IBM launches an Open Radio Access Network Center of Excellence in Spain to Accelerate Telco Digital Transformation across Europe

• Center will leverage the IBM Cloud for Telecommunications and its ecosystem of partners to help mobile operators drive innovation that meets O-RAN standards

• Based in Spain, the center will employ more than 500 O-RAN professionals in the next 3 years and leverage expertise from existing IBM labs in Nice, France and Dallas, Texas, among others

Madrid, February 25, 2021.- IBM has announced in Spain a Center of Excellence for solutions and services for the telecommunications sector, specializing in Open Radio Access Network (O-RAN), the industry standard that is driving a new open, flexible and virtualized mobile network architecture. The center plans to employ more than 500 O-RAN professionals over the next 3 years, including cloud developers and telecommunications engineers such as RF design engineers, MIMO engineers and O-RAN delivery engineers.

Harnessing the power of the [IBM Cloud for Telecommunications](#) and its ecosystem of 40+ partners, IBM's O-RAN Center of Excellence is designed to help European operators successfully test and bring to market applications that meet O-RAN architecture standards. Ecosystem partners Altiostar and Juniper are first to join with IBM to contribute their O-RAN software and hardware to the center. The center will be open to all Certified IBM Cloud for Telecommunications ecosystem partners, current and future, to bring their solutions and expertise in to help solve the evolving needs of joint telecommunications clients.

Supported by IBM Global Business Services (GBS) as the preeminent partner for digital transformation in the telco industry, GBS will offer a portfolio of end-to-end services, including services integration, to build and manage RAN and help speed how partners build and deploy next gen, 5G-enabled solutions. The O-RAN Center of Excellence will also work closely with IBM's Global Business Services delivery centers around the world, including a center in Bangalore, India - where IBM is already deploying RAN solutions.

In addition, IBM's existing Telco Network Cloud Lab locations in Nice (France) and Dallas (USA) will serve as a network for knowledge and resource sharing with the new O-RAN Center of Excellence. For example, the Nice and Dallas labs have advanced AI and automation models such as the "Zero Touch Provisioning" that eliminate the need to physically upgrade software in antenna sites, and these models can be utilized in the new O-RAN lab as well.

The rise of 5G and edge computing is accelerating the transformations of telco networks into more agile, hybrid cloud platforms that can harness growing volumes of complex data. O-RAN architecture is an important building block to a network transformation, as it provides a layer of interoperability across more than 150,000 cell sites in Europe, simplifying how operators manage and update applications. It also enables improved equipment interoperability from a broad ecosystem of companies that provide hardware like radio remote units (RRU), servers, switches and cabling to help deliver the full innovative potential of 5G.

" This new center in Spain will help communications service providers build and manage RAN deployments while addressing the fundamental shifts happening in the industry driven by the transformation to cloud and the rise of edge computing. Combined with the power of 5G and Edge, our clients will be able to deliver a new class of services that will unleash value across the global marketplace "

The IBM O-RAN Center of Excellence will focus on:

- Co-developing new use cases that leverage the IBM Cloud for Telecommunications and its partner ecosystem to help clients scale and expand the delivery of network services to their customers
- Evaluating new features coming out of O-RAN technology through extensive testing and pilot programs in collaboration with IBM's ecosystem partners
- Offering end-to-end portfolio of telecommunications network services to build and manage RAN deployments including advisory services, services integration, network build, and post-deployment network management
- Multiparty Network Functions orchestration from IBM Cloud for Telecommunications with software intent-based orchestration automation
- Integration testing of multi-party solutions for Five 9s availability assurance testing on IBM Cloud for Telecommunications

"Our clients are seeking a complete end-to-end partnership, and IBM Global Business Services is committed to being the prime integrator across all aspects of network transformation. In addition to IBM's recently announced Global Telco Network & 5G Transformation Unit, this new center in Spain will help communications service providers build and manage RAN deployments while addressing the fundamental shifts happening in the industry driven by the transformation to cloud and the rise of edge computing. Combined with the power of 5G and Edge, our clients will be able to deliver a new class of services that will unleash value across the global marketplace," said Steve Goetz, Vice President and Senior Partner, IBM GBS Communications Sector.

The power of an ecosystem

The contribution of IBM's ecosystem partners to this technological foundation also plays a critical role. For example, Altiostar's software makes it possible to translate the waves emitted by cell phones into data that can be processed and analyzed in the cloud. The combination of Altiostar's software with IBM's Cloud for Telecommunications platform brings the benefits of cloud and the ability to take a platform-centric approach by deploying RAN functions on an agile, scalable and hybrid platform.

"Altiostar is pleased to be working with IBM on the O-RAN Center of Excellence lab to promote and demonstrate the benefits of Open RAN as operators expand their 4G networks and transition to 5G,"said Pierre Kahhale, Vice President of Field Operations, Altiostar. "As part of on-going operator engagements, we have a strong and growing relationship with IBM, collaborating on a cloud-native approach to mobile networks."

Also key to the IBM Center of Excellence will be Juniper's switches and communication software. "The true potential and value of 5G can only be realized by service providers when it is fully aligned with cloud and AI capabilities. Together, these technologies provide the building blocks needed to help service providers transform their network architectures, operations and the service experience they deliver for the next era of networking. IBM will leverage Juniper's expertise in cloud, networking and automation, along with our commitment to openness, to help accelerate the Open RAN ecosystem for European service providers'5G evolution," adds Raj Yavatkar, Chief Technology Officer at Juniper Networks.

"The creation of a center open to the ecosystem allows us to deliver the best end-to-end solution to our customers, combining technology, services and automation, which will result in accelerated innovation cycles and shorter time-to-market for mobile operators," says Eduardo Argüeso, director of Telecommunications for IBM Europe.

"Red Hat understands the value open source can bring to Telecomm operators across Europe as they deploy new Open-RAN capabilities. Open-RAN specifically enables operators to bring new and innovative offerings to market more quickly, and IBM's new Open-RAN Center of Excellence showcases the opportunity these standards present in our industry," said Darrell Jordan-Smith, senior vice president of Industries and Global Accounts at Red Hat.

IBM is trusted by the world's leading telcos to lead them through transformation and prepare them for the next era of communication. Currently, 83% of the largest telecommunications companies rely on IBM technology and expertise, including hybrid cloud, artificial intelligence, analytics, security and blockchain.

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