Etisalat leads in deploying a Cloud-based telecom infrastructure

Abu Dhabi, (13th July) 2016: Abu Dhabi, UAE—Etisalat, the Middle East's leading telecom, has activated its first live Network Function Virtualization telco cloud in Abu Dhabi.

Amidst strong financial results, the latest project comes as part of the corporation's continuous efforts for technological leadership in the region and worldwide. The NFV-based telco infrastructure has been built with Quanta servers, Arista switches and Canonical Ubuntu OpenStack , a multi-vendor combination integrated for production for the first time ever globally.

Projects, proof of concepts and various experiments and tests to transform the corporation for the cloud era have started as early as 2013, with the telecom industry's fostering and adoption of Network Function Virtualization (NFV) and Software-Defined Networking (SDN), two enabling technologies commonly associated with smart cities, IoT and the upcoming 5G future.

Based on the open-source OpenStack cloud platform used by the likes of NASA, CERN and leading web companies, activations are currently in progress in more sites across the UAE. On top of this telco cloud, the Middle Eastern telecom operator targets to virtualize its infrastructure and services across its portfolios of data, communications and video, beginning with mobile services. The leap is meant to efficiently make telecom resources and services more fluid, automatic and open for innovation.

Aligning with the UAE's aspirations for global competitiveness, the telco cloud platform serves as a step towards realizing Etisalat's values of:
1.Customer Centricity, including One-stop-shop app/online portals; Fast, intuitive and pleasing user experiences and interfaces; and Self-organising network/service capabilities, e.g. self-configuration, self-optimisation and self-healing functions,
2. Agility, including Faster time-to-market in product development; Rapid prototyping of services; and Shorter cycles of product improvements and fixes,

3. Collaboration, including Rich/open ecosystems and collaborations; Explore new innovations with lower risks, e.g. startup-like/app-like development; and Cloudifying consumer and business connectivity and collaborations,

4. Empowerment, including Empowering Etisalat and its customers through openness, e.g. APIs; Maximum automation of services and operations; and Automatic capacity expansion/reduction, e.g. cloud elasticity.

"It's a different world that we've embarked into", says Esmaeel Alhammadi, Senior Vice President of Network Development in Etisalat and Sahaab program lead. "We thought it was a technological step, requiring a mere upgrade of the network and services. But it turns out to be more than that. It's a shift in mindsets and how things get done. It's not every year that we have technologies like these that have the potential of adapting to customer wishes faster and opening new avenues for future innovations and collaborations."

Realizing the potential and benefits of cloud-based and software-defined technologies, Etisalat has launched a corporate-wide program in 2016 to "cloudify the network", dubbed Sahaab—an Arabic word that translates to 'cloud'. The program aims to harmonize between the hardware-centric telecom services and the software-centric cloud services across the corporation.

The corporation's digital transformation strives to support the UAE's Vision 2021 national agenda for a competitive, digital economy driven by innovative Emiratis. Its mission is to empower the nation and its citizens, residents, businesses and ideas to be competitive locally and globally. And the telco cloud is our gift to the UAE for its future.

"Etisalat is demonstrating real vision and innovation by the speed at which they are embracing network function virtualisation, " said Anand Krishnan, EVP, Cloud, Canonical. "We are delighted that Etisalat has selected Canonical OpenStack as their NFV infrastructure and Juju as their generic VNF manager. As the global leader in OpenStack deployments, we will work closely with Etisalat to ensure its customers can benefit from the virtualisation and cloudification of network functions that this will deliver."

Etisalat has been the telecommunications service provider in the UAE since 1976, and has built up a modern telecom infrastructure and established itself as an innovative and reliable operator.

Etisalat stands 140th among the Financial Times Top 500 Corporations in the world in terms of market capitalization, and is ranked by The Middle East magazine as the 6th largest company in the Middle East in terms of capitalization and revenues. The Corporation is the largest contributor outside the oil sector to development programmes of the UAE Federal Government, and is an award-winning socially responsible corporation. Etisalat has also won accolades from across the region for its technological leadership.

-Ends-

Press release issued by Corporate Communication Department – Etisalat

For further media information:
Nancy Sudheer,
Corporate Communications – Etisalat
Tel +971 2 6184860, Mobile +971 50 7055290
Email nsudheer@etisalat.ae

etisalat.ae
mediaoffic@etisalat.ae

etisalat