

Israeli firm begins BTC wireless backbone upgrade

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The Botswana Telecommunications Corporation (BTC) says the upgrading of its nationwide wireless backbone and the backhaul network of its mobile subsidiary beMOBILE by Ceragon Network is ongoing after the Israeli company was awarded a \$1.5 million (P9.96 million) contract earlier this year.

In an interview with Business Week on Wednesday, BTC Communications Manager Golekanye Molapisi says Ceragon, which is a leading provider of high-capacity wireless backhaul solutions, was awarded the contract in April this year.

In a statement on Wednesday, Ceragon said its solutions would enable BTC to support rapid subscriber growth and meet its service expansion plans. "Using Ceragon's FibeAir(R) solutions that support high speed wireless transmission will enable the operator to continue to offer its growing customer base high-quality and disturbance-free service delivery."

The statement said equipment deployments were already underway and were scheduled for completion by the end of 2009. "In order to succeed in the dense telecom market of Botswana, it was important for us to select a backhaul solution that will ensure high quality service delivery at a competitive price," BTC was quoted in a statement.

"Ceragon has proven to be a great partner, combining superb technology with excellent customer support," the statement said. "With a high-capacity wireless network that we can depend on, be Mobile is set to meet the goal of doubling its market share in Botswana."

"We are very pleased to extend our relations with BTC and support the expansion of new wireless voice and broadband services in Botswana," President and Chief Executive Officer of Ceragon, Ira Palti, said in a statement. "We continue to provide value to our growing customer base by offering the most advanced technology with the most favourable cost position."

BTC is Botswana's largest supplier of fixed-line and associated communications services that provide telephony and other products.

Ceragon's wireless backhaul solutions use microwave technology to transfer large amounts of network traffic between base stations and the infrastructure at the core of the mobile network. The company's solutions are deployed by more than 150 service providers and used by hundreds of private networks in nearly 100 countries.

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