

Airtel partners with Ericsson for expansion of network elements

Bharti Airtel have announced that it has undertaken an end-to-end network transformation program across its mobile operations in 16 African countries. The program, which is reportedly the largest of its kind on the African continent, in partnership with Ericsson involved a comprehensive upgrade and expansion of network elements across all of Airtel's African operations, including switching, radio, network management, data, charging, and consumer services platforms and systems.



This network transformation program, under which Ericsson has deployed latest wireless technologies, will enhance Airtel's network capacity and robustness and help deliver best-in-class services to customers at affordable rates. This also makes Airtel's networks fully ready for next generation services that include high speed data and value added services.

New, innovative value-added services

In addition, a full upgrade of the charging platforms across all operations was implemented introducing the latest version of Ericsson's Charging System, enabling Airtel to offer subscribers new and innovative value-added services such as mobile wallets. This project which will result in Airtel's 60+ million customers having a better experience on their networks.

Eben Albertyn, chief technical officer at Airtel Africa said "Customer is at the core of everything we do at Airtel. The implementation of this transformation program will enable us to further enrich our customer experience across the region. It allows us to provide Airtel subscribers with the best network possible while meeting the growing usage of mobile data. Our long-standing relationship with Ericsson gave us confidence in their ability to manage and deliver such a large and complex project."

Backed by 12 000 consulting and systems integration professionals across the world, over one hundred resources worked onsite to ensure successful delivery of this complex project - the largest network modernization program in Africa's telecom history. Ericsson's systems integration organisation delivers more than 1 500 systems integration projects per year in multi-vendor and multiple-technology environments. Projects range from single-solution integrations to end-to-end solution transformation projects such as this one.

Lars Lindén, head of Ericsson sub-Saharan Africa, says, "In the transition to a networked society in Africa, operators are facing growing challenges in meeting the rapidly evolving demands of consumers. The focus of this project was to transform Airtel Africa's networks to meet current and future consumer demands."

This transformation program follows the 2011 announcement of an ongoing five year multi-country managed services agreement, wherein Ericsson would manage and optimise Airtel's mobile networks across Africa.