Alcatel-Lucent extends e-government services to rural regions

Alcatel-Lucent and the National Information Technology Agency (NITA), the information and communications technology (ICT) policy arm of Ghana's Ministry of Communications, are expected to expand communication links between central and regional administration offices in support of 'e-Ghana', a national initiative to develop local IT services and improve the transparency and efficiency of government functions.

Alcatel·Lucent

Alcatel-Lucent will design and implement a 600km fiber-optic 'backbone' network that will provide high-speed data links between central government functions and remote and rural locations. In addition, Alcatel-Lucent will provide a national data center facility to support the network, through close collaboration with HP, a global alliance partner for the delivery of converged ICT solutions.

Under the agreement with NITA, Alcatel-Lucent will also manage network operations of Ghana's entire 'e-government' program for three years commencing November 2012. Financing for the program is being facilitated by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), an office of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs tasked with combating poverty through the promotion of human rights and economic growth.

Connecting Ghana

The new network, which will link Ghana's north and south as well as international submarine gateways via its eastern corridor, will use Alcatel-Lucent's 100 gigabit per second (100G)-capable optical coherent technology. This advanced fiber-optic technology will enhance business efficiencies between central and regional government offices and maintain quality and reliability across a telephone service, email and other Internet-based e-services.

The network will easily be able to expand to support anticipated increases in future demand: the government intends to extend use of e-services to the health, education, justice, immigration, parliament and other sectors over the next few years.

William Tevie, director general of NITA said, "By delivering a new network and data center, Alcatel-Lucent will enable us to streamline government processes between central and rural divisions and provide a consistent external view. This is an important step toward realizing the vision of giving our people access to a range of critical services how and when they need them."

The Danish Minister for Development, Christian Friis Bach said, "Information and communication technology (ICT) is an important platform for sustainable growth and development. It can provide access to information on basic health, education and relevant business data. ICT can also strengthen democracy and increase transparency, accountability and empowerment. I am very pleased that Denmark and Danish technical solutions in this way can contribute to Ghana's further economic development"

Vice president of Alcatel-Lucent in Africa, Daniel Jaeger said "Alcatel-Lucent has a long history of providing communications solutions to meet customers' e-business needs across the globe. Combined with our managed services expertise we are able to implement the best organization and processes to help continuously improve the services available to Ghana's citizens."

Hakan Yuce, worldwide vice president of Global Strategic Alliances at Alcatel-Lucent added: "The NITA project demonstrates the clear value to our customers of a seamless solution for converged IT and telecommunications networking needs. Through our global alliance, Alcatel-Lucent and HP are able to deliver to our customers the broadest ICT portfolio available."

Alcatel-Lucent's solution for NITA Ghana

The network being installed in Ghana will apply the 1830 Photonic Service Switch (PSS). The 1830 PSS offers exceptional capacity, performance, agility and intelligence for the transport of very large amounts of data over long distances and can support a mixture of 10G, 40G and 100G channels on the same fiber pair, helping ensure support for future needs as demand grows.

Alcatel-Lucent will work with local IT hardware and services provider, IPMC, to establish a large-scale data center using state-of-the-art data center, server and storage infrastructure from HP, which will host all of the e-Government project information. It will also host a Genesys helpdesk solution, a performance rating platform and e-learning systems from Saba.

Alcatel-Lucent will implement voice communication, email and other data services to enhance communication across all government bodies, while managing the complete operation of the e-Government network including the backbone, data center and services for three years. Alcatel-Lucent will also train NITA's employees to ensure a seamless transfer of knowledge so that the NITA teams can take over the full network operation responsibility by the end of the three-year period.