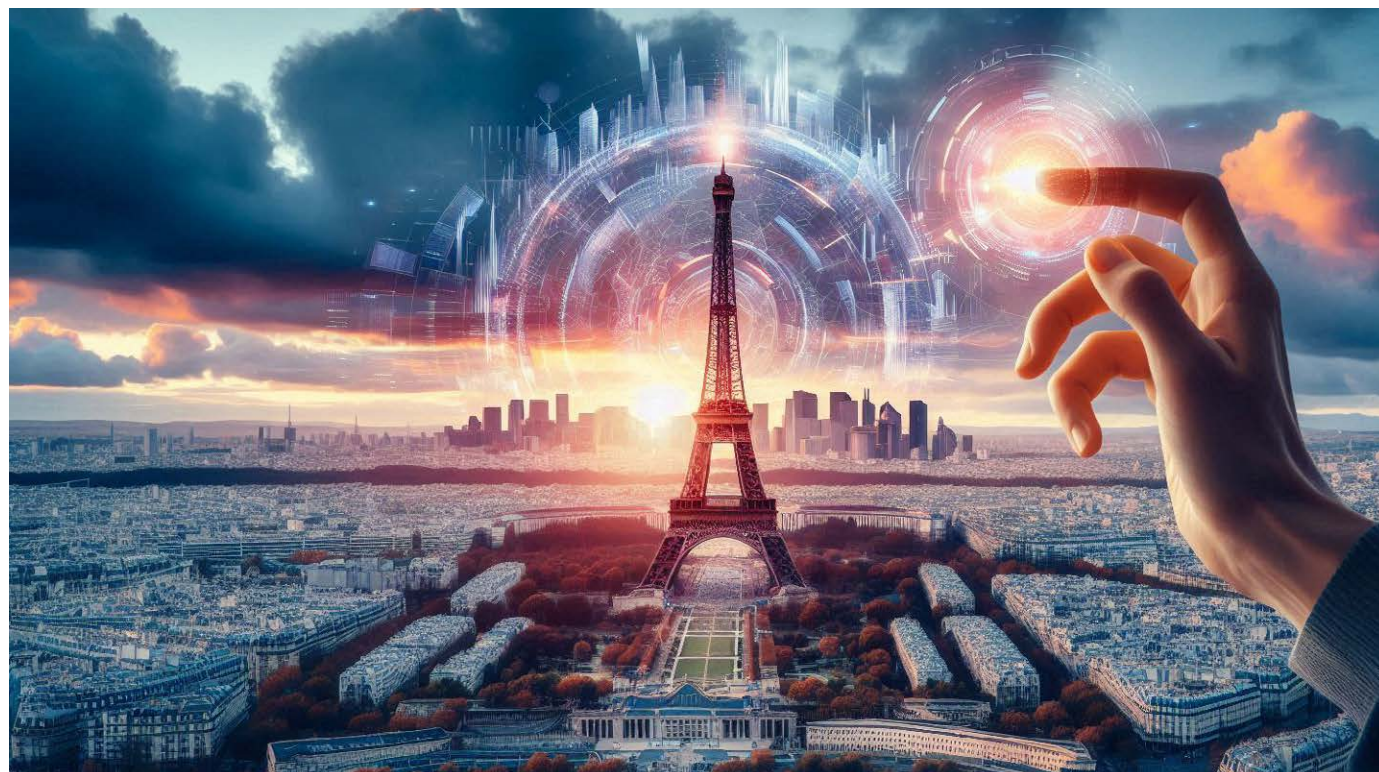
The first day of the summit saw a range of discussions addressing AI's risks and opportunities. French Special Envoy Anne Bouverot dismissed concerns about AI posing existential threats to humanity, calling them "science fiction," but emphasized the environmental impact of AI, labeling its current trajectory as "unsustainable." Christy Hoffman (UNI Global Union) raised concerns about

AI-driven productivity gains exacerbating inequality and destabilizing democratic structures. Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Guoqing reaffirmed China's commitment to international AI collaboration, focusing on security, development, and shared technological advancements.

On the corporate front, Google CEO Sundar Pichai highlighted AI's immense economic potential and stressed that the biggest risk was "missing out." Google also announced increased investments in AI research, particularly deep research agents.

Another major development was the launch of the Robust Open Online Safety Tools (ROOST) Initiative, backed by major tech firms like Google, Discord, OpenAI, and Roblox, aiming to enhance open-source tools for detecting and reporting child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

President Emmanuel Macron, in his closing remarks for the day, highlighted



France's ability to support AI infrastructure through nuclear energy and urged the European Union to accelerate AI regulation processes to keep pace with global advancements.

The second day of the summit focused on AI investments and sustainable development. The French government announced a \$400 million endowment for Current AI, a foundation dedicated to AI public goods such as high-quality datasets and open-source tools. Nine countries, along with private firms like Google and Salesforce, pledged support for this initiative.

Additionally, the Coalition for Sustainable AI was introduced, co-led by France, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). This coalition received backing from 11 countries, five international organizations, and 37 technology firms, including IBM, Nvidia, and SAP.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi advocated for the democratization of AI technologies, ensuring accessibility for developing nations

in the Global South.

Major Investments Announced

- The European Union launched InvestAI, a €200 billion initiative, including €20 billion for four AI gigafactories to train large-scale AI models.

- A coalition of 60 European companies, led by General Catalyst, committed to investing €150 billion in AI businesses and infrastructure in Europe over the next five years.

- France secured nearly €110 billion in private AI investments. Financing of between €30 to €50 billion is expected from the UAE for building a large AI data center and another €20 billion from Brookfield Corporation (Canada) for AI-related projects in France.

Statement on Inclusive and Sustainable AI

A total of 58 countries, including France, China, and India, signed the Statement on Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and the Planet. The declaration emphasized:

- AI accessibility and reducing the digital divide
- Developing AI that is open, transparent, ethical, and trustworthy
- Encouraging competition to avoid AI market concentration
- Ensuring positive labor market outcomes
- Fostering sustainability and international cooperation

However, the U.S. and the U.K. refused to sign the statement, citing concerns that it lacked clear global governance strategies and national security safeguards.

The AI Action Summit 2025 marked a shift from AI safety concerns to AI-driven economic growth, global competitiveness, and sustainability. While the event attracted major investments and policy discussions, criticisms emerged over the lack of regulatory focus and AI risk mitigation strategies. Moving forward, the challenge remains in balancing AI's economic potential with responsible governance and ethical considerations. ■

Huawei Cloud enables Saudi Arabia's path to AI leadership at LEAP 2025

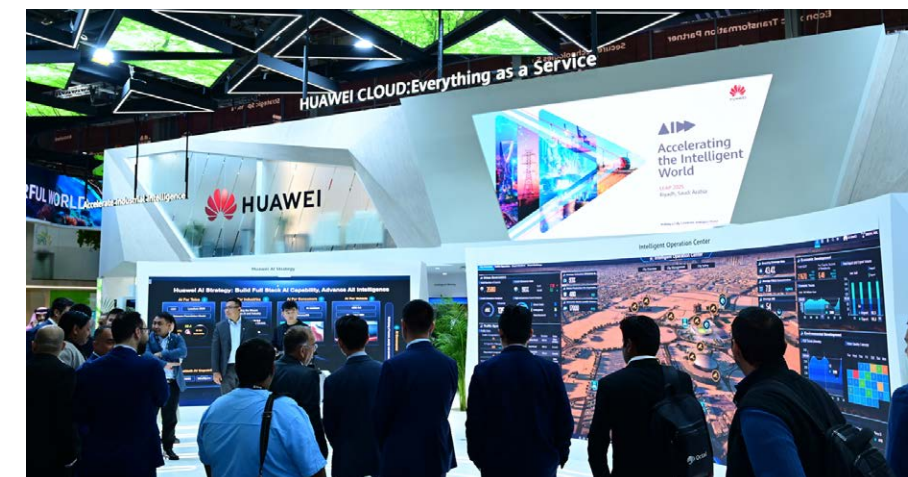
As artificial intelligence reshapes the global economy, Huawei Cloud showcased how its Riyadh Region is enabling Saudi Arabia to chart its own path to AI leadership while maintaining data sovereignty. At LEAP 2025, the company highlighted how its sophisticated infrastructure and AI capabilities empower the Kingdom to build locally relevant AI solutions that address unique regional needs.

The Huawei Cloud Riyadh Region, launched in September 2023, has rapidly evolved into a pivotal hub for AI development in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa. Its sophisticated 3AZ (Availability Zone) architecture delivers industry-leading latency rates of 25ms within Saudi Arabia and 100ms across the broader region. Following its receipt of the prestigious Class C license from Saudi Arabia's Communications, Space, and Technology Commission (CST) in 2023, Huawei Cloud has strengthened its position by entering the Saudi government's National Framework Agreement (NFA V2.0) in December 2024, enabling direct cloud service procurement by government entities.

Alan Qi, President of Huawei Cloud Middle East and Central Asia, said, "As a pioneer in AI industrial applications, Huawei Cloud is transforming how enterprises harness



Alan Qi - President of Huawei Cloud Middle East and Central Asia



intelligence. Our Riyadh Region is the foundation for Saudi Arabia to develop locally relevant AI solutions that reflect its unique needs and values. The remarkable growth we have witnessed, serving over 1,000 customers across critical sectors, reinforces our leadership in delivering cutting-edge AI capabilities that are reshaping this dynamic market. The ability to process data locally while accessing world-class AI capabilities is today a strategic advantage for Saudi businesses in an increasingly global marketplace."

Huawei Cloud Enables Intelligence Across Industries as AI Pioneer

At LEAP, Huawei demonstrated a comprehensive suite of technological innovations representing the convergence of AI and cloud computing. Huawei Cloud adheres to the concept of AI for industries through its flagship Pangu model series. Dedicated to providing each industry, enterprise, and individual with their own expert assistants, Pangu Model 5.0 represents a significant advancement with its "5+N+X" three-layer architecture. This complete hierarchical decoupling design enables quick adaptation to changing industry requirements, while its multi-modal and multi-size characteristics optimize the match between scenarios and

models, meeting enterprise demands for both economic efficiency and professional capability.

Visitors explored Huawei Cloud DataArts, a one-stop intelligent data governance production line. It includes distributed database GaussDB, cloud-native data lake service (MRS), fully managed serverless data lake exploration service (DLI), all-scenario one-stop data warehouse service GaussDB (DWS), and data governance center service DataArts Studio based on Huawei's digital transformation experience.

The newly released Huawei Cloud Stack 8.5 further strengthens this architecture with more than 120 locally deployable cloud services. This enhanced version improves reliability and security while significantly advancing database and AI engineering capabilities. It includes 50 scenario-based solutions across six industries, supporting initiatives from host cloudification to national cloud 2.0 and telecom cloud implementations.

Pioneering "Cloud for AI, AI for Cloud" Innovation

Huawei has built comprehensive cloud infrastructure and specialized solutions

tailored to regional needs. This infrastructure supports the development of smart cities and enables the integration of AI across various sectors, from government services to private enterprise applications. The company's focus on Arabic language models and localized AI solutions demonstrates its commitment to making AI technology accessible and relevant to the Saudi market.

Huawei Cloud's AI approach is built on a dual innovation strategy. Cloud for AI leverages cloud architecture innovation to build powerful AI model capabilities and efficient data mining capabilities. Meanwhile, AI for Cloud combines these capabilities to enhance Huawei Cloud's own development processes across AI, media, and software production lines, making these advances available as external services that accelerate enterprise development.

This strategy is realized through a comprehensive three-layer cloud service architecture. At its foundation, Infrastructure-as-a-Service is delivered

through KooVerse, a distributed cloud infrastructure with a unified architecture spanning 96 availability zones across 33 geographic regions, serving customers in more than 170 countries. The infrastructure supports flexible deployment across public, private, and edge clouds to meet diverse application scenarios.

The second layer, Technology-as-a-Service, opens Huawei's accumulated technologies and tools to the broader community. Through AI development production lines such as ModelArts, enterprises can accelerate their application modernization journey. The third layer, Experience-as-a-Service (aPaaS), provides ready-to-use industry solutions, allowing developers to leverage accumulated expertise across government, finance, manufacturing, transportation, and meteorology sectors.

Lawrence Liu, CEO of Huawei Cloud Saudi Arabia, said, "Through our ambitious five-year plan to develop 200,000 developers,

building solutions with 1,000 local partners, and supporting 2,000 startups in Saudi Arabia, we're investing in the future of the region's digital economy. This aligns perfectly with Saudi Vision 2030 and demonstrates our dedication to fostering a robust digital ecosystem that maintains sovereignty while advancing AI capabilities."

Transformative Impact Across Key Sectors

The transformative impact of Huawei Cloud's solutions is demonstrated through notable success stories across key sectors. StarzPlay, the region's second-largest streaming platform, leveraged Huawei Cloud's full-stack serverless architecture to seamlessly serve over 3.2 million paid users during the Cricket World Cup. In e-commerce, Saudi Arabia's Zode achieved exceptional performance with 25ms local latency. Cashin, a pioneering fintech enterprise, improved response times by 35% and operational efficiency by 40% while reducing total ownership costs by 30%. ■

KSIADC and Huawei to revolutionize smart aviation

The King Salman International Airport Development Company (KSIADC) and Huawei have signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to drive innovation and digital transformation in the aviation sector. This strategic partnership is set to revolutionize airport operations and passenger experiences by leveraging Huawei's global expertise in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and KSIADC's leadership in transforming King Salman International Airport into a state-of-the-art aviation hub.

Spanning an impressive 57 square kilometers, King Salman International Airport is envisioned as one of the world's largest and most advanced aviation hubs. The development will feature six runways, six terminals, and an iconic terminal designed to redefine the passenger experience. It will also include a private aviation hub, a cargo and logistics center, and an integrated airport city that combines residential, hospitality, retail,

entertainment, office, logistics, and industrial assets. This comprehensive vision positions the airport as a global gateway for business, tourism, and logistics.

The collaboration will focus on integrating advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) and Private 5G-Advanced (5G-A) to enhance operational efficiency and elevate passenger services. It also includes the development of an AI-powered digital guest platform to streamline interactions, improve wayfinding, and offer personalized services. Additionally, the partnership aims to incorporate smart infrastructure solutions Private and IoT into airport operations, while exploring future innovations such as predictive analytics and advanced biometrics to ensure scalability and adaptability for evolving needs.

Linda Schucroft, VP of Digital Innovation of KSIADC, said: "This partnership with Huawei represents a significant milestone

in our journey to transform King Salman International Airport into a global leader in smart aviation. By integrating cutting-edge technologies, we aim to redefine operational efficiency, elevate passenger experiences, and set new benchmarks for innovation in the aviation sector."

Simon Zousiyi, Deputy CEO of Huawei Saudi, added: "At Huawei, we believe that technology has the power to transform industries and create smarter, more sustainable ecosystems. This collaboration with KSIADC reflects our commitment to delivering innovative ICT solutions tailored to the unique needs of the aviation sector. Together, we aim to build a next-generation airport that not only enhances operational excellence but also redefines the passenger experience, setting a new standard for smart airports globally. This partnership aligns seamlessly with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, and we are proud to contribute to this transformative journey." ■

stc Group advances global digital transformation across industries as a strategic partner at LEAP 2025



stc Group showcased its innovative digital solutions as a strategic partner of LEAP 2025. Attendees witnessed how stc Group is powering Saudi Arabia's key industries and

upcoming developments with cutting-edge technology.

Now in its fourth year, LEAP is brought together over 600 start-ups, 1,000 speakers, and over 1,800 exhibitors from around the world to explore the future of global digital advancement and innovation under the theme, "Into New Worlds". This theme aligns with stc Group's mission to drive technological advancement and expand the impact of its digital solutions to customers, businesses, and communities around the world.

stc Group's role at LEAP is more than showcasing technology; it's about leading the dialogue on what's next in digital innovation across industries. stc Group presented its comprehensive portfolio of digital solutions and innovations, spanning AI, healthcare, logistics, tourism, and smart communities. stc Group's showcases underscored the Group's pivotal role in addressing global challenges—such as sustainability, digital inclusion, and economic resilience—while enabling industries to adapt to a rapidly evolving technological landscape. Solutions leveraging IoT and 5G technologies reflect stc's alignment with global needs. Through these offerings, stc Group aims to empower businesses and governments to unlock new opportunities and achieve transformative growth.

Since its inception, LEAP has served as a key platform for driving global agreements and accelerating digital transformation. At LEAP 2024, stc Group showcased cutting-edge technological solutions across health, logistics, megaprojects, and sports while announcing numerous strategic partnerships. These included the launch of Oracle Alloy, the Ericsson Esports partnership, and a strategic alliance with Huawei to develop fintech solutions, among others. Additionally, stc Group forged multiple local and regional strategic agreements including with PSDSARC, the Prince Sultan Center for Defence Studies, and an Air to Ground agreement with Flynas and Skyfive.

At LEAP 2025, stc Group captivated audiences with dynamic panel discussions led by industry experts, reveal groundbreaking strategic partnerships, and offer unforgettable, hands-on experiences at its interactive booths, immersing attendees in the future of technology. From advanced connectivity to solutions across industries, stc Group is redefining the limits of what is possible. ■

Mobily and Ibasis strengthen global mobile data services collaboration



Mobily and iBASIS have renewed their partnership, extending their multi-service IPX agreement for roaming services.

Since establishing a strong collaboration in 2014 through an international voice partnership, iBASIS has consistently delivered world-class mobile data solutions to Mobily. This includes economies of scale, cost stability, and dedicated service management—key factors driving Mobily's sustained international traffic growth.

The renewal highlights the enduring success of this collaboration, particularly in managing Mobily's international traffic growth to handle a tenfold increase in mobile data traffic over the past three years. This enhancement will improve Mobily's network scalability in managing significant traffic surges during peak demand periods, such as the Hajj, Ramadan, and tourism seasons, and showcase unmatched reliability and robustness.

"Our collaboration has been focused on ensuring high-quality, scalable mobile services for our customers. This milestone reinforces our commitment to innovation and growth as we explore new opportunities, including IoT services, while maintaining the exceptional performance our customers expect," said Thamer Alfadda, SVP Wholesale of Mobily. "iBASIS has been a trusted partner of Mobily for over a decade, managing our international voice and mobile services."

"We are honored to renew our partnership with Mobily, reflecting a shared vision to drive digital transformation and enrich consumer experiences," said Patrick George, CEO of iBASIS. "As a leading technology and telecommunications provider, Mobily continues to take proactive steps to deliver top-tier services. We're proud to support their efforts with our advanced IPX capabilities, enabling them to expand their market reach and achieve their strategic goals." ■

DataVolt signs agreement with NEOM to design and develop the region's first truly sustainable, net-zero AI factory campus in Oxagon

NEOM and DataVolt, a Saudi-based international developer, investor and operator of data centers, have signed a landmark agreement, marking a significant step toward realizing the Kingdom's vision for a sustainable, data-driven economy.

The development will take a phased approach, with phase one – funded by an initial investment of USD 5 billion – expected to be operational by 2028. Aligning with Oxagon's ambition, the 1.5-gigawatt factory will integrate a wide range of computing densities and energy-efficient architectures to address the global challenges posed by traditional data centers.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), data centers currently consume between 1 to 1.3 percent of global electricity demand. With the advancements of generative AI, power consumption is expected to grow exponentially over the next decade. The energy-intensive nature of data centers and the cumulative impact of associated carbon emissions necessitate a rapid need for transition to clean sustainable solutions.

Commenting on the landmark announcement, Vishal Wanchoo, CEO of Oxagon, said: "The Kingdom is at the forefront of the global energy transition. At Oxagon, we are accelerating a renewable energy industrial ecosystem that is set to power businesses with green energy and technology solutions. The agreement with DataVolt highlights the potential impact of the sustainable infrastructure Oxagon offers its tenants and sets the foundations for the first green-AI workload to come on-stream in KSA along with the necessary computing power for regional and global impact."

Rajit Nanda, CEO of DataVolt, added: "This agreement with NEOM and Oxagon underscores our unwavering commitment to support the Kingdom's vision of becoming a regional digital and AI hub. The Kingdom's strategic location, coupled with its abundant green energy resources, aligns perfectly with DataVolt's mission in providing state-of-the-art sustainable data centers. This project marks a significant milestone in advancing the Kingdom's leadership as a digital powerhouse in the region."

As part of the agreement, Oxagon will lease DataVolt the land for the development of the facility and provide the sustainable data center operator with infrastructure support. The ambition is for the facility to be entirely powered by renewable energy, providing a fully integrated, end-to-end data center solution. The project will utilize advanced cooling technologies and is designed to operate at net zero, addressing the global challenges of power availability and the carbon footprint posed by data centers.

Oxagon's strategic location on the Red Sea coast, combined with access to sub-sea cables providing fiber connectivity, alongside cost-competitive renewable energy, green hydrogen, and a rapidly expanding industrial ecosystem, makes it the ideal location for DataVolt to develop a large-scale green AI factory. ■

Qualcomm and Aramco Digital introduce world's first 5G AI-enabled industrial smartphone with support for 450mhz spectrum

At LEAP 2025, Qualcomm Technologies and Aramco Digital have announced their groundbreaking collaboration to develop the world's first AI-enabled industrial 5G smartphones with native support for the 450MHz spectrum. Support for 450 MHz spectrum allows 5G IoT devices, edge computing and end-users to connect to a new generation of AI-enabled industrial applications, initially focusing on advanced industrial solutions for Aramco, one of the world's leading integrated energy and chemicals companies.

The new industrial smartphones will be powered by the Qualcomm® QCM8550 and QCM6490 processors which provide native support for 5G in 450MHz. These processors are designed to provide ubiquitous connectivity to intelligent edge devices, enabling superior communication and data transfer in industrial settings.

"At Aramco Digital, we are committed to pushing the boundaries of technological innovation. This collaboration with Qualcomm Technologies, introducing the world's first AI-enabled industrial smartphone with 450MHz support, represents a significant milestone in our journey to empower industries with next-generation connectivity. By utilizing cutting-edge 5G and AI technologies, we are enabling smarter, more sustainable industry that align with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 and beyond, driving industrial transformation not only within Saudi Arabia but across the globe." — Eid Alharbi, Connectivity President, Aramco Digital.

"The industrial sector is being transformed by advanced technologies, and our industrial smartphones with native support for 450MHz, are another vital component in enabling industries to become more connected, efficient, safe, and sustainable," said Nakul Duggal, group general manager, automotive, industrial and embedded IoT, and cloud computing, Qualcomm Technologies, Inc. "Qualcomm Technologies is excited to collaborate with Aramco Digital to help them develop innovative solutions in Saudi Arabia, supporting the Kingdom's industrial transformation in alignment with their Vision 2030. This collaboration also aims to drive the advancement of cutting-edge technology in the Middle East, delivering benefits on an international scale."

Qualcomm Technologies and Aramco Digital also previously announced the deployment of Aramco's first generative AI industrial

IoT solutions, which are improving operational safety, efficiency, and sustainability at Aramco sites. The new industrial smartphones will give Aramco users another way to connect to these advanced industrial applications. Examples of the industrial smartphone and Qualcomm Technologies' 450MHz processors are on display at Aramco Digital's stand at LEAP. ■

Elm demonstrates digital transformation services at LEAP

Elm demonstrated its wide range of cutting-edge platforms and innovations as a strategic sponsor of LEAP 2025. The company launched an advanced suite



of solutions designed to address emerging challenges and empower future innovators. Through its participation, Elm aims to leverage the event's robust reputation as a global platform that attracts creative minds and excellent talents, promote strategic partnerships, help shape the future of smart solutions and etch innovations, and explore ways to leverage cutting-edge technologies to boost quality of life.

Furthermore, the company exhibited 'elm Autonomous Vehicle', which is in line with its smart solutions and features cutting-edge systems like drive-by-wire systems. The vehicle, integrated with multi-sensors, communication networks, high-powered computing systems, and Elm virtual driver software (L3/L4), indicates the mobility sector's technological evolution. Furthermore, it aligns with Elm's ambitious vision and forward-looking approach to revolutionising the world through digital products and innovative solutions.

The company also showcased its popular Mobile Mapping System, which utilizes multiple sensors mounted on regular vehicles to easily collect environmental data. This technology supports 3D map updates and the creation of precise digital twins, employing artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics for smart environmental development. Additionally, Elm displayed its 3D mapping technology, which uses advanced algorithms to convert mobile mapping data into detailed 3D maps that provide information such as traffic rules, roads, buildings, and vegetation, facilitating autonomous driving, realistic simulations, and digital twin applications.

Elm demonstrated its expertise in visitor experience and crowd management through efficient site operations and skilled team deployment. The company implements smart pathways and digital systems to optimise visitor flow and prevent congestion while providing digital solutions for ticket booking and visit management. The company will further enhance the experience through tailored

workshops and educational tours for diverse audiences.

As part of its exhibition, Elm showcased its Tawaaf Simulation, an innovative system analyses movement patterns around the Mataf, assesses capacity and tests new scenarios by simulating pilgrim flow during Hajj and Umrah, ensuring optimal safety and efficiency. The company also presented its 'Smart Assistant; tool, which processes advanced data and document analysis while engaging with users to deliver personalised responses drawing from a dynamic, field-specific knowledge base.

The exhibition featured the 'AI Segmentation', a versatile smart engine designed to enhance safety and boost operational efficiency. This system provides strategic recommendations for early intervention and proactive management, enabling swift adaptation and instantaneous analysis. Furthermore, the company showcased its digital twin technology, demonstrating the reconstruction of 3D techniques in urban centres through land imaging. This technology captures footage using mobile vehicles or satellites to create realistic representations. Visitors to the event can also explore the 'Exams Monitoring / Students Behavior Analytics', which evaluates students by performing complex video analytics in exam centres and airports. The system promptly alerts relevant authorities and generates detailed periodic reports. Additionally, Elm's Edge AI Device will be exhibited, an advanced Edge AI device designed to process computer vision and NLP models locally, delivering real-time intelligence for diverse applications with unmatched efficiency and reliability.

Elm highlighted its linguistic model, 'Nuha VLM', developed using satellite imagery and AI technologies. This smart assistant showcases high-precision vocal interaction capabilities, personalizing engagement across various contexts. It leverages Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG technology), AI, and natural language processing to deliver detailed and accurate answers. The system efficiently manages tasks such as bill payments, registration, and data analysis for both individuals and organizations. Elm also introduce its Call Center Smart System, which analyses call centre conversations, accurately transcribes them, measures customer satisfaction, understands various dialects, and generates comprehensive reports to improve service quality. ■

Hewlett Packard Enterprise showcases industry-leading AI solutions, from edge to cloud, at LEAP 2025

Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) showcased its cutting-edge AI, hybrid cloud and networking solutions, including HPE Private Cloud AI, and announce its latest updates on the 'Saudi Made' HPE production initiative, highlighting HPE's commitment to the Saudi Arabia market.

At this year's booth visitors had the opportunity to interact with a virtual AI avatar of HPE Middle East managing director, Mohammad Alrehaili, and learn about how HPE's AI-powered solutions are shaping the future by boosting productivity and accelerating the rate of discovery and innovation. They could interact with HPE's technical experts, and experience interactive challenges and live demonstrations, including:

- Virtual AI avatar of HPE's Middle East managing director, Mohammad Alrehaili – Demonstrating the power of AI at scale, attendees can communicate with Mohammad's AI powered avatar, which looks and sounds just like him. Enabled through Proto, the world's first holographic communications platform, the 7ft tall machine allows life-size holograms to be beamed in real time.

- 'Saudi Made' HPE servers – Not even a year ago, at LEAP 2024, HPE announced the availability of 'Saudi Made' HPE servers, following the opening of its new Riyadh production facility. This year, visitors will be able learn more about HPE's commitment to the 'Saudi Made' program and receive the latest updates on the production.

- HPE Private Cloud AI – With the first Private Cloud AI solution of this kind, HPE is bringing its world-leading AI capabilities to the Middle East. At the HPE booth, visitors can learn how this turnkey HPE Private Cloud AI, co-developed with NVIDIA and part of the NVIDIA AI Computing by HPE portfolio, will enable them to deploy generative AI (GenAI) applications in seconds.

- The HPE GreenLake High-Speed challenge – HPE GreenLake is a hybrid cloud solution that allows organizations to run computing services with a public cloud experience, deploy and manage resources across their private and public clouds while retaining control of their data and flexibility over how they consume and manage services. Attendees are invited to test their skills using HPE GreenLake to build an IT landscape from the ground up. The fastest to complete the challenge successfully will be awarded by HPE.

- Smart stadium & fan experience – HPE Aruba Networking is a key provider for "smart stadiums" technology solutions, delivering high-speed, reliable connectivity throughout world-renown venues. Visitors of the "Orange Smart Bus" will hear more about how HPE Aruba Networking by providing a secure and intelligent network infrastructure that enables and supports enhanced and connected stadium experiences for fans.

- 100% fanless direct liquid cooling systems architecture – Based on years of expertise, HPE introduced the industry's first 100% fanless direct liquid cooling systems architecture. In conversation with HPE experts onsite, LEAP attendees can find out how this architecture delivers greater energy and cost-efficiency advantages than the alternative solutions on the market. In fact, this direct liquid cooling architecture yields 90% reduction in cooling power consumption as

compared to traditional air-cooled systems.

"LEAP brought together technology experts, innovators, business and thought leaders from across the region," said Mohammad Alrehaili, Middle East managing director at HPE. "This makes it the ideal environment to strengthen relationships, celebrate successes and explore future opportunities as we present our broad portfolio of AI, hybrid cloud and networking solutions, and reaffirm our commitment to the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030." ■

stc Group launches 'upsource' at LEAP 2025: Empowering businesses with advanced outsourcing solutions



stc Group unveiled 'upsource' by solutions, its newly rebranded business process outsourcing (BPO) subsidiary. Building upon the success of stc's leading customer experience solutions provider, Contact Center Company (CCC), this transformation marks a bold new chapter in delivering unparalleled customer experience solutions.

By streamlining essential operations, upsource allows entrepreneurs to concentrate their efforts on accelerating core business growth. With upsource, businesses across the kingdom can outsource non-core business functions to external groups, increasing efficiency and resourcing on core business functions. Furthermore, it offers a comprehensive suite of BPO services, including operations management, finance, human resources, and customer experience solutions.

Powered by the stc Group ecosystem, upsource aims to become a resource for enterprises looking to optimize processes, reduce costs, and drive long-term growth. It integrates advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, IoT, and data-driven analytics to enhance productivity and accuracy across the business functions that customers choose to outsource. With a customer-centric approach, upsource is poised to set new industry benchmarks in service quality, digital transformation, and scalable solutions for businesses across the Middle East.

Launched at LEAP 2025 - the world's most attended tech event- stc Group's upsource introduces advanced business process outsourcing solutions, empowering businesses in the kingdom to drive economic growth and expand their potential. ■

e& Carrier & Wholesale strengthens global connectivity with strategic market expansion



e& Carrier & Wholesale (C&WSS) is reinforcing its position as a global connectivity enabler with a strategic expansion into high-growth regions and a renewed focus on digital infrastructure. By strengthening its international footprint and integrating AI-driven solutions, e& C&WS is driving new business opportunities to scale, transform, and stay ahead in a fast-evolving digital landscape.

Nabil Baccouche, Group Chief Carrier & Wholesale Officer, e&, said: "Our global expansion and investments in digital infrastructure reflect our commitment to delivering seamless, secure, and intelligent connectivity solutions. We are not just growing our presence—we are redefining how businesses connect across borders. With a robust ecosystem spanning subsea networks, AI-powered platforms, and localised expertise, we enable our partners to scale with agility and confidence in a hyperconnected world."

As part of its international expansion, e& C&WSS is establishing new strategic hubs in Miami and Johannesburg, strengthening its existing presence in London and Singapore.

These locations serve as key gateways to some of the world's most dynamic markets, enabling e& C&WSS to provide 20 cutting-edge services across Voice, Data, Roaming, and Mobility Services to enterprises, telcos, and digital-first businesses. This robust global infrastructure empowers businesses to scale seamlessly, supported by cutting-edge connectivity solutions and localised expertise.

This expansion strengthens C&WSS's support for international partners while unlocking new market opportunities, allowing the company to forge strategic partnerships across the Americas and Africa, enabling businesses to establish a presence in high-growth, previously underserved regions.

Going beyond traditional wholesale services, C&WS acts as a single entry point for MNOs, MVNOs, cloud providers, and enterprises seeking frictionless global connectivity. By leveraging AI-powered automation and localised market expertise, it enables businesses to expand rapidly, enter new markets, and monetise emerging digital opportunities. This diversified

strategy has successfully expanded C&WS's international customer base, acquiring non-telco clients in sectors such as enterprise technology, hyperscalers, and AI-driven platforms while scaling its business with new and existing telco customers.

As part of e&'s broader transformation strategy, the C&WS arm continues to evolve its offerings to align with the demands of the AI, cloud, and edge computing era. With a specialised international workforce, deep market expertise, and an expanding global footprint, e& C&WS is poised to accelerate digital transformation across industries, powering the future of seamless global connectivity.

Last year, with the acquisition of PPF Telecom, e& expanded its global footprint to 38 countries, adding four new markets – Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia, and Slovakia. C&WS has played a critical role in driving this geographic expansion by enabling seamless connectivity through international hubs and fostering partnerships across telco and non-telco sectors. This approach strengthens e&'s position as a trusted global enabler of digital transformation. ■



Ericsson and ACES-NH implement 3 operators shared 5G indoor connectivity in KSA

Ericsson and Advanced Communications and Electronics Systems (ACES), an international neutral host provider, have reached a significant milestone with the successful implementation of a shared indoor solution utilized by major communications service providers under the three-year Neutral Host Provider agreement partnership signed last year. This achievement marks a new standard for innovation in 5G technology across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The partnership has resulted in a neutral host ecosystem where multiple operators share the same advanced 5G indoor infrastructure. This approach reduces operational complexity and cost, and provides seamless, high-quality connectivity for users, regardless of their chosen network operator.

Leveraging Ericsson's Radio Dot System, the solution currently delivers reliable,

high-performing indoor connectivity at airports, hospitals, stadiums and offices across Saudi Arabia. The deployment addresses the increasing demand for an enhanced indoor user experience and aligns with Saudi Vision 2030's goals of advancing digital transformation and modernizing infrastructure.

Dr. Khalid Al-Mashouq, Chief Executive Officer of ACES-NH, says: "This milestone underscores our commitment to building innovative solutions that meet the growing connectivity needs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. By leveraging a neutral host model, we are enabling seamless communication for operators and their customers, ensuring they have access to world-class connectivity in even the busiest indoor environments. This collaboration is a testament to our shared vision for progress and innovation in the telecommunications sector."

Håkan Cervell, Vice President and Head of

Ericsson Saudi Arabia at Ericsson Middle East and Africa, says: "The deployment of this shared indoor solution with ACES-NH is a significant step forward for 5G connectivity in the Kingdom. This achievement reflects our commitment to driving digital transformation and delivering solutions that empower operators and enhance end-user experiences. With a shared history of delivering transformative telecommunications projects we, along with ACES-NH, are aiming to exemplify our ability to meet the demands of today's digital landscape while setting a global benchmark for indoor connectivity solutions, in alignment with the goals of Saudi Vision 2030."

Ericsson and ACES have a long-standing partnership focused on delivering innovative telecommunications solutions. This latest deployment further strengthens their role as drivers of enabling transformative connectivity and digital transformation. ■

Ericsson features 5G-enabled robotic dog 'Rocky' at LEAP 2025



Ericsson has featured its 5G-powered robotic dog, Rocky, as part of its technology demonstrations at LEAP 2025. The showcase highlights how robotics, combined with 5G, is enabling advancements in industrial automation and operational efficiency.

Rocky is equipped with advanced sensors, cameras, and private 5G connectivity, enabling tasks such as factory inspections, remote monitoring, and safety assessments. The integration of real-time data transmission and artificial intelligence enhances operational accuracy in challenging environments.

By leveraging the Ericsson Private 5G network, Rocky can also assist authorities with efficient emergency response and

quality inspections of factories, airports, and other critical infrastructure. Ericsson Private 5G sets a new standard for network performance, enabling secure, reliable, high-speed 4G and 5G connectivity, powered by its robust dual-mode core and industry-leading radio portfolio.

Ante Mihovilovic, Vice President and Head of Networks at Ericsson Middle East & Africa, says: "Rocky demonstrates how private 5G networks can support advanced robotics to optimize industrial processes. By leveraging the high-speed, low-latency, and secure connectivity of Ericsson Private 5G, industries can adopt innovative solutions that enhance operational efficiency, improve safety, and enable real-time decision-making. Our participation at LEAP 2025 underscores

Ericsson's commitment to providing technology that meets the evolving demands of industrial automation and digital transformation."

Ericsson's presence at LEAP 2025 highlights its innovation leadership and commitment to Saudi Vision 2030. Under the theme "Step Forward: Discover the Unfolding Future," Ericsson is showcasing advanced solutions, live demonstrations, and insights into the future of connectivity. With over four decades of partnership in Saudi Arabia, Ericsson continues to collaborate with communication service providers, enterprises, and government entities to localize advanced technologies, nurture local talent, and support the Kingdom's position in the global technology landscape. ■

Unifonic participates in LEAP 2025, showcasing exceptional marketing campaigns and customer service tools



Unifonic showcased its AI-powered conversational platform at LEAP 2025. The innovative platform, designed to help elevate customer engagement and operational efficiency, reflects Unifonic's ongoing transition towards adopting artificial intelligence-powered engagement solutions.

Unifonic's innovative conversational tools empower businesses to deliver impactful marketing campaigns and outstanding customer service, in line with rising customer demand for more personalised and meaningful interactions. Moreover, these solutions leverage the power of artificial intelligence to facilitate seamless omnichannel communication and tailored customer experiences that foster long-term relationships.

LEAP 2025 features live simulations showcasing the potential of Unifonic's AI-driven platform to improve efficiency, optimise engagement and drive substantial ROI for businesses. Unifonic is proud to showcase some of the most popular and impactful use cases of its solutions, which include Conversational Marketing capabilities, including targeted marketing

campaigns, abandoned cart recovery, personalization, and the ability to click to WhatsApp for direct engagement. Additionally, their Customer Support solutions empower businesses with tools for improving customer satisfaction (CSAT), sending notifications, and offering multi-language support to cater to a global audience. As part of their commitment to helping businesses optimize customer experience, Unifonic is also offering a complimentary Customer Experience (CX) Maturity Assessment. This assessment, conducted by their team of experts, uncovers valuable insights that can enhance a company's customer service strategies and overall performance.

Ahmed Hamdan, Co-founder and CEO of Unifonic, said: "We, at Unifonic, are committed to transforming customer engagement for businesses. Being one of the leading entities in integrating AI within engagement processes in the Middle East, our executives will showcase the potential of AI-powered solutions in delivering personalised, omnichannel customer experiences at LEAP 2025. These are vital to business success, and by leveraging our innovations, businesses can seamlessly

connect with customers in a meaningful manner."

Furthermore, Unifonic empowers clients to ensure omnichannel customer experiences, enhance customer communication, and optimise digital journeys. Through conversational AI, the company automates customer journeys, enhances business productivity, streamlines customer interactions, and orchestrates daily operations. It further utilises business messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp, to ensure enhanced engagement and performance marketing strategies.

Unifonic's participation at LEAP 2025 demonstrates its commitment to innovation and its role in positioning Saudi Arabia as a global digital leader. The company's booth will feature interactive demonstrations of its unified dashboard, which offers real-time insights and refines customer engagement strategies. Unifonic's range of solutions, from AI-powered chatbots and advanced messaging platforms to sophisticated analytics, enable businesses to stay ahead of the curve and achieve long-standing success in the ever-evolving market. **■**

Deloitte launches its Silicon-2-Service Offering at LEAP 2025 to accelerate AI adoption in the Middle East



Deloitte, the Innovation & Emerging Technology Partner at LEAP 2025, has launched its comprehensive Silicon-2-Service (S2S) offering in the Middle East. This innovative service offering aims to provide end-to-end strategy, design, deployment, optimization and management of Sovereign AI capabilities for its most strategic clients.

Unveiled at the world's most attended technology event, the S2S offering's all-encompassing AI approach blends industry best practices in production, deployment, and business integration. The service offering draws on Deloitte's deep expertise in private cloud infrastructure, hardware optimization and management, AI software integration, data science, and data management, leveraging powerful technology platforms such as NVIDIA.

"AI is transforming business landscapes globally and presenting our Middle East region with unprecedented opportunities

to innovate and scale. With the rollout of our Silicon-2-Service offering in the region, we are enabling adoption and providing access to cutting-edge innovation at a large scale. We support clients across the public and private sectors through their entire AI journey," commented Yousef Barkawie, Deloitte Middle East AI & Data Leader.

"S2S is our way of assisting our clients in the design and deployment of their sovereign AI capabilities in a secure, private, and scalable infrastructure. Our clients can now confidently deploy the latest AI infrastructure, from GPU to Generative AI services – therefore Silicon-to-Service – on their private networks. Client organizations are now able to build AI solutions that maximise productivity while addressing sovereign considerations and mitigating market-specific challenges," he added.

The S2S offering stands out by managing the complexity of AI adoption at every stage, allowing businesses to achieve

faster and more impactful outcomes. By integrating production-grade AI solutions with custom workflows, Deloitte's S2S helps reduce the costs, risks, and challenges organisations face when deploying and scaling advanced technologies.

Through the partnership with NVIDIA, Deloitte Middle East simplified the deployment of state-of-the-art infrastructure, including NVIDIA's accelerated computing and AI platforms, enhancing efficiency and scalability. This collaboration enables Deloitte's clients to accomplish faster time to value of their large scale AI investments while embracing the freedom to innovate and adapt to evolving market demands.

The launch of S2S aligns with Deloitte's broader commitment to supporting the Middle East's digital economy by fostering an ecosystem where AI bridges innovation with tangible, positive outcomes, in compliance with the prevailing regulations unique to each country. **■**

CMG, in partnership with China Mobile and ZTE, advances 5G-A 4K wireless live broadcasting at the 2025 Spring Festival Gala

ZTE together with China Media Group (CMG) and China Mobile, ensured a seamless live broadcast of the 2025 Spring Festival Gala and related programs with 5G-A wireless technology.

CMG, in collaboration with China Mobile and ZTE, has once again pushed the boundaries of live television broadcasting at the 2025 Spring Festival Gala. Building on the successful implementation of the innovative "5G-A 4K Shallow-Compression Wireless Broadcasting" technology, this year's gala featured an expanded deployment, delivering an even more immersive viewing experience.

Celebrating the Year of the Snake, the gala seamlessly blended China's rich cultural heritage with state-of-the-art broadcast technology. In a landmark collaboration, CMG partnered with industry leaders China Mobile and ZTE to refine and expand the technology, enabling robust wireless 4K camera coverage across both studio and on-location settings. This enhanced system provided audiences with unprecedented multi-angle, behind-the-scenes access, reinforcing the gala's reputation for innovation and excellence.

Advancing 4K wireless live broadcast technology

Since its inception in 1983, the Spring Festival Gala has chronicled China's remarkable journey through periods of transformation. This year, the gala not only celebrated this legacy but also showcased significant advancements in 5G-A 4K wireless broadcasting. The breakthrough was driven by two key factors:

Enhanced creative innovation: Building on previous success, the expanded deployment now delivers even more dynamic, multi-dimensional coverage, meeting growing audience expectations for immersive, real-



time experiences.

Technological maturation: The evolution of 5G-A wireless mobile broadcasting has enabled ultra-high reliability and image quality that rivals traditional wired systems, while ensuring secure, uninterrupted transmission.

Utilizing shallow compression codec technology at transmission rates of up to 880 Mbps per camera, the 2025 Spring Festival Gala marked a significant leap forward, demonstrating the technology's scalability and capacity to deliver high-fidelity live coverage in real-time.

Superior performance breakthrough with a dedicated 5G-A private network

This year's enhanced deployment was supported by a dedicated 5G-A private network, built on ZTE's distributed micro-stations. Achieving uplink speeds of up to 2 Gbps per camera, the network enabled seamless camera mobility throughout the venue. ZTE's proprietary 5G-A SuperMIMO technology and AI-enhanced beam tracking ensured uninterrupted streaming even during high-mobility camera movements, facilitating real-time local editing of 4K video streamed directly to the broadcasting studio.

The network's ultra-low latency—averaging 4 ms at the air interface and less than 100 ms end-to-end, including encoding and decoding—ensured secure and efficient transmission. The system also seamlessly integrated wireless and wired setups, delivering a synchronized live broadcast for top-tier production quality.

Expanding coverage to every corner

The 5G-A network not only enhanced coverage within the main studio but also extended its reach to surrounding areas. Multiple channels benefited from the system's stable performance during interviews and live segments. The technical team and directors praised the exceptional mobility, reliability, and overall performance of the wireless transmission, while audiences enjoyed a more immersive and dynamic presentation.

By seamlessly integrating cutting-edge technology with cultural heritage, CMG, in partnership with China Mobile and ZTE, has set a new benchmark in live broadcasting. The enhanced 5G-A 4K wireless broadcasting system at the 2025 Spring Festival Gala not only showcases the evolution of this technology but also paves the way for future innovations in the media landscape. ■

Turkcell and ZTE to conduct Europe's first "Fiber Fingerprint" intelligent ODN trial in Türkiye

ZTE and Turkcell, to conduct the first "Fiber Fingerprint" trial in Europe. The trial was deployed at Turkcell Kartal Plaza, leveraging ZTE's Fiber Fingerprint line card, external optical multiplexer with an integrated optical switch, and Fiber Fingerprint splitter.

Traditionally, optical access ODN networks have functioned as passive "dark" pipelines, presenting ongoing challenges in resource updates, fault detection, and proactive assessment of optical path quality. ZTE's innovative "Fiber Fingerprint" intelligent ODN solution effectively overcomes these limitations by enabling accurate identification of optical splitter port statuses, intelligent restoration of network topology, and precise detection and localization of optical path quality issues and faults.

This innovative solution lights up "dark" ODN network, offering an efficient, labor-free, and intelligent approach for visualizing ODN topology, enhancing splitter port resource utilization, rapidly locating fault with precision, improving operation and maintenance (O&M) efficiency. These advancements are recognized as pivotal for the future evolution of ODN networks.

The trial was designed to address practical network challenges, ensuring that "Fiber Fingerprint" intelligent ODN solution delivers tangible benefits in live deployments. During the trials, significant improvements were observed across multiple ODN application scenarios:

Accurate Fault Diagnosis: Weak-light faults in feeder, distribution, and drop segments were precisely identified, enhancing network reliability.

Automated ODN Topology Updates: The network topology was automatically refreshed following new Optical Network Terminal (ONT) registrations, streamlining



network management.

Enhanced Visibility and Monitoring: ONT information and connection relationships were accurately displayed, enabling more efficient network operations.

Splitter Port Status Detection: The system effectively detected splitter port statuses, classifying them as occupied, idle, directly connected to ONT's, or virtually occupied.

The successful completion of this trial highlights Turkcell's steadfast dedication to improving network quality and creating a superior unified platform for comprehensive optical access network management. Moving forward, Turkcell and ZTE will continue refining algorithms to improve system performance, expand the Fiber Fingerprint solution to wider applications, and accelerate the seamless integration of advanced digital intelligence into ODN infrastructure.

Prof. Dr. Vehbi Çağrı Güngör, Turkcell Chief Network Technologies Officer, said, "At Turkcell, we are committed to advancing innovative solutions that enhance network efficiency and provide

exceptional experiences for our customers. The successful trial of the Fiber Fingerprint solution signifies a pivotal advancement in our efforts to transform the Optical Distribution Network (ODN) infrastructure into a more intelligent and reliable system. This innovation addresses longstanding challenges in network management while paving the way for a future characterized by seamless connectivity. We are pleased to collaborate with ZTE on this groundbreaking initiative and anticipate continued success in our partnership."

Peng Aiguang, Senior Vice President of ZTE and Chairman of the Board of Netaş, said, "ZTE is committed to driving innovation in the telecommunications industry, and the Fiber Fingerprint solution is a testament to this commitment. Partnering with Turkcell on Europe's first Fiber Fingerprint trial demonstrates our shared vision of building intelligent and efficient network infrastructures. This solution brings transformative value by enabling precise fault detection, resource optimization, and proactive maintenance. Together with Turkcell, we are setting a new benchmark for ODN evolution and digital transformation." ■



stc Group has announced a strategic collaboration with Cohere to transform the AI landscape in the Middle East and beyond. This collaboration is set to redefine stc's AI-driven operations, enhance customer engagement, and unlock new digital growth opportunities through state-of-the-art AI solutions.

Revolutionizing AI Capabilities with Advanced AI-Powered Solutions

Under the collaboration, stc will leverage Cohere's cutting-edge AI capabilities to develop transformative products as part of its internal Gen AI initiative. The joint effort will focus on key AI-powered innovations, including stc's AI-powered language model and the Digital Co-Workers Foundry, which are designed to optimize business efficiency and deliver a superior digital experience for customers.

As part of the efforts, stc will work with Cohere to develop North for Telecom, a customized version of Cohere's North, a secure AI workspace platform announced earlier this year. North for Telecom will be tailored to address the unique needs of the sector, providing intelligent automation, enhanced conversational experiences, and real-time data insights. Meanwhile, the Digital Co-Workers Foundry will introduce AI-driven virtual assistants designed to

streamline workflows, boost productivity, and support stc's workforce with intelligent automation solutions.

Strategic AI Investments Driving Innovation

"As a leader in digital transformation, stc continues to invest in advanced AI technologies that will shape the future of our industry. Our collaboration with Cohere represents a significant milestone in our AI journey, reinforcing our vision to harness AI-driven intelligence, enhance operational capabilities, and introduce innovative AI solutions that create tangible value," said Haithem Mohammed Alfaraj, Group Chief Technology Officer at stc Group.

Motaz Alangari, Group Chief Investment Officer at stc Group, added: "stc Group strategically invests in pioneering companies that unlock access to transformative technologies, new business models, and enhanced revenue streams. This collaboration aligns with tali ventures, stc's Corporate Venture Capital arm, which plays a key role in fostering technological advancement and investing in next-generation innovations that complement stc's digital ecosystem.

Cohere is a global leader in secure

enterprise AI, and our investment in this collaboration facilitates access to enterprise-grade AI solutions, positioning stc to maximize AI's potential across its product and service offerings."

Empowering AI-Driven Digital Transformation

Cohere, known for its industry-leading secure AI solutions, will bring its expertise in enterprise AI models and applications to stc's ecosystem, ensuring faster adoption and optimization of AI capabilities across stc's digital infrastructure.

"It's been great working closely with stc's team. I'm really excited to bring our secure AI technology to enhance its role as a digital enabler. We look forward to collaborating with stc and integrating Cohere's enterprise AI solutions to lift grunt work off the backs of their employees so they can focus more on the areas of their jobs where they can add real value" said Aidan Gomez, Cohere's Co-founder and CEO.

This collaboration underscores stc's commitment to being at the forefront of AI-driven innovation, fostering a digital-first economy, and shaping the future of intelligent technology in Saudi Arabia and beyond. ■

stc Group enhances digital infrastructure capabilities with key partnerships at Capacity Middle East 2025



stc Group at Capacity Middle East 2025, signed several strategic partnerships throughout the three-day event – held from 4-6 February in Dubai, UAE – all supporting the future of connectivity and digital infrastructure across Saudi Arabia and beyond.

Capacity Middle East is an annual opportunity to expand business partnerships and agreements among industry leaders. This year, stc Group announced major collaborations with several peers, including CEQUENS, Orange, and Telenor IoT. These strategic partnerships aim to optimize business solutions, improve 5G network and data roaming services, and meet the growing demand for international networks to access Saudi Arabia's IoT and digital infrastructure capabilities. stc Group also announced several initiatives at Capacity Middle East focused on digital offerings like Catalogue-to-Catalogue (C2C) solutions for wholesale partners, announcing dynamic bandwidth on-demand services and expanding stc Group's IoT services.

Supported by its Carrier & Wholesale unit and center3 subsidiary, stc Group continues to drive the future of connectivity by



shaping the region's digital infrastructure. Its participation in key industry discussions and its strategic partnerships are driving regional growth ambitions, reinforcing stc Group's position as a world-class telecom provider and digital expert.

stc Group's on-ground showcase, highlighted the latest successful field trial of a 1.6Tbps single-carrier Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM) channel, reinforcing the Group's ambition to advance connectivity solutions. Spanning from stc Group's land station to a Jeddah-based data center, the demonstration showcased

enhanced network performance and data transmission standards.

Mohammed Alabbadi, Group Chief Carrier & Wholesale Officer at stc group said: "Our annual sponsorship of this event as a Digital Enabler underscores the kingdom's commitment to prioritizing digital infrastructure as a cornerstone of the future digital economy. Our recent partnerships are a testament to our pursuit of innovation and excellence, and we look forward to delivering cutting-edge solutions that drive growth and connectivity for our partners and customers." ■

AMD and Aramco to explore potential collaboration to help accelerate industrial AI deployment



AMD has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Aramco to collaborate and discuss with respect to the evaluation and use of AMD's products and technology to, among other things, accelerate the deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) for specific industrial workloads.

The MoU explores a framework for potential collaboration on advanced technology solutions. Key areas of focus include leveraging high-performance AMD graphics processing unit (GPU) and central processor unit (CPU) capabilities, exploring industrial edge AI deployment, cloud strategy, AI/machine learning, predictive analytics, and data center modernization. Additional areas for potential collaboration include training on AMD ROCm software stack as well as evaluating AMD AI capabilities for

operational optimization and digital twin technologies in the energy sector.

"Digital transformation is expected to play a pivotal role in the future of the energy industry, and AI is expected to contribute to the next-generation infrastructure that will power innovation in the industry," said Sami A. Ajmi, Aramco Acting Senior Vice President of Digital & Information Technology. "In seeking to collaborate with AMD, we aim to explore opportunities to accelerate Aramco's deployment of AI, upskill the company's employees to equip them for the AI era, and exploit possibilities enabled by emerging technologies such as AI and machine learning."

Aramco embarked on a digital transformation program in 2017, aiming to drive greater efficiency, accelerate

innovation, build a digital-savvy workforce, and create new employment opportunities. The potential collaboration with AMD reflects Aramco's aim to continue exploring technologies such as AI, big data, and predictive analytics to help make its operations more productive, efficient, and sustainable.

"This collaboration with Aramco underlines the leadership performance and breadth of our portfolio, which addresses the needs of the modern business looking to take advantage of the immense possibilities enabled by AI," said Stephanie Dismore, AMD Senior Vice President Europe Middle East & Africa. "Customers and partners across the Middle East region are leveraging AI to evolve their value propositions, and AMD is committed to empowering them with best-in-class technology." **T**

Huawei Europe bags prestigious Top Employer 2025 Award for sixth consecutive year

Huawei Europe earned recognition as a Top Employer in Europe for the sixth consecutive year in 2025. This prestigious certification covers the following 17 countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Poland, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden and Turkey.

The recognition is a testament to Huawei Europe's exemplary human resources practices and underscores its commitment to fostering a culture of innovation, inclusivity, and continuous improvement.

Lesley White, Vice President of Human Resources, Huawei European Region said: "Europe is home to a diverse and highly skilled talent pool, driving innovation and excellence. Being certified as a Top Employer in Europe is a testament to Huawei's commitment to fostering a supportive, inclusive, and growth-oriented workplace. This recognition underscores the importance of investing in employee development, well-being and engagement, ensuring that the company not only attracts top talent but also retains and empowers them to thrive in a competitive global landscape."

The Top Employers Institute is a globally recognized authority in certifying excellence in employment practices. The certification process involves a comprehensive survey across six core dimensions, with over 250 detailed questions assessing various HR practices. Each topic is evidence-based, ensuring answers are factual and aligned with industry benchmarks, followed by a rigorous audit to guarantee certification accuracy.

Patrik Rendel, Regional Manager DACH & CEE of Top Employers Institute said: "On behalf of the Top Employers Institute, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Huawei for achieving the prestigious



Top Employer certification with an impressive score of 91.26%. This remarkable accomplishment reflects commitment to implementing best HR practices. Huawei's dedication to empowering talent and driving innovation sets a benchmark for excellence in the industry. We are proud to recognize Huawei as a leader in people practices and look forward to your continued success in shaping the future of work. "

Huawei is dedicated to driving digital transformation and innovation, connecting the world through cutting-edge ICT technology. With a focus on excellence, we empower individuals to lead, excel, and shape the future of connectivity. Join us in a dynamic, supportive environment where your contributions will be recognized, and your potential can break boundaries, advancing both your career and global progress. **T**

Omantel attracts cutting-edge AI and metaverse technologies in collaboration with Shaffra Technology Labs



Omantel has entered a strategic partnership with Singapore-based Shaffra Technology Labs to develop groundbreaking solutions leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and metaverse technologies. These solutions will be hosted within Omantel cloud services and provided to government institutions and private sector companies in the Sultanate of Oman to enhance operational efficiency. The agreement was signed during the LEAP 2025 Conference in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Eng. Aladdin Bait Fadhel, Chief Commercial Officer of Omantel, stated: "At Omantel, our vision is to solidify our leadership role as a key enabler of Oman's digital transformation and to be the premier provider of innovative technology solutions in the region. Our collaboration with Shaffra will significantly contribute to developing cutting-edge technology solutions, particularly in artificial intelligence, for our customers".

Al Harith Al Atawi, CEO of Shaffra

Technology Labs, expressed his enthusiasm about partnering with Omantel on this strategic project. He noted that this cooperation would open vast opportunities for Shaffra in the Omani market by introducing successful AI and metaverse solutions, such as the AI employee project, which is now being adopted by numerous government and private entities in several countries. "We aim to deliver a unique experience for Omantel customers through this partnership and innovative projects that enhance productivity and reduce costs," said Al Atawi..

Omantel has previously signed multiple agreements to localize global technologies and enhance the ICT infrastructure in the Sultanate. In collaboration with major international technology giants, Omantel seeks to attract the latest technological and innovative advancements to foster Oman's digital transformation. This strategic initiative aligns with Omantel's vision to become an integrated provider of digital solutions, catering to the diverse needs

of government institutions, private sector companies, and individual subscribers under one umbrella.

Omantel has succeeded, through the integration of its operations, processes, and extensive expertise in the field of communications and digital technology, in establishing its position as a leading telecommunications company within the Sultanate of Oman and beyond. The company's innovative approaches have contributed to providing state-of-the-art solutions to different consumer and business sectors. The company aims to deliver an unparalleled, exceptional experience to its customers and strives to always exceed their expectations. To achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, Omantel invests in emerging technologies and provides cutting-edge ICT solutions, such as cloud solutions, AI, Smart solutions, cybersecurity, and much more, in addition to harnessing its technological capabilities to enhance innovation and leadership in new and advanced technologies. ■



Bridging the digital divide: Empowering Africa's future with robust broadband infrastructure

Toni Pellegrino, MD of South Africa and Head of Network Infrastructure for Southern and Eastern Africa at Nokia

Broadband connectivity is a cornerstone of Africa's transformation, driving economic growth, enhancing social equity, and unlocking new opportunities for innovation. However, with fixed broadband penetration in Africa at 12% - compared with the global average of 63% - millions remain disconnected, particularly in rural and underserved areas. This digital divide not only limits access to essential services like education and healthcare but also hampers the continent's broader socio-economic development.

Encouragingly, Africa's fixed broadband adoption grew by 11% in 2022, reflecting both progress and potential. Transformational projects, such as those focused on expanding affordable, high-speed fiber broadband to underserved

communities in South Africa, demonstrate how innovative technology and business models can pave the way for inclusive digital connectivity.



Real-world impact on bridging the digital divide

South Africa's broadband market is at the forefront of Africa's digital transformation. Fixed broadband, driven by both fiber networks and Fixed Wireless Access (FWA), is enabling greater connectivity across urban and rural areas. However, the need to connect underserved regions remains critical, particularly as broadband's socio-economic benefits become increasingly apparent.

Recent initiatives demonstrate how innovative partnerships are driving progress. In collaboration with local operators, fiber broadband expansion projects are delivering affordable, pay-as-you-go fiber solutions to underserved

communities, particularly in five cities and 14 townships (Low-income, High-Density areas) across South Africa. These efforts are addressing affordability challenges by reducing reliance on mobile data, which can be up to 70 times more expensive per gigabit than fiber.

The result? For millions of low-income households, broadband connectivity is becoming a reality for the first time. These solutions are not only bridging the digital divide but also unlocking access to essential digital services like online education, telehealth, and remote work—key drivers of economic empowerment and social inclusion.

Market potential for broadband expansion

With its growing broadband market, South Africa offers immense opportunities for stakeholders. Over one million households are already in overbuild zones, showcasing the demand for high-speed, reliable internet. As digital adoption increases, the market is shifting from simple connectivity to services that require high-speed network infrastructure capable of supporting advanced applications.

This demand is particularly pressing as South Africa becomes a hub for digital innovation in Africa. Technologies such as fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) and fixed wireless access (FWA) are crucial to addressing connectivity challenges, offering scalability and efficiency. Future-proof solutions like 25G, 50G and 100G PON ensure that infrastructure can handle the exponential growth in data consumption, laying a sustainable foundation for long-term economic growth.

Business models that make a difference

Technology alone cannot solve the connectivity challenge. The success of broadband expansion depends on innovative business models that align with local realities. In South Africa,

pay-as-you-go fiber broadband has emerged as a game changer. This model enables households to access high-speed broadband incrementally, making it more affordable for low-income communities.

Such business models also help monetize network investments, creating sustainable revenue streams for operators while expanding access. By integrating these models with advanced technologies, service providers can meet the diverse needs of South Africa's population, from densely populated urban centers to rural areas with limited connectivity options.

Collaboration: the key to connecting the African continent

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for addressing Africa's connectivity challenges. South Africa's experience highlights the importance of collaboration among governments, technology providers, and local stakeholders. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have proven especially effective, enabling stakeholders to pool resources, share expertise, and scale broadband deployments.

For instance, partnerships are transforming underserved communities in provinces like Gauteng and Free State. By leveraging local insights and innovative technology, these collaborations are delivering high-speed connectivity to regions previously left behind. This approach ensures that broadband expansion addresses both accessibility and affordability, creating solutions that are impactful and sustainable.

Broadband's role in socio-economic growth

Broadband connectivity is more than a technological upgrade, it is a catalyst for socio-economic transformation. Affordable, high-speed internet enables access to critical services like education and healthcare while fostering economic

participation.

In underserved communities, telemedicine bridges gaps in healthcare access, connecting patients with doctors in urban centers. E-learning platforms empower students in rural schools, providing them with the tools they need to succeed. Broadband also fuels entrepreneurship, enabling small businesses to reach new markets and driving job creation in the digital economy.

South Africa's connectivity efforts also align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those focused on reducing inequalities and fostering inclusive growth. By prioritizing broadband expansion, the country is laying the groundwork for a more equitable and prosperous future.

Shaping Africa's digital future

The journey to a connected South Africa is a shared responsibility. Governments must implement policies that encourage investment and innovation, while operators and technology providers develop scalable, adaptable and sustainable solutions. Local communities and organizations also play a crucial role in ensuring these efforts address real-world needs.

The numbers are clear: With 12 to 14 million households remain unconnected, the potential for transformation is immense. Bridging the digital divide can unlock South Africa's full potential, enabling every individual and community to thrive in the digital economy.

Recent initiatives, such as the pay-as-you-go fiber solutions and collaborative efforts to expand broadband access in underserved South African communities, highlight the transformative power of innovation and partnership. Affordable broadband is no longer a distant goal, it is an achievable reality that can transform lives, drive sustainable economic growth, and create a digitally inclusive future. ■



Innovations in space technology are developing every hour of every day. These innovations not only about scientific research but also propel commercial projects forward. Particularly, the miniaturization of space-operating devices—creating small, lightweight, but highly functional technologies—marks a revolutionary era in this field.

Azerbaijan is increasingly solidifying its position in space research. In recent years, significant steps in implementing national satellite programs, organizing innovation competitions, and developing education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics have increased the younger generation's interest in this area and accelerated technological advancement in the country.

It is important to note that the initiatives of the COSMIC Academy, operating under Azercosmos, are essential in this area. These initiatives do not just limit youths

to theoretical knowledge but also direct them towards finding solutions to real global problems. Innovation competitions, scientific conferences, and technology exhibitions among school students create a conducive platform for presenting their ideas and gaining international recognition. At these events, students develop their projects and gain experience in engineering, programming, and research.

One of the peak achievements of these initiatives in 2025 will be the launch of a PocketQube picosatellite into space orbit via a SpaceX carrier rocket. This project, organized by the COSMIC Academy under the "Azerbaijan National Satellite Innovation Competition," will be realized through the scientific research efforts of 7th to 9th-grade students and will further highlight the country's achievements in space technologies.

PocketQube satellites were first launched into orbit in November 2013 through the UniSat-5 platform owned by Austria, and

the launch included several mini-satellites such as WREN (Germany), T-LogoQube (USA), and QBSout-1 (Italy). This concept is not only a product of technological progress but also symbolizes the idea that space belongs to everyone.

The standard size of these satellites is 5x5x5 cm, and they weigh approximately 250 grams. They are made from robust materials like aluminum alloys and carbon composites, which ensure mechanical durability and thermal management.

These initiatives underscore the role of Azerbaijani school students in integrating into international space technologies, the significant impact of advanced technologies on education, and steps taken to enhance students' digital literacy. Moreover, these projects encourage young people to form new local and international collaborations from their school years and apply theoretical knowledge in practical applications through complex projects. ■

Arabsat retires BADR-6 after 16 years of service

A new chapter begins as BADR-8 takes the helm at 26° East

Arabsat has announced recently the retirement of its BADR-6 satellite after an extraordinary 16 years of service. Launched in 2008 and stationed at Arabsat's flagship orbital position at 26° East, BADR-6 has been a cornerstone of connectivity across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, delivering reliable broadcasting, broadband internet, and telecommunication services.

BADR-6's contributions have been profound, connecting millions of households, empowering businesses, and supporting governmental operations across the MENA region. Its impeccable service has earned it a place in Arabsat's storied legacy as a trailblazer in satellite communications.

"BADR-6 has set the benchmark for reliability and performance in satellite communications," remarked Dr. Badr



Alsuwaidan, Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer at Arabsat. "Its retirement marks the end of a remarkable chapter in our history. As we bid farewell to BADR-6, we also embrace the future with BADR-8, which builds on this legacy with cutting-edge technology designed to meet and exceed the evolving needs of

our customers," he added.

BADR-8, launched in May 2023, now serves at the same orbital position, 26° East, bringing enhanced capabilities to Arabsat's satellite constellation. Equipped with the innovative TELEO optical communications payload, BADR-8 is designed to provide robust, high-capacity analog optical feeder link communications at gigabit speeds. This technology represents Arabsat's dedication to delivering cutting-edge, secure, high-performance services for broadcasting and telecommunication.

As BADR-8 takes over, Arabsat remains committed to expanding its global reach and technological advancements. BADR-8's state-of-the-art capabilities will strengthen Arabsat's ability to offer innovative, reliable solutions in the dynamic satellite industry, ensuring the highest levels of service for customers in the MENA region and beyond. ■

ABS appoints Sameer Karimbhai as new General Counsel

ABS (Agility Beyond Space) has appointed Sameer Karimbhai as its new General Counsel.

Sameer brings over 15 years of extensive legal expertise spanning corporate and commercial law, M&A, joint ventures, finance, governance, regulatory and compliance within the satellite, telecommunications, and energy sectors.

Sameer joins ABS following his tenure at Eutelsat Communications, where he served as OneWeb General Counsel and Group Company Secretary. His experience includes leading significant corporate projects such as helping secure over US\$4 billion of equity and debt funding for OneWeb,

guiding the company through its Chapter 11 restructuring and recovery and completing its US\$6.8 billion combination with Eutelsat. His broad expertise in managing legal teams, supporting executive leadership, building and navigating stakeholder relationships, working with large company boards and handling complex legal matters will be invaluable as ABS continues to grow.

"I am delighted to join the executive team at ABS. This is an exciting time for the company, and I look forward to supporting the business as it embarks on its new growth strategy and achieves many important milestones. My sincere thanks to Mark and team for this incredible opportunity," commented Sameer



Karimbhai, General Counsel.

Sameer's appointment reinforces ABS's commitment to operational excellence, innovation, and customer-centric growth as the company continues delivering tailored satellite communication solutions worldwide. ■

Eutelsat and Télécoms Sans Frontières: A renewed commitment to emergency connectivity and digital inclusion



Eutelsat and Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF) have announced the renewal of their long-standing partnership. This renewed agreement builds upon the first patronage convention initiated in 2022, further strengthening a collaboration that began in 2007.

Empowering Humanitarian Response through connectivity. Headquartered in Pau, France, with a regional office in Latin America, TSF has intervened in more than 80 countries. The organization's mission is to restore connectivity and provide critical information access in humanitarian situations, using cutting-edge technological solutions. With the ability to deploy within 24 hours of a sudden crisis, TSF offers direct aid to affected communities while supporting coordination centers with essential connectivity.

Between 2022 and 2024, Eutelsat's contributions have been instrumental in

supporting TSF's initiatives, leading to remarkable outcomes [1].

A shared vision for Social Responsibility. Eutelsat's enhanced financial and logistical support reflects the Group's commitment to leveraging satellite technology for the greater good. By supporting TSF's capacity to continue its vital work, Eutelsat underscores its dedication to connecting sustainably and bringing vital connectivity to those who need it most.

Eva Berneke, Chief Executive Officer of Eutelsat Group, commented: "For nearly two decades, our partnership with TSF has demonstrated the transformative power of satellite technology in addressing global humanitarian challenges. This renewed agreement reinforces Eutelsat's belief that connectivity is not just about technology but, above all, about people. Together with TSF, we are proud to continue bridging the digital divide and making a tangible difference in the

lives of those facing critical moments."

Jean-François Cazenave, Chairman of Télécoms Sans Frontières, added: "By renewing this partnership, Eutelsat and TSF reaffirm their shared commitment to supporting those whose lives have been dramatically altered by disasters and humanitarian crises around the world. These next three years of partnership will mark 20 years of trust and collaboration between our teams to establish vital satellite links in times of crisis. Eutelsat's unwavering support empowers our organization to turn shared values into action, leveraging cutting-edge technologies to restore communication and hope to people in their most vulnerable moments." ■

[1] To calculate the impact of Eutelsat Group's support, the contribution amount is reported annually against total expenses. This ratio is then applied to the number of beneficiaries for each mission.

Gilat reports fourth quarter and full year 2024 results

Gilat has reported its unaudited results for the fourth quarter and full year ended December 31, 2024.



Fourth Quarter 2024 Financial Highlights

- Revenue of \$78.1 million, up 3% compared with \$75.6 million in Q4 2023;
- GAAP operating income of \$12.8 million, compared with \$2.9 million in Q4 2023;
- Non-GAAP operating income of \$9.7 million, compared with \$6.1 million in Q4 2023;
- GAAP net income of \$11.8 million, or \$0.21 per diluted share, compared with \$3.4 million, or \$0.06 per diluted share, in Q4 2023;
- Non-GAAP net income of \$8.5 million, or \$0.15 per diluted share, compared with \$6.5 million, or \$0.11 per diluted share, in Q4 2023;
- Adjusted EBITDA of \$12.1 million, up 30% compared with \$9.4 million in Q4 2023.

Full year 2024 Financial Highlights

- Revenue of \$305.4 million, up 15% compared with \$266.1 million in 2023;
- GAAP operating income of \$27.7 million, compared with \$28.1 million in 2023;
- Non-GAAP operating income of \$31.9 million, up 35% compared with \$23.5 million in 2023;
- GAAP net income of \$24.8 million, or \$0.44 per diluted share, compared with \$23.5 million, or \$0.41 per diluted share in 2023;
- Non-GAAP net income of \$28.2 million, or \$0.49 per diluted share, compared with

\$19.9 million, or \$0.35 per diluted share 2023;

- Adjusted EBITDA was \$42.2 million, up 16% compared with adjusted EBITDA of \$36.4 million in 2023.

Adi Sfadia, Gilat's CEO, commented, "Gilat delivered strong results with profitability of Adjusted EBITDA of \$12.1 million for the fourth quarter and \$42.2 million for the entire year. These results alongside our strong generation of cash flow underscore the strength and resilience of our core business model, demonstrating both operating leverage and the positive impact of our current product revenue mix."

"During the fourth quarter our Defense and In-Flight Connectivity business continued to experience strong momentum with increased orders and awards. The Defense segment, with a focus on the US DoD, represents a significant growth opportunity for Gilat. We are pleased with our progress in expanding opportunities to serve the specialized needs of government and military customers with our innovative satellite solutions.

"With the closing of the Stellar Blu acquisition, our Commercial business is poised for significant growth as we establish our leadership in the expanding Electronically Steerable Antenna (ESA) market. Our portfolio of IFC GEO, LEO and multi-orbit solutions will be instrumental in capitalizing on increasing demand for inflight connectivity by airlines and passengers," Sfadia continued.

Commencing January 1, 2025, the company has implemented a new

organizational structure and reportable segments. The new organizational structure and segment reporting are designed to better target the diverse and attractive end markets the company serves and to provide investors with greater insight into Gilat's business lines and strategic growth opportunities. The company will report financial results based on the following three divisions: Gilat Defense, Gilat Commercial and Gilat Peru.

• **Gilat Defense Division:** provides secure, rapid-deployment solutions for military organizations, government agencies, and defense integrators, with a strong focus on the U.S. Department of Defense resulting from our strategic acquisition of DataPath Inc. By integrating technologies from Gilat, Gilat DataPath, and Gilat Wavestream, the division delivers resilient battlefield connectivity with multiple layers of communication redundancy for high availability.

• **Gilat Commercial Division:** provides advanced broadband satellite communication networks for IFC, Enterprise and Cellular Backhaul, supporting HTS, VHTS, and NGSO constellations with turnkey solutions for service providers, satellite operators, and enterprises. Our acquisition of Stellar Blu serves as the cornerstone of this division, strengthening our position in the IFC market and enabling us to provide cutting-edge connectivity solutions that meet the demands of passengers, airlines, and service providers worldwide.

• **Gilat Peru Division:** specializes in end-to-end telco solutions, including the operation and implementation of large-scale network projects. With expertise in terrestrial fiber optic, wireless, and satellite networks, Gilat Peru provides technology integration, managed networks and services, connectivity solutions, and reliable internet and voice access across the region. ■

SES enables Viasat Energy Services' Asia-Pacific customer to experience high-performance connectivity

SES has announced that O3b mPOWER, its second-generation medium Earth orbit (MEO) satellite system, was deployed to a Viasat Energy Services' customer operating an offshore vessel in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region. This collaboration represents Viasat Energy's first adoption of MEO satellite technology in APAC and their inaugural implementation of O3b mPOWER services globally.



Offshore Energy mPOWERED was deployed in late October 2024 aboard a Floating Production Storage and Offloading Vessel (FPSO), delivering high-performance connectivity tailored to the specific needs of the offshore energy sector. The O3b mPOWER connectivity will support both critical and non-critical communications onboard, ensuring reliable, high-speed connectivity with guaranteed service level agreement (SLA). This deployment marks a significant step forward in enabling digitalisation and operational efficiency for

offshore operations.

"This collaboration with SES demonstrates how satellites can enhance offshore energy operations," said Lee Ahlstrom, Vice President, Viasat Energy Services. "By enabling the latest technologies through high-speed satellite connectivity, we can empower our customers to gather and analyse critical data about their operations and make important data-driven decisions that optimise how they work."

Viasat Energy Services' forward-thinking approach to satellites is evident in their early adoption of MEO solutions. The company has successfully implemented O3b services across its global operations, particularly in offshore locations in Brazil and Africa. In anticipation of O3b mPOWER, Viasat Energy proactively installed a sophisticated MEO and GEO system onboard the FPSO from the outset.

"Our O3b mPOWER solutions offer an excellent combination of reach, performance, flexibility and resilience that is well-suited to serve the needs of offshore energy and maritime organisations," said Nadine Allen, Global Head of Enterprise and Cloud at SES. "This project with Viasat Energy Services continues the momentum for O3b mPOWER deployments across a wide range of geographies, industries and organisations that are looking to utilise MEO-based satellite technology to drive their digital transformations." ■

Intelsat and GCI expand Alaska partnership with multi-orbit satellite services

Intelsat has signed an expanded satellite services agreement with GCI, Alaska's largest telecommunications company, that will soon deliver multi-orbit broadband services throughout the largest state in the U.S.

"Four years ago, Intelsat and GCI entered into an agreement that dramatically increased the size and speed of GCI's geostationary satellite network in rural Alaska and cemented GCI as the state's leader in satellite connectivity," said Mike DeMarco, Chief Commercial Officer. "This new chapter of our partnership expands our agreement to include next-generation low-earth orbit satellite services and leverages the best of what Intelsat has to offer."

GCI has delivered satellite-based connectivity

for 35 years and has the largest footprint of satellite-delivered data, video and voice services in Alaska. The new deal with Intelsat ensures GCI will be able to meet the growing demands of customers including regional tribal health care providers, school districts, government agencies, and businesses. The agreement not only provides GCI continued access to reliable C-, Ku-, and Ka-band GEO service, which is already part of GCI's satellite service portfolio, it also provides access to high-throughput LEO service managed by Intelsat.

"For over a decade, GCI and Intelsat have been working together to meet the evolving needs of GCI's satellite customers and to bring the best technology to the table," said GCI Senior VP of Corporate Development

Billy Wailand. "Our expanded agreement will give GCI access to Intelsat's broad portfolio of proven, high availability GEO services, next-generation LEO service, and deep expertise in managed satellite services."

Delivering service in Alaska requires a comprehensive approach and a willingness to use "every tool in the toolkit." For GCI, that toolkit includes fiber, microwave, as well as GEO and LEO satellite services. GCI will rely on wholesale satellite capacity as well as Intelsat's fully managed solutions. Those managed services allow GCI to quickly bring their own solutions to market without the need to invest in additional satellite ground infrastructure to provide quality connectivity for end customers. ■

SAMENA Telecommunications Council and Influence Public Affairs sign MoU to strengthen public affairs, policy engagement, and investment facilitation in Egypt

SAMENA Telecommunications Council and Influence Public Affairs (IPA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance strategic public affairs engagement, policy advocacy, and investment facilitation in Egypt. The collaboration aligns with government goals to drive regional cooperation, policy harmonization, and digital transformation across sectors and industries, with special focus on the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector, bringing international best-practices and success cases to Egypt.

As a regional, non-profit industry association spanning South Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa, SAMENA Council continually acts as a sector-development partner to regional governments, regulators, and the Industry for the joint creation of a flourishing and sustainable ICT environment; aid sustainable growth, incentivize investments, and broaden value-creation via the adoption of new collaboration-driven approaches in the areas of digital services, data regulation, industry fees & taxation, among others.



Bocar A. BA

Through this strategic partnership, IPA will play a key role in supporting SAMENA Council's efforts to strengthen engagement with policymakers, regulators, and industry leaders in Egypt by facilitating high-level discussions and promoting investment opportunities in the country, in-line with Egypt ICT 2030 and Egypt digital transformation strategies.

IPA, a leading consultancy specializing in government relations and strategic communications, brings extensive expertise in bridging the gap between public and private sectors. By fostering constructive dialogue and policy collaboration, IPA aims to create

a regulatory environment that enhances investment opportunities, supports sustainable development, and encourages technological innovation.

According to Bocar A. BA, SAMENA Council's CEO, and Walid Ramadan, General Manager of Influence Public Affairs (IPA), this partnership aims to reinforce Egypt's position as a leading regional hub for digital and technological innovation. Together, the two institutions will promote private sector investment in digital transformation projects, as well as support the government's efforts to enable Egypt to take full advantage of global developments in the telecommunications and technology sector, in partnership with specialized international organizations and bodies.

This strategic co-operation marks the beginning of a long-term engagement focused on reinforcing public- and private-sector collaboration, government-industry partnerships, driving policy reforms, and positioning Egypt as a leading hub for digital innovation and telecommunications advancements in the region. ■

Airtm and Tech Mahindra to drive global workforce transformation with advanced payment and talent solutions

Airtm in partnership with Tech Mahindra will enhance payment capabilities and access to top global talent for the Populii community, Tech Mahindra's crowdsourcing platform that connects enterprises with a skilled workforce for high-value, human-in-the-look tasks.

Airtm has earned its reputation as a trusted partner for businesses navigating financial ecosystems in regions often overlooked by larger payout providers. This new partnership with Tech Mahindra showcases Airtm's comprehensive suite of services tailored to the unique needs of AI, data labeling, and BPO sectors, particularly in

emerging markets.

Airtm's platform addresses the challenges faced by companies operating in regions with limited access to traditional financial services. By integrating Airtm's payout solutions, which offers over 500 withdrawal methods in 190 countries, Tech Mahindra ensures that gig workers across the globe can access fast, affordable, and secure methods to manage their earnings.

Birendra Sen, President – Business Process Services, Tech Mahindra, said, "Pay Right & Pay Fair" is our guiding principle for success in crowdsourcing. With the addition of Airtm

as a payment partner, we simplify global payments for our Populii community. This seamless system empowers gig workers to concentrate on their tasks, ensuring timely payments. By expanding our options, we're significantly enhancing our talent pool, giving our customers access to top-tier professionals for their projects."

By combining Airtm's user community, Tech Mahindra's AI expertise, and Populii's specialized solutions, businesses will now have access to a network of skilled gig workers in regions where other global providers have limited local presence. ■

Sparkle once again at forefront of cloud adoption in European research and education community



Sparkle, the first international service provider in Italy and among the top global operators, has been awarded OCRE 2024 Framework provider by GÉANT, the pan-European network and service provider for research and education, to offer cloud solutions and professional services to R&E institutions across all the 39 European countries where the scheme is implemented.

OCRE (Open Clouds for Research and Education) 2024 is the third iteration of GÉANT cloud frameworks that since 2016 have enabled and facilitated cloud adoption in the European research and education community. Through ready-to-use service agreements with cloud service providers, the framework - effective from February 2025 to 2030 - also covers public sector entities in addition to R&E institutions and offers a standardized contractual vehicle

to ease the purchase of these solutions for over 25,000 organisations.

Already qualified as selected provider since the first GÉANT cloud framework, under the OCRE 2024 scheme Sparkle has been awarded as the highest ranked Supplier for Amazon Web Services (AWS) in all 39 Countries and for Google Cloud in 19 Countries. As a result, Sparkle will continue supporting Institutions in their cloud journey providing cloud solutions blended with professional services, thus reducing the cost and complexity of the transition to the cloud.

"We are very proud of being qualified among the highest ranking OCRE 2024 service providers" says Annalisa Bonatti, Vice President Enterprise at Sparkle: "This new award is a testament of Sparkle's

long-time commitment and success in offering the best cloud solutions to the R&E community, and it is also an encouragement to continue on this path and support the uptake of new digital services."

Thanks to its multi cloud offering, Sparkle provides cloud services across multiple public and private platforms along with management consoles and connectivity services to connect customers' on-premises cloud facilities to the major public cloud providers through private, high speed and secure connections. Cloud computing offers compelling advantages to students, researchers and institutions, making available virtualized resources ranging from compute, storage, database and networking to Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) and Security. ■

Saudi Arabia ranks third globally in 5G speed, averaging 243.7 Mbps



Saudi Arabia continues to impress in the global mobile network landscape, with new insights from Opensignal's Global Network Excellence Index. The report, which evaluates the mobile experience across countries with large land areas (over 200,000 square km), places Saudi Arabia 20th globally in overall network performance. Notably, Saudi Arabia secured third place worldwide in 5G download speeds, achieving an impressive 243.7 Mbps, trailing only Brazil and New Zealand.

Saudi Arabia's Leadership in 5G Technology

This strong ranking highlights Saudi Arabia's strategic investments in 5G infrastructure and its commitment to delivering high-speed, reliable connectivity to its citizens. Opensignal evaluates mobile network performance based on three key pillars: 4G/5G Availability, Download Speeds, and Excellent Consistent Quality (ECQ)—a measure of real-world user experience.

The Kingdom's continued focus on network advancements aligns with its vision for digital transformation, reinforcing its status as a top global player in next-generation telecommunications.

Saudi Arabia ranks 11th overall across G20 in Q4 2024

Overall Rank	4G/5G Availability	ECQ	4G Download Speed	5G Download Speed
South Korea 1	United States of America 1	South Korea 1	South Korea 1	South Korea 1
United States of America 2	South Korea 2	France 2	France 2	Brazil 2
Australia 3	Japan 3	United States of America 3	Canada 3	Saudi Arabia 3
Japan 4	Australia 4	Australia 4	Australia 4	France 4
Canada 5	Germany 5	Japan 5	Germany 5	India 5
France 6	Indonesia 6	Canada 6	Japan 6	South Africa 6
Germany 7	Canada 7	Italy 7	United States of America 7	Australia 7
Italy 8	India 8	Germany 8	Turkey 8	United States of America 8
United Kingdom 9	United Kingdom 9	Turkey 9	Mexico 9	Mexico 9
Turkey 10	Saudi Arabia 10	United Kingdom 10	Italy 10	Italy 10
Saudi Arabia 11	Italy 11	Brazil 11	Brazil 11	Canada 11
Brazil 12	France 12	Indonesia 12	Saudi Arabia 12	Japan 12
India 13	Turkey 13	Argentina 13	United Kingdom 13	Germany 13
Indonesia 14	South Africa 14	India 14	Argentina 14	United Kingdom 14
South Africa 15	Argentina 15	South Africa 15	South Africa 15	Turkey 15
Argentina 16	Russian Federation 16	Russian Federation 16	Russian Federation 16	Indonesia 16
Russian Federation 17	Mexico 17	Saudi Arabia 17	Indonesia 17	Argentina 17
Mexico 18	Brazil 18	Mexico 18	India 18	Russian Federation 18

Excluding China, the European Union and the African Union. Based on Q4 2024 Global Network Excellence Index. © Opensignal Limited



Excellent Consistent Quality (ECQ) Performance

Opensignal's ECQ metric takes a deeper dive into network performance by measuring factors like upload speed, latency, jitter, packet loss, and time to first byte. This metric ensures a seamless user experience for critical applications such as video calls, gaming, and content streaming. Saudi Arabia achieved a 61.3% rate of users experiencing Excellent Consistent Quality, ranking the country 31st globally among large-area nations. This high percentage reflects Saudi Arabia's focus on ensuring reliable, consistent connectivity for users even under heavy demand.

Future-Ready Infrastructure: Supporting Vision 2030 Goals

As Saudi Arabia accelerates its Vision 2030 digital transformation, enhancing mobile network performance remains a top priority. The Global Network Excellence Index highlights that continued investment in 5G infrastructure and network quality will be essential to meeting the growing demand for mobile services.

With a strong ECQ rating and world-class 5G speeds, Saudi Arabia is well-positioned to sustain its leadership in mobile connectivity, fueling economic growth, digital innovation, and a more connected future. 📶

AI agents for good? ITU's AI for Good Global Summit 2025 to tackle the rise of autonomous AI

The UN agency for digital technologies rallies global AI leaders to address the opportunities and risks presented by AI agents, low-cost AI models, and the next wave of accelerated AI development



A new wave of autonomous AI—capable of reasoning, acting independently, and scaling at unprecedented speed—is rapidly reshaping the technological landscape. The rise of "agentic AI" and powerful, low-cost AI models is making artificial intelligence cheaper, more widely available, and potentially more energy efficient—but also harder to regulate. With some prominent CEOs predicting human-level AI within two to three years, concerns are mounting over safety risks, weakened guardrails, and the challenge of responsible governance.

These pressing issues will be at the center of the AI for Good Global Summit 2025, the United Nations' leading platform advancing AI in service of sustainable development, in Geneva, Switzerland from 8 to 11 July 2025. The expanded, four-day

gathering will also showcase progress on advanced robotics, autonomous mobility, quantum computing, AI in space, and brain-computer interfaces.

Organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UN agency for digital technologies, the goal of AI for Good is to identify trustworthy applications of AI, build AI skills and standards, and strengthen global dialogue on AI governance for sustainable development.

"As AI development accelerates, so does the urgency to keep innovation aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals," said ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin. "AI for Good is where the world comes together to ensure these technologies are safe, responsible, and

leave no one behind."

Tackling AI's biggest questions

At the AI for Good Global Summit 2025, leading experts from governments, industry, academia, civil society, and the UN will explore how AI is reshaping our world, tackling urgent challenges such as safety, employment, sustainability, privacy, security, governance, and its broader societal and economic impacts.

Among the AI visionaries set to present are Geoffrey Hinton, AI pioneer and Nobel Prize winner; Yoshua Bengio, Founder and Scientific Director of Mila – Quebec AI Institute and Turing Award winner; Sasha Luccioni, AI & Climate Lead of open-source AI developer Hugging Face; and other prominent voices on AI.

Acting on global AI priorities

Responding to the Global Digital Compact, adopted last year by the UN General Assembly, the AI for Good Global Summit 2025 will provide a global platform for dialogue to advance AI governance, standards, and capacity building. As AI adoption accelerates, the Summit aims to inform policies and drive solutions that ensure AI is developed and deployed responsibly, fairly, and for the benefit of all.

Yet, a global AI governance gap persists—an ITU survey found that 55 per cent of Member States lack a national AI strategy, and 85 per cent have no AI-specific regulations. To address this, the Summit will host ITU's second AI Governance Day on 10 July, focusing on safety, trust, international standards, and bridging the regulatory gap, while also tackling the urgent need to build AI skills and capacity, especially in developing countries.

On 11 July, the Summit will host an International AI Standards Exchange, bringing together leading global standards bodies to strengthen AI's technical backbone, ensuring interoperability, safety, and inclusive standards development.

"ITU is driving the development of a trusted and interoperable AI ecosystem," said Seizo Onoe, Director of ITU's Telecommunication Standardization Bureau. "Our AI standards are supporting innovation in areas from network orchestration and energy efficiency to multimedia coding and content authenticity. Our International AI Standards Exchange will help keep up global momentum on the technical underpinnings of responsible AI."

The newly established AI for Good Awards, presented in partnership with Tech to the Rescue, will recognize groundbreaking AI solutions that contribute to global progress on sustainable development with categories including AI for People, AI for Planet, and AI for Prosperity. Applications for awards will open soon.

Combining the UN's leading AI platform with the tech and development community

The AI for Good Global Summit is organized by ITU together with 47 partner UN agencies. The annual event, co-convened by the Government of Switzerland, is free of charge and open to everyone.

This year, AI for Good makes its debut at Palexpo, Geneva's largest event venue and exposition centre.

Registration for media accreditation for reporters is open. Registration for the public is also open.

Confirmed speakers include:

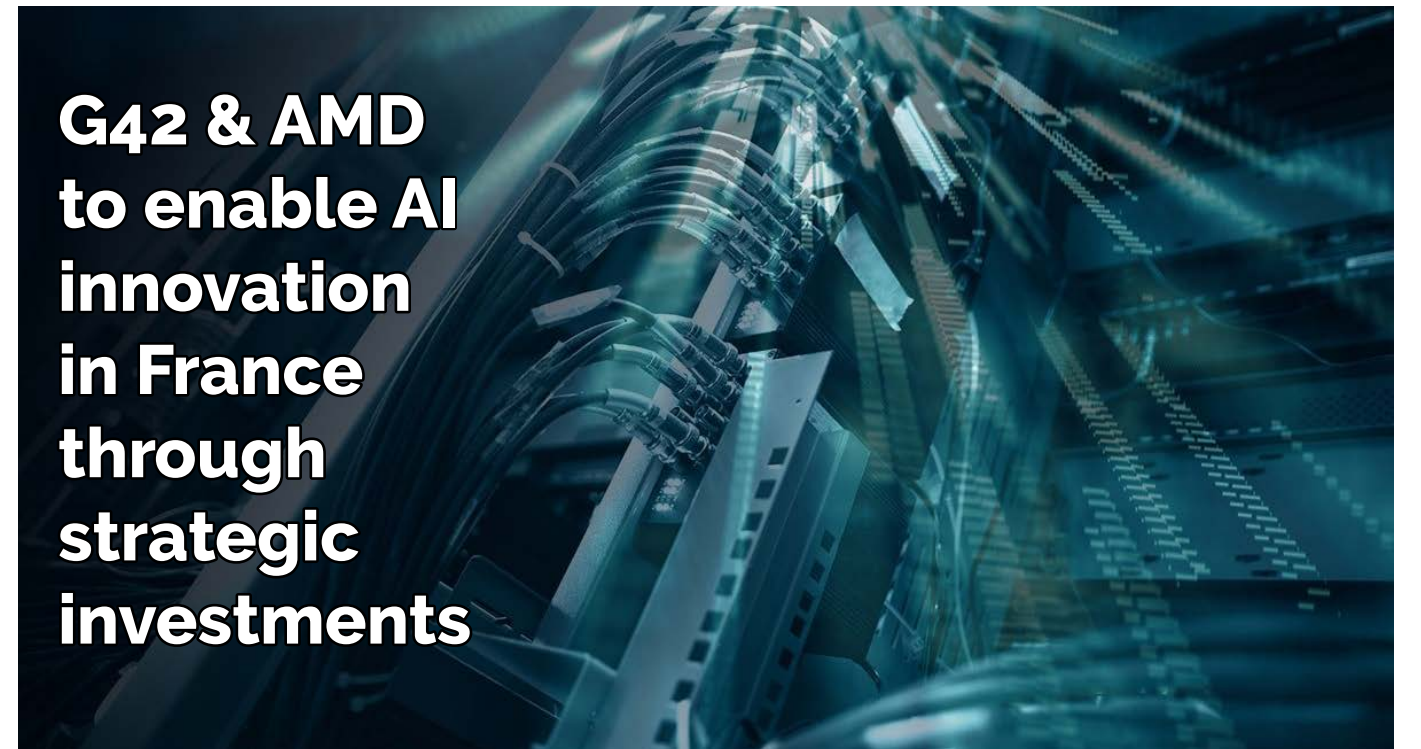
- Doreen Bogdan-Martin, ITU Secretary-General
- Ravi Kumar, CEO Cognizant
- Geoffrey Hinton, Advisor for the Learning in Machines & Brains, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (presenting remotely)
- Cherie Blair, Founder, Cherie Blair Foundation for Women
- Stuart Russell, Professor of Computer Science at University of California, Berkeley, and author of "Human Compatible: Artificial Intelligence and the Problem of Control"
- Nina Schick, Author, Entrepreneur, Speaker - AI Authority, Founder of Tamang Ventures
- Yoshua Bengio, Turing Award winner. Founder and Scientific Director, MILA.
- Gary Marcus, Scientist, best-selling author, and serial entrepreneur, New York University
- Nicholas Thompson, CEO, The Atlantic
- Alex Zhavoronkov, Founder & CEO, Insilico Medicine, world-known scientist and author working in biotechnology, regenerative medicine, and aging economics.

- Sasha Luccioni, AI & Climate Lead, Hugging Face, Time 100 AI

- Tristan Harris, Co-Founder & Executive Director, Center for Humane Technology (CHT), The Social Dilemma

Demonstrations of robots, drones, and AI innovations will include:

- Big Ocean (K-Pop band)
 - FES cycling system for spinal cord injury rehabilitation (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
 - Wireless brain-computer interface headset for neurorehabilitation (University of Houston)
 - Autonomous farm robot for orchard automation (Kisuitech)
 - Self-sanitizing mobile dry toilet (allcareAI)
 - Lower limb exoskeleton for mobility assistance (TU Berlin)
 - Myoelectric prosthetic arm for intuitive control (UPV)
 - Programmable living biological robots (University of Vermont and Tufts University)
 - VR training for elite athlete anticipation skills (Inria Centre, Rennes University)
 - Bird-inspired fixed-wing robot (EPFL)
 - Drone and eDNA system for scalable pest and biodiversity monitoring (Namu Robotics)
- The AI for Good Global Summit will take place alongside the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20 High-Level Event 2025, bringing a wide range of stakeholders together to advance global digital cooperation for sustainable development. A single media accreditation will be accepted for both the AI for Good Global Summit and the WSIS+20 High-Level Event. **IT**



G42 has announced a strategic investment in France in partnership with DataOne, Europe's first gigascale AI hosting infrastructure data center. Spearheaded by Core42, a G42 company specializing in sovereign cloud and AI infrastructure, the initiative will establish a state-of-the-art AI data center in Grenoble. Equipped with AMD GPUs, this advanced facility will empower enterprises, researchers, and innovators with cutting-edge AI infrastructure.

Unveiled at the AI Action Summit in Paris, this milestone reinforces G42's commitment to advancing AI innovation globally while delivering innovative AI capabilities from the UAE to the world. By integrating the latest AMD Instinct accelerator technologies, Core42 will equip French enterprises, researchers, and innovators with the computational capabilities needed to develop and scale sophisticated AI models, agents, applications and research. The facility is expected to be fully operational by mid 2025.

The investment represents a commitment by G42 to foster strategic partnerships within the European AI ecosystem

to accelerate digital transformation across industries. These strategic arrangements guarantee that France's AI-driven enterprises have direct access to industry-leading AI infrastructure, further positioning the country as a center for AI excellence.

Commenting on the announcement, Kiril Evtimov, Group CTO of G42 and CEO of Core42, said, "France is taking bold strides in AI innovation, and G42 is proud to contribute to this effort. By deploying AMD GPUs, we are not only strengthening Europe's AI infrastructure but also enabling enterprises and researchers to accelerate innovation at scale. Our collaboration with local providers ensures seamless access to the computational power needed to drive the next wave of AI advancement in France and beyond."

"Our strategic collaboration with G42 will help energize the French AI ecosystem, providing the compute capacity needed to enable the local AI start-ups and AI pioneers who are driving state-of-the-art innovation and strengthening the French economy," said Lisa Su, AMD Chair and CEO. "Our work with G42 is the latest example of our

commitment to combine open ecosystems with industry-leading AMD AI technologies to empower public institutions and private enterprises to harness the full potential of AI."

"We are extremely proud to count Core42 among our esteemed clientele and thrilled to take on the challenge of deploying their largest AI supercomputer in Europe within just 20 weeks," said Charles-Antoine Beyney, CEO of DataOne.

G42's investment in France is a testament to its mission of shaping the future of AI through strategic global partnerships and advanced infrastructure. As the demand for AI compute continues to surge, Core42 remains at the forefront of this transformation providing optionality with a heterogeneous AI cloud offering that includes multiple AI accelerator options expanding their global footprint, strengthening AI accessibility and driving AI-powered advancements across Europe and beyond. In addition, AMD brings extensive experience in engaging with the French AI startup ecosystem. It looks to continue supporting innovative startups in the region through its venture program, AMD Ventures. **IT**

In two years, cryptocurrency could become part of everyday life in the UAE - Crypto.com



Cryptocurrency is being rapidly adopted across the traditional world of finance. In the UAE, digital currency could see swifter integration within the next two years, according to Mohammed Al Hakim, Crypto.com President, UAE Operations. Speaking during a session on The Future of Crypto at the 8th annual Sharjah Entrepreneurship Festival (SEF) on Saturday, he said, "In the next two years, people in the UAE should be able to use cryptocurrency for everyday transactions".

He highlighted the clear upward trajectory in crypto uptake in Japan, Singapore, and Switzerland, adding, "change is happening quickly here in the UAE. I would love to see someone paying for coffee using cryptocurrency, or buying land, paying rent, fines, or utility bills all through crypto."

Al Hakim further noted that his firm is currently in discussions with Emirates Petroleum to explore how crypto could be used to pay for fuel at petrol stations.

UAE's regulatory support building trust

Addressing trust issues around cryptocurrencies, Al Hakim praised the UAE authorities for their forward-thinking stance on regulations and the establishment of the Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (VARA). "We have been able to offer a wide range of products and services in this region because of the flexible yet prudent regulatory framework," he said.

Crypto.com recently partnered with Mastercard, marking another step in integrating the world of virtual currencies with traditional finance. The firm is also working to launch its first sukuk—a Sharia-compliant financial product—in the UAE, in partnership with Dubai Islamic Bank.

Future outlook

Al Hakim during his talk suggested the changing global dynamics could accelerate the mainstream adoption of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. "The world has changed significantly in recent years. Bitcoin might become a main reserve currency in the coming months or years. Whether this happens in six months or a few years, we cannot say for sure, but the crypto world has a very bright future."

Niki Skene shares Silicon Valley mindset: Experimentation and data-driven decisions

The first day of SEF 2025 also hosted a thought-provoking keynote by renowned innovator and futurist Nikki Skene, who captivated audiences by exploring the Silicon Valley mindset, structured experimentation, and the importance of information-driven decision-making.

"Information-driven decision-making and constant experimentation are key to an exponential mindset and a thriving business," said Skene. He emphasised the necessity of shifting from a linear to an exponential

mindset when approaching business growth and innovation. "In a linear mindset, we only want wins. Everything else is labelled a failure. But in an exponential mindset, everything is just information. The worst thing that can happen is doing something that does not deliver new information."

Skene underscored the value of structured experimentation, referencing Silicon Valley's approach, "Companies like Meta (Facebook) run over 700 structured experiments every week. Each experiment delivers a simple verdict: continue, discontinue, or adapt. This is exponential learning—something many organisations don't implement, making them less prepared for change."

Reframing innovation for the future

Drawing further inspiration from Silicon Valley's problem-solving approach, Skene encouraged entrepreneurs to rethink their perspectives on products and industries. "The key to innovation lies in asking the right questions. A car's brakes, for instance, are not designed to stop the car; they allow us to drive faster with confidence. The same applies to businesses—if you focus only on past functions, you miss future opportunities."

The Sharjah Entrepreneurship Festival (SEF) 2025, organised by Sharjah Entrepreneurship Center (Sheraa), continues through February 2, bringing together 300+ globally respected luminaries, representing over 45 nations. **T**

Ooredoo Group announces financial results for the year 2024

Ooredoo has announced its financial results for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Full-year 2024 (FY 2024) Highlights:

- Revenue increased by 2% to QAR 23.6 billion
- EBITDA up by 3% to QAR 10.0 billion
- EBITDA margin increased by one percentage point (pp) to 42.5%
- Record reported Net profit of QAR 3.4 billion, up by 14%, marking three consecutive years of growth
- CAPEX spend of QAR 3.2 billion
- Strong normalised Free Cash Flow (FCF) of QAR 6.8 billion, up by 1%
- Customer base of 146.2 million (including IOH and excluding Myanmar)
- Progressed toward becoming the leading digital infrastructure provider in the MENA region
- Board proposed a cash dividend of QAR 0.65 per share, up 18%

Commenting on the results, HE Sheikh Faisal Bin Thani Al Thani, Chairman of Ooredoo, said: "2024 was another solid year for Ooredoo Group, which saw growth across revenue, partnerships and delivering value to our stakeholders as we continue to make substantial progress on our strategy. Revenue grew by 2% to QAR 23.6 billion while reported Net Profit increased by a healthy 14% to QAR 3.4 billion.

"I am pleased to announce that the Board of Directors will recommend a cash dividend distribution of QAR 0.65 per share, in line with our sustainable and progressive dividend policy, at the Annual General



Sheikh Faisal Bin Thani Al Thani
Chairman, Ooredoo Group



Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo
Group CEO, Ooredoo



Meeting in March.

"The Group is making robust operational progress, and our results remain consistent with our expectations, demonstrating that our strategy is working as planned. We continue to stay disciplined in pursuing profitable growth driven by our ongoing operational transformation to expand our capabilities across our markets.

"Heading into 2025, we remain focused on becoming the leading digital infrastructure provider in the region, deploying an effective, agile and forward-looking strategy to stay ahead and generate positive returns for our shareholders."

Also commenting on the results, Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, CEO of Ooredoo Group,

said: "Ooredoo Group posted another year of strong growth in 2024, marked by sustained operational momentum, a robust and ever-increasing financial position as well as the achievement of key strategic milestones.

"Revenue for the year reached QAR 23.6 billion, a rise of 2% compared to last year, underpinned by solid performances in Iraq, Algeria, Kuwait, Tunisia and Maldives. Group profitability remained a central focus, with EBITDA increasing by 3% to QAR 10.0 billion, delivering an EBITDA margin of 42.5%, up by 1pp.

"Reported Net profit hit a record high of QAR 3.4 billion, marking the third consecutive year of record earnings. Normalised Free cash flow ticked up by 1%

Consolidated Group	Quarterly Analysis			YTD Analysis		
	Q4 2024	Q4 2023	% Change	FY 2024	FY 2023	% Change
Revenue (QAR m)	5,937	5,923	-	23,595	23,164	2%
EBITDA (QAR m)	2,329	2,326	-	10,027	9,717	3%
EBITDA Margin (%)	39.2%	39.3%	-	42.5%	41.9%	1pp
EBITDA (QAR m) – Normalised	2,329	2,289	2%	10,027	9,623	4%
Net Profit attributable to Ooredoo Shareholders (QAR m)	513	352	46%	3,436	3,016	14%
Normalised Net Profit attributable to Ooredoo Shareholders (QAR m)	773	745	4%	3,676	3,279	12%
CAPEX (QAR m)	1,232	1,229	-	3,178	2,821	13%
CAPEX/Revenue (%)	21%	21%	-	13%	12%	1pp
Free Cash Flow (QAR m) – Normalised	1,097	1,060	3%	6,849	6,802	1%
Customers (m)	51.5	57.6	-11%	51.5	57.6	-11%
Customers (m) – (excl Myanmar)	51.5	49.1	5%	51.5	49.1	5%
Customers (m) (incl IOH)	146.2	156.4	-7%	146.2	156.4	-7%

The disposal of the Ooredoo Myanmar operation was completed on 31 May 2024, and Ooredoo Group's financial results for 2024 include results for Ooredoo Myanmar until 31 May 2024.

to QAR 6.8 billion, highlighting the Group's strong financial health and operational discipline.

"These results prove that our combination of best-in-class network and unmatched customer experience will continue to set us apart in the market.

"We advanced on our journey toward becoming the MENA region's leading digital infrastructure provider by layering the Group into focused verticals and adjacencies to drive more operational efficiency.

"We positioned ourselves at the forefront of Artificial Intelligence (AI) through our collaboration with NVIDIA to become a Cloud Partner in the region, and we see AI still holds significant untapped potential and opportunities.

"2024 was a notable year for our financing initiatives. We secured QAR 2.0 billion with 10-year tenor in a landmark financing deal to accelerate the expansion of our data

centre business and successfully executed a USD 500 million, 10-year international bond issuance.

"In our fintech vertical, we launched 'walletii' and obtained Payment Service Provider (PSP) licenses in Oman, Maldives and in Tunisia just before the end of Q4.

"We are intensifying our focus on subsea cable systems to establish ourselves as a global connectivity leader, and post-year-end, we capitalised on the opportunity to acquire through Alcatel Submarine Networks, a submarine cable that connects all the GCC countries and beyond, in a single, high-capacity loop. The 'Fibre in Gulf' project will be the largest subsea cable ever built in the GCC, delivering an unparalleled 720Tbps of capacity across 24 fibre pairs - more than the combined capacity of all existing and planned Gulf cables.

"These achievements are a direct reflection of the dedication and hard work of our talented employees.

"Looking ahead, Ooredoo will build on its success to become the region's leading telecom and digital infrastructure provider. By driving new revenue streams within its balanced portfolio and maintaining a strong financial position, we aim to unlock greater value for our stakeholders. The focus on sharpening our structure and optimising our processes will help us create a sustainable, high-performance business primed for long-term success in the region."

Strategic review

Ooredoo remains committed to its strategy based on five fundamental pillars: delivering exceptional customer experience, empowering our people and nurturing talent, driving innovation as a smart telco, continuously evolving and fortifying our core operations and maintaining a value-focused portfolio.

Ooredoo has a balanced portfolio that provides exposure to both stable economies with modest growth and dynamic, high

growth markets with fast-growing GDPs and population growth trends. Ooredoo will continue to provide strong shareholder value by rolling out strategic growth initiatives and making smart investments across our markets.

Ooredoo is positioning itself as the leading digital infrastructure provider in the region by transforming into a telecom and infrastructure holding company with a delayered multi-business structure, optimising capital deployment and operational focus for increased asset returns in telecommunications operations, towers, data centres, sea cable business, and fintech.

TowerCo

Ooredoo Group, Zain Group, and TASC Towers Holding jointly announced the signing of definitive agreements to create the largest tower company in the MENA region through a cash and share deal in December 2023.

The primary focus remains on finalising the closing of the transactions in each market, which requires regulatory approval.

Data centres

Ooredoo achieved good progress in its data centre vertical with the establishment of a carrier-neutral data centre company with a dedicated and experienced CEO at the helm. The data centre assets in Qatar, Tunisia and Kuwait were carved out and managed under the new independent, specialised data centre entity. The carve-out of the rest of the data centre assets from other Ooredoo markets is expected to be completed in 2025.

To support the data centre expansion, Ooredoo secured a QAR 2.0 billion, 10-year financing deal with QNB, Doha Bank, and Masraf Al Rayan in September 2024. This landmark deal, the largest of its kind in Qatar's tech industry, will enable the strategic carve out of existing data centre assets from Ooredoo's telecom operations. A significant portion of the financing will

be directed toward expanding capacity and upgrading infrastructure to meet the growing demand for AI, cloud services, and hyperconnectivity across the MENA region.

This builds on Ooredoo's aim to lead in AI innovation, highlighted by its strategic collaboration with NVIDIA in June 2024. By leveraging NVIDIA's cutting-edge AI platform, Ooredoo aims to accelerate digitalisation and innovation across the region. As an NVIDIA Network Cloud Partner, Ooredoo will integrate thousands of Tensor Core GPUs into its data centres, boosting its technological capabilities and solidifying its position at the forefront of AI advancements.

As part of our journey to becoming the region's leading digital infrastructure provider, the data centre company aims to expand its capacity to over 120 megawatts with a USD 1 billion investment over the medium to long term. This will include a new generation of sustainable, energy-efficient, and carrier-neutral data centres across the MENA region.

Fintech

Ooredoo Financial Technology International (OFTI), our fintech venture, continues to scale successfully in its pursuit of meeting the financial needs of underserved markets.

OFTI remained market leader in Qatar and started growing its presence in Oman and Maldives after obtaining PSP licenses in 2024. On 24th December 2024, OFTI successfully obtained the license in Tunisia and commenced with the build phase.

The Company also launched its mobile money app branded as 'walletii by Ooredoo' that provides a financial ecosystem for consumers and merchants to simplify their money management, allowing them to receive, send and spend both domestically and internationally.

OFTI will continue to pursue license applications in Iraq and Kuwait in 2025.

OFTI is a key player in Qatar, processing

over USD 6 billion in transactions annually and holding a 20% market share in international remittances. With a vision to create an integrated marketplace, OFTI is focused on unlocking the untapped potential of the MENA digital payment market, aiming to empower individuals and businesses across the region.

Financial highlights

Revenue

The sustained solid operational performances in Iraq, Algeria, Kuwait, Tunisia, and Maldives supported a 2% YoY increase in Group revenue to QAR 23.6 billion (2023: QAR 23.2 billion). This increase was partially offset by a decrease in revenue from Qatar and Oman.

EBITDA & EBITDA Margin

An ongoing priority across the Group is improving operational efficiencies, enhancing profitability across nearly all our operations.

EBITDA grew by 3% YoY to QAR 10.0 billion. EBITDA margin increased by 1pp to 42.5%.

Iraq, Algeria, Tunisia, Qatar and Maldives contributed positively to the Group's improved profitability.

Net Profit

The Group successfully delivered another year of strong Net profit results.

Reported Net profit hit a record high of QAR 3.4 billion (2023: QAR 3.0 billion), up by 14% YoY, marking the third consecutive year of record earnings. This is a testament to the Group's commitment and ability to drive profitability.

The Group delivered strong double-digit Normalised Net Profit growth of 12% YoY to QAR 3.7 billion (2023: QAR 3.3 billion). Normalised Net Profit is adjusted for foreign exchange, impairments, and exceptional items.

Capital expenditure (CAPEX)

The Group deployed a total of QAR 3.2 billion of CAPEX for 2024. This reflected an increase of 13%YoY, largely from higher investments in Iraq, Oman, Tunisia, and Kuwait.

Free Cash Flow

Normalised Free Cash Flow increased by 1% to QAR 6.8 billion. The healthy FCF underscores the Group's strong financial health and operational discipline.

The strong EBITDA performance was offset slightly by an acceleration of targeted network projects.

Debt

Ooredoo Group maintained its healthy financial and liquidity position for 2024 with investment-grade ratings.

As of 31 December 2024, the Group's Net-Debt-to-EBITDA ratio stood at 0.4x, below the Board's guidance of 1.5x to 2.5x.

The Group maintains a conservative approach, ensuring the fixed rate portion continues to dominate the floating rate debt which provides strong protection against interest rate volatility. As at 31 December 2024, approximately 92% of debts are at fixed rate.

The Group has QAR 16.2 billion in cash reserves (net of restricted cash) and QAR5.6 billion available in undrawn facilities, reflecting a strong liquidity position.

Ooredoo successfully issued USD 500 million in 10-year senior unsecured notes in October 2024 under its existing USD 5 billion Global Medium Term Notes programme. Priced with a spread of 88 basis points over 10-year U.S. Treasuries, this marks the tightest spread ever achieved in Ooredoo's history as well as one of the lowest in the emerging markets and the lowest for a global telecommunications company on a 10-year bond since 2020. The funds raised from this issuance will be used

for general corporate purposes, including refinancing existing debt.

Customer base

The best-in-class network and unmatched customer experience is attracting more customers to the network, ending 2024 with a total of 51.5 million customers, reflecting a 5% increase YoY (excluding Ooredoo Myanmar). Including IOH, the customer base reached a total of 146.2 million.

Dividends

The Board will recommend the distribution of a cash dividend of QAR 0.65 per share at the Annual General Meeting, to be held in March 2025. This represents a dividend increase of 18%YoY and a payout of 58% of normalised earnings in line with the dividend policy.

Ooredoo Group has a sustainable and progressive dividend policy which aims for a payout in the range of 40% to 60% of normalised earnings.

Operating Companies FY 2024 highlights

Middle East

Ooredoo Qatar

Ooredoo Qatar delivered a robust financial performance in a highly competitive environment as the demand for digital and data services across Qatar increased in 2024.

Ooredoo Qatar's reported revenue decreased by 2%YoY to QAR 7,123 million as 2023 base included revenue from data centres and one-off projects. Normalising for these items, revenue was 1% below the prior year, mainly due to lower mobile services and device sales.

The operation sustained profitability despite market challenges, with EBITDA reaching QAR 3,683 million, reflecting a 2% increase YoY on a reported basis. Normalising for the above revenue items and one-time bad debt provisions recorded in 2023 and 2024,

EBITDA declined by 1%YoY.

EBITDA margin improved by 2pp, reaching an industry-leading 52%, reflecting the continued benefit of initiatives to drive operational efficiencies and cost controls.

Ooredoo Qatar remains the largest telco provider in the country with a customer base that remained flatYoY to reach 3.0 million driven by enhanced digital experiences, strong partnerships with leading brands and the introduction of innovative services tailored to evolving consumer demands.

Ooredoo Kuwait

The operation achieved a healthy underlying result for the year. This performance was underpinned by a comprehensive strategic focus on innovation, delivering excellent customer experience, and optimising efficiencies.

Revenue increased by 7%YoY to QAR 3,132 million backed by higher service revenue owing to a rise in usage of data and digital services as well as equipment revenue.

The one-off bad debt provisions recorded in 2024 led to a decrease in EBITDA of 14% YoY to QAR 839 million and a reduction in the EBITDA margin of 7pp to 27%. Normalising for the one-off bad debt provisions, EBITDA remained flatYoY.

Ooredoo Kuwait's customer base increased by 2%YoY, ending the 2024 year with 2.9 million customers on its network.

Ooredoo Oman

Ooredoo Oman continued to navigate a highly competitive telecommunications landscape with intensifying market activity.

While revenue in Oman declined by 3%YoY to QAR 2,381 million due to challenging market dynamics, the launch of new 5G initiatives is expected to stabilise performance in FY 2025.

EBITDA reached QAR 1,084 million,

reflecting a 6% decrease YoY, impacted by lower service revenue and higher operating costs. EBITDA margin ended at a resilient 46%, down 2ppYoY.

Ooredoo Oman's customer base declined by 10%YoY to close the year with 2.8 million customers on its network.

The operation is focused on expanding its 5G footprint and enhancing mobile and fixed connectivity offerings to improve its competitive position through targeted customer-centric initiatives, including hyper-personalised digital experiences, innovative IoT solutions, and differentiated B2B services.

Ooredoo Oman continued to innovate and, during the year, launched 'waltetii,' the Sultanate's first mobile money app offering a remittance marketplace. Additionally, we strengthened global connectivity by signing an agreement to land the 2Africa Cable System in Oman. As the world's largest subsea cable network, this project will enhance connectivity for over three billion people across 33 countries.

Asiacell – Iraq

Asiacell delivered another noteworthy performance leveraging the favourable market conditions resulting in higher customer acquisitions and a healthy performance in the data segment.

Asiacell achieved double-digit revenue growth of 16%YoY to QAR 5,164 million. EBITDA expanded by 22%YoY to QAR 2,374 million with a 2pp EBITDA margin improvement to 46%.

Asiacell grew its customers by 8%YoY to reach a customer base of 19.1 million.

Ooredoo Palestine

In a year marked by unprecedented challenges, the company demonstrated unwavering commitment to its customers, employees, and the broader community, reinforcing its role as a critical enabler of connectivity in Palestine. Notwithstanding

the challenging operating environment, Ooredoo Palestine delivered a resilient 2024 performance.

The operation prioritised the connectivity needs of its customers driving an 8% increase YoY to close the year with a total of 1.6 million customers.

The results were impacted by the challenging conditions and foreign exchange fluctuations; revenue remained flat at QAR 397 million while EBITDA declined by 6%YoY to QAR 146 million. EBITDA margin for the year ended at 37%.

North Africa

Ooredoo Algeria

Ooredoo Algeria achieved strong results in 2024, recording another year of double-digit revenue and EBITDA growth underpinned by the strong performance in data and digital revenue streams and continued strategic investments in network expansion and digitalisation.

Revenue reached QAR 2,839 million, marking a 15% increase YoY which in turn drove a 21%YoY expansion in EBITDA to QAR 1,199 million with a solid EBITDA margin of 42%, up by 2pp.

The customer base jumped to 14.7 million at the end of 2024, representing a growth of 10%YoY, reaping the benefits of network densification, which improved customer experience.

Ooredoo Tunisia

Ooredoo Tunisia achieved solid financial and operational growth in 2024 driven by an increase across most of its service segments and operational efficiencies. The operation capitalised on opportunities through strategic investments in the fixed business driven by strong demand and the expansion of fibre-optic networks and fixed wireless broadband access.

Revenue for the year grew by 5%YoY to QAR 1,542 million.

EBITDA saw significant growth, improving YoY by 16%, or 6% when excluding the exceptional bad debt reported in 2023. EBITDA margin expanded by 4pp to 42% attributable to good topline performance and effective cost management.

The customer base was lower by 3%YoY to close the year with a total of 7.0 million customers on its network.

Asia

Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison (IOH)

IOH, equity-accounted JV, announced its 2024 financial results on 10 February 2025 (IOH), with results once again reflecting strong YoY growth across all key metrics: revenue up by 9%, EBITDA grew by 10% and EBITDA margin remained flat at 47%.

Ooredoo Maldives

Ooredoo Maldives delivered a strong performance for 2024 maintaining its leadership position through a strong focus on customer engagement, innovation, strategic partnerships, and a growing service portfolio aligned to market demands.

Revenue increased by 5%YoY to QAR 520 million backed by growth in the mobile segment. EBITDA grew by 2%YoY to QAR 284 million benefitting mainly from higher service revenue partially offset by higher operating costs. EBITDA margin ended at a strong 55%, down by 2pp.

The customer base increased by 3%YoY to 405k customers as Ooredoo Maldives continued to improve the digital experiences of its customers while contributing to the development of a Digital Maldives.

A key milestone in 2024 was the expansion of its 5G network to cover 60% of the population, positioning Ooredoo Maldives as the largest 5G network provider in the country. The shift towards 5G is expected to continue driving demand for mobile broadband services. ■

ATRC marks UAE Innovation Month 2025 by empowering researchers and next generation in advanced technology



The Advanced Technology Research Council (ATRC), mandated to shape an advanced R&D ecosystem in Abu Dhabi and drive the nation's strategic research priorities, is not only turning Innovation Month 2025 into a launchpad for the next generation of researchers, innovators, and STEM students but also embodying the spirit of the 'Year of Community,' as declared by President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan under the slogan 'Hand in Hand.'

ATRC is dedicated to empowering students and fostering talent in advanced technology fields, shaping the youth into the next generation of researchers and innovators. ATRC's mandate is to spark curiosity and cultivate the necessary skills to drive future breakthroughs in science and technology, positioning Abu Dhabi and the UAE as critical players in research and development (R&D) globally.

Throughout February, ATRC will introduce immersive STEM activations for youth and the community and showcase the UAE's rising research talent.

A core focus of ATRC's participation in Innovation Month is inspiring young minds and

engaging the public with hands-on experiences that bring science and technology to life. On February 11, in recognition of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, ATRC will spotlight female graduates from its NexTech program. NexTech, a flagship program by the Council, has placed 100 Emirati STEM students in 25 leading global universities for their master's and PhD programs, including Cambridge, Yale, Manchester, and CalTech. This initiative enables the students to collaborate on groundbreaking research projects and gain international knowledge and experience to drive future innovation.

For the first time, ATRC will transform shopping malls into AI and robotics playgrounds from February 10 to 16 in Yas Mall (Abu Dhabi), Al Ain Mall, and Al Dhanna Mall (Al Dhafra). Children and families will get the opportunity to build and train robots, experiment with AI, and explore quantum tech in a fun and educational way. The mall activations will feature a gamified learning system where participants earn digital innovation badges for completing challenges. The public will also be introduced to innovative researchers. At the same time, the achievements of young winners will get their names displayed as "Future STEM Talent"

on a ranking board, inspiring others to follow in their footsteps.

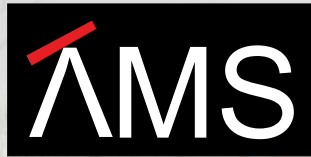
On February 18, at TII open innovation event, ATRC, in partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, hosted a session showcasing UAE Research Map and ResearchHUB—two platforms transforming collaboration and innovation in R&D.

Designed to bridge the gap between researchers, government, and industry, these platforms streamline knowledge exchange and foster real-time partnerships. UAE Research Map and ResearchHUB are accelerating scientific breakthroughs and industry-driven R&D by centralizing funding opportunities, research projects, and innovation resources.

ATRC's initiatives during Innovation Month 2025 will provide young people with the tools, inspiration, and opportunities to become tomorrow's leaders in science and technology. By empowering students, fostering curiosity, and offering direct access to groundbreaking research and technology, ATRC is cultivating a thriving R&D ecosystem to elevate Abu Dhabi and the wider UAE in advanced technology. **■**

GLOBAL ICT, TELECOM & SATCOM EVENTS 2025

03-06 March 2025 MWC <small>GSMA</small> Barcelona, Spain	07-08 May 2025 IDC Sapanca, Türkiye	13-17 October 2025 GITEX <small>GLOBAL</small> Dubai, UAE
10-13 March 2025 SATELLITE 2025 Washington DC	13-15 May 2025 CABSAT Dubai, UAE	14-16 October 2025 NETWORK X Paris, France
14-16 April 2025 GITEX AFRICA Morocco Marrakesh	20-22 May 2025 seamless <small>MIDDLE EAST</small> Dubai, UAE	03-06 November 2025 GLOBAL MILSATCOM 2024 London, UK
15-16 April 2025 DCD Connect MENA Dubai, UAE	27-29 May 2025 CommunicAsia Singapore	11-13 November 2025 Africa Com AFRICA TECH FESTIVAL Capetown, SA
23-25 April 2025 GITEX ASIA Singapore Singapore	18-20 June 2025 MWC <small>GSMA</small> Shanghai • 上海 Shanghai, China	18-19 November 2025 CONNECTED WORLD Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
06-08 May 2025 GISEC <small>GLOBAL</small> دبي و مؤتمرات القمة العالمي للمعلومات Dubai, UAE	12-15 September 2025 ib Amsterdam Netherlands	18-19 November 2025 TELECOMSWORLD Asia Bangkok, Thailand



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