



Fastweb and Linkem sign a partnership for the deployment of 5G Fixed Wireless Access services delivering gigabit connectivity in grey areas

Milan, December 23rd 2019 - Fastweb and Linkem today announced a long-term agreement to accelerate the deployment of their respective 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) networks and the reciprocal provision of wholesale services to deliver fiber-like services with speed up to 1 Gbps.

Last April Fastweb, a pioneer in the deployment of FTTH and FTTC networks announced a plan to double its proprietary ultrabroadband infrastructure by 2024 from current 8.0 million of Italian households and business sites covered through FTTx to 16.0 million by deploying a state of the art 5G FWA network. The company has an overall plan to invest 3 billion euros over the next 5 years, also for the deployment of 5G FWA and 5G mobile networks. For this plan Fastweb builds on the competencies of its subsidiary Fastweb Air which already operates an LTE FWA network in digital divide areas.

Leading operator in the Italian FWA market, Linkem has built Europe's largest fixed wireless proprietary access network that already serves over 650,000 household and business customers and covers 70% of the Country. Thanks to the vision of utilizing LTE FWA technology as an ultrabroadband alternative in Italy, Linkem has been able to attract over half a billion euros of foreign investments and is implementing an industrial plan to upgrade its network to 5G which will enable not only the best performance for end customers, but also a whole ecosystem of innovative services.

The agreement signed today will leverage the existing assets of both companies - such as radio planning capabilities, existing and new sites - enabling a faster and more efficient roll out of two independent 5G Radio Access Networks enhancing both coverage and performance. At the same time, it will ensure a strict separation of assets, services and commercial offers.

Linkem and Fastweb will provide each other wholesale access to their respective their respective 5G Radio Access Network, thus enabling the provision of the highest performing ultrabroadband connectivity to their customers, thanks to the specific peculiarity of the network that each operator will deploy.

The overall footprint of 8 million households in small and medium cities in so called "grey areas" - i.e. 30% of the country - will be completed by 2023.



Fastweb and Linkem will significantly enhance their customer experience by delivering fiber-like connection speed up to 1 Gbps at costs and time that are only a fraction of FTTH.

Fastweb measured speed up to 1 Gbps downstream and up to 200 Mbps upstream in several field trials conducted in recent months, confirming 5G FWA as a powerful alternative to FTTH infrastructure, with the added benefit of reduced costs and time of deployment compared to traditional Fiber networks.

Alberto Calcagno, Fastweb CEO: "The agreement with Linkem is another key element in the execution of Fastweb strategy to provide the best connectivity to our customers wherever they are. We are fully committed to deploy a best-in-class 5G FWA network in grey areas and thanks to this agreement we will extend the fiber-like gigabit connectivity services to our customers. We strongly believe in our role as infrastructure-based operator and consider 5G FWA the future-proof network to deliver quickly and efficiently the advantages of the gigabit society in wide areas of the country".

Davide Rota, Linkem CEO: "The agreement with Fastweb confirms Linkem's pioneering role in the deployment of high-capacity FWA networks, as well as the crucial role Fixed Wireless technology plays as a true ultrabroadband alternative in the Italian telecommunications market also in the 5G perspective. We are especially excited to apply our 15 years of experience building and operating wireless broadband networks to quickly expand and upgrade our current network to provide robust ultrabroadband connectivity as well as support new innovative 5G services in these areas and across the country."

With 2.6 million wireline customers and 1.7 million mobile customers, Fastweb is a major Italian telecommunications operator. The company offers a wide range of voice and data services, fixed communication and mobile, to households and businesses. Since its creation in 1999, the company has focused on innovation and network infrastructure to provide high quality ultra-broadband services. Thanks to the continuous expansion of its UBB network, Fastweb today reaches 22 million households, of which 8 with a proprietary infrastructure, with connection speeds of up to 1 Gigabit. The company offers its customers new generation mobile services based on 4G technology and 4G Plus. Starting in 2020, the mobile service will be strengthened thanks to the deployment of a next-generation 5G mobile network.

Linkem S.p.A., a leader in the Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) market, is an Italian 5G operator that provides wireless ultra-broadband Internet services across Italy. Founded in 2001, and thanks to the largest proprietary radio access network that utilizes licensed 4G-Advanced frequency, Linkem currently covers approximately 70% of the population and is committed to bringing high speed wireless Internet connectivity to all areas of the country. Linkem is already present in all the main Italian cities. With nearly 900 employees and more than 650,000 customers, Linkem has also launched a series of Open Innovation initiatives in order to support the development of the 5G ecosystem and the digital transformation of the country.