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French firm wins E-Vision wireless deal

Dubai | By Manoj Nair | 15-08-2002

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MDS of France has won the mandate to install a "wireless" cable transmission solution for Etisalat's E-Vision subsidiary. Work on the contract, awarded in July, has already started in Al Ain and should be completed in the third quarter itself, confirmed a top official.

E-Vision plans to launch its services over the wireless platform in Al Ain during the fourth quarter, and in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah by early next year. The northern emirates will be brought into the network towards end 2003.

MDS edged out the claims of seven other contenders in the bid for the major contract. The value of the deal was not revealed.

The tests in Al Ain will continue through to September. Already, 50 households are being connected as part of the process. Al Ain was chosen because of the "topology and the limited geographical base."

"Wireless will co-exist with our fibre optic coaxial cable platform, and there will not be any overlap between them," said Rashid Ali, sales and marketing manager at E-Vision.

"Where we already have coaxial cabling, there is no need to offer any of our services through wireless. The two platforms will compliment each other perfectly.

"With wireless, we can extend our network quicker into the more remote areas of the country than would have been possible with coaxial cabling. Etisalat is responsible for the network and providing the technology. The investments are also made by it."

The official added that there will be no revision in the service offering for users receiving content through wireless. Packages will start at Dh50.

E-Vision expects to close this year with cable ready homes of 200,000. If Al Ain gets connected as scheduled, the numbers could swell to 250,000 units.

As of now, it is just under 170,000. Already, E-Vision has managed to have 70 per cent plus coverage in Abu Dhabi, and is close to doing so in Dubai.

"We are moving in line with the projections made at the outset. There continues to be a lot of interest from across the country to get our services," said Ali.

The upgrades on its infrastructure will also come in handy for the planned launch of the pay-per-view services.

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Dubai: Sunday, July 07, 2002

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Al Ain to get E-Vision from next month

Al Ain | By Aftab Kazmi | 07-07-2002

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People are anxiously awaiting E-Vision connections in Al Ain as the Emirates Cable TV and Multimedia plans to test a new wireless technology for cable television service there next month.

The new 'Wireless Broadband Network' will be tested in Al Ain and soon after its completion the service will be available, according to an E-Vision source.

M. Rashid Ali, Sales and Marketing Manager of E-Vision in a recent interview said, the target launch of the E-vision service in the garden city of the UAE is in September. "Soon E-Vision will also go wireless. It will start testing the Wireless Broadband Network shortly in Al Ain."

Launched in April 2000, Emirates Cable TV and Multimedia is a subsidiary of Etisalat and is currently using the digital hybrid fibre coaxial cable technology for its service in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah.

Explaining the new technology, Rashid Ali said it will allow E-Vision to reach new subscribers much faster as its installation will not require the time consuming ground digging and cable laying.

According to Rashid Ali, the company plans to cable some 600,000 homes in the UAE in three years.

The service, which includes channels in 14 languages, is gaining increasing popularity among the people across the country for its reliability, affordability and the large number of digital and interactive channels it offers.

Munir Ahmed, a businessman in Al Ain, said other cable operators are charging exuberant prices for the installation of dish and decoders and offering only selected channels.

"I am highly impressed by the quality of E-Vision and the number of channels it offers through the basic package," said Ahmed who watched the E-Vision channels at a relative's home in Abu Dhabi.

It is very affordable and will relieve a large number of people in Al Ain from installing several dishes on roof tops for getting different satellite channels, he added.

Abdul Fatah, an Egyptian expatriate, said E-Vision should not take much long in reaching Al Ain. "We want that service as quickly as possible." Fatah said he has recently subscribed to a pay channel network for six months only because he was not aware that E-Vision was coming to Al Ain within two months.

"I have relatives in Dubai who are all praising E-Vision for the recent inclusion of four Egyptian channels such as Egypt 1 and 2, Nile News, and Dream TV."

Rajan Kumar, an Indian expatriate, said he is delighted to hear that the basic package of E-Vision will cost just Dh50 per month and offer as many as 70 channels. "This package will, at least, satisfy my requirement."

With the news of E-Vision reaching Al Ain shortly, many cable operators have become active and are offering special discounts and attractions to attract more customers.

Some of the operators are even offering free decoders and installations, provided a customer subscribes the service for a minimum of six months.

E-vision which started its service in April 2000 with a target of just 20,000 homes, now have around 150,000 subscribers in three cities.

Since its very inception, E-Vision's channel network has also expanded from just 39 to 105 channels with several exclusive channels especially for kids.

The service also offers several packages, including Premium and La Carte that brings famous Showtime and ART cable packages to the viewers.

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