

STARCOMMS PIONEERED 3G TECHNOLOGY IN NIGERIA

WE WILL EXTEND 3G SERVICES TO MORE STATES - STARCOMMS

As the four operators granted the 3G licenses by the Nigerian Communications Commission continue preparations towards roll out, Starcomms Limited, which pioneered the 3G technology in the country, has reiterated its determination to deploy the most robust technology to drive its products and services for the benefit of subscribers.

Former Minister of Communications, Chief Cornelius Adebayo, had in February last year performed the commercial launch of Starcomms' high-speed Mobile Broadband Data Access Service (EV-DO), a 3G technology solution. It was Nigeria's first 1xEV-DO-based mobile broadband deployment and one of West Africa's first CDMA2000 1xEV-DO networks leveraging Huawei's latest third generation CDMA2000 1xEV-DO platform.

Unveiling the company's plans in Lagos, Mr Maher Qubain, the chief executive officer, said recent news reports that one of the GSM operators has begun test calls on its 3G platform validates Starcomms' decision to deploy the technology.

"When we introduced the Third Generation (3G) technology, it was based on the realization that the Nigerian subscriber has become quite sophisticated and deserved to be provided world class services using the best technology".

Qubain said the company had envisaged that it would be granted a unified license which will enable it to provide all range of telecommunications services including fixed wireless, fax, data, mobile telephony and high speed internet, hence the need for a state-of-the-art infrastructural platform to meet the new dispensation.

EVDO, also known as Enhanced Voice Data Only services, is CDMA's answer to the need for high speed broadband services speeds as high as 300-400 kilobits per second (kbps). Starcomms is providing EVDO services currently in Lagos and Port Harcourt. The services are offered by Starcomms through the mobile data cards for laptop users and USB modems for desktop users. It will also enable subscribers to watch streaming video, movies and sort broadcast over their laptops or desktops.

In a continuous zeal to provide its subscribers better and innovative products, Starcomms is implementing the next version of EVDO which is known as EVDO release A in federal capital city of Abuja. The latest technology is capable to delivery average speeds of 800 Kpbs and will provide the world class high speed broad band experience to the users.

Now that unified license has been granted to Starcomms, Qubain said Nigeria's largest CDMA 3G mobile network can progress with confidence after successfully launching its mobile line range – 0702 – in February. Abuja, Aba, Asaba, Kaduna and Zaria are billed to join the network soon. The network is in final stages of being tested before being offered to subscribers.

The company has already introduced mobile data on the CDMA 1x platform and also currently offers mobile data with a select range of mobile phones including Nokia models. The Nokia phones have a built-in mini-browser and can also be used as a modem for PC internet access via a USB cable when the browser is activated.

The CDMA technology consistently provides better capacity for voice and data communications than other commercial mobile technologies, allowing more subscribers to connect at any given time, and it is the common platform on which 3G technologies are built.

The world is demanding more from wireless communication technologies than ever before as more people around the world are subscribing to wireless communications. Third-Generation wireless data services and applications - such as wireless email, web, digital picture taking/sending, assisted-GPS position location applications, video and audio streaming and TV broadcasting - and wireless networks are doing much more than they did just a few years ago

EV-DO currently being deployed by Starcomms is a part of the International Telecommunication Union, ITU, approved 3G standards technologies. EVDO delivers growing demand for high-speed broadband data services.

CDMA 1X is the fastest growing wireless technology and it will continue to grow at a faster pace than any other technology. Currently, there are just a little over 45 million subscribers to the CDMA 1X the latest version of the technology all over the world bringing global use of all ranges of CDMA to a little over 353 million.

Remarkably, this foray by the company will further empower Nigerians to communicate more effectively and affordably as the technology base of the 3G CDMA offers greater clarity than is currently prevalent.

Commercially launched in 1999, Starcomms has invested heavily over the years to improve the quality of its products. Its deployment of the world class CDMA technology in 2002 exponentially established the company as the largest CDMA 3G Mobile network in Nigeria in terms of coverage, subscriber base, network quality and customer service delivery.

Following introduction of its mobile lines, the company has hit over 550,000 lines in its subscriber's base with further indication that the network would cross the one million subscriber base before the end of the year.