

Fastweb and Linkem extend their agreement for the deployment of 5G Fixed Wireless Access networks in digital divide areas

The deal signed today extends the footprint of 8 million households envisaged by the original agreement signed in December to an additional 4 million households in digital divide areas. The 5G FWA represents an efficient and cost-effective solution to bring ultra-broadband connectivity in areas with low population density.

Milan, August 4th 2020 - Fastweb and Linkem announced today that the agreement signed last December to accelerate the deployment of the respective 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) networks providing connectivity up to 1 Gbp/s to 8 million households has been extended to serve an additional 4 million households in "white areas", i.e. digital divide areas.

The original coinvestment deal launched in December 2019 between the two operators leverages their respective assets - the 5G frequency portfolio, existing and new sites, the fiber to connect the antennas - to enable a faster and more efficient roll-out of two independent 5G FWA networks intended to cover 8 million houses in small and medium sized cities in "grey areas", corresponding to 30% of the population. While ensuring a strict separation and management of the respective assets, services and commercial offers, the synergies achieved thanks to the agreement allow a better coverage and performance of the respective services.

With the new agreement signed today, the coinvestment is extended to an additional footprint of 4 million households, corresponding to a further 15% of the population, located in areas not covered by ultra-broadband services, which instead will be enabled by the 5G FWA networks to be deployed by Fastweb and Linkem in the next few months.

As the previous agreement, Linkem and Fastweb will provide each other wholesale access to their respective 5G Networks, 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 roll out.

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

Linkem, the first operator in Italy for number of customers served by FWA technology, has demonstrated in over 15 years its worth as technological model recognized today as a real infrastructure alternative for the country.

The deployment of the networks within the scope of the agreement signed today will be started in 2021 and will be completed in three years.

Alberto Calcagno, Fastweb CEO: *"5G FWA networks are the most efficient solution to guarantee ultra-broadband services up to 1 Gigabit in areas of the country that are currently in a serious digital divide. The COVID emergency has clearly shown us how is important to have stable and powerful connections everywhere. With this agreement we give our contribution to timely eliminate the digital divide in Italy".*

Davide Rota, Linkem CEO: *"The FWA model has demonstrated all its effectiveness to reduce the digital divide, especially during the Covid-19 emergency, thanks its characteristics of flexibility, resilience and rapid activation of the service. The low costs and the capacity of enabling the 5G ecosystems make the FWA the infrastructural answer to the undeniable need for digital transformation in our country".*

For further info:

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