



Cooperation key to Europe's first EDGE launch

When Lithuanian operator Bité required increased data speed and capacity for its GPRS network, Ericsson's EDGE solution was the obvious answer. In December 2003, Bité and Hungarian operator Westel became Europe's first operators to launch commercial EDGE networks.

Bité, which is wholly owned by Danish communications group TDC, is the second-largest mobile operator in Lithuania with more than 600,000 users. Ericsson has a

close relationship with the innovative operator and has been sole supplier of its GSM/GPRS network since 1995.

EDGE triples the data capacity of GPRS and is an extremely cost-effective solution. Ericsson has been developing EDGE-capable base stations since 1995 and the RBS 2000 series is fully EDGE compatible. This makes upgrading to EDGE easy and fast, and because EDGE falls under the scope of GSM, operators don't need a separate license to offer the service.

Rimas Kalvaitis, director of marketing and sales at Ericsson Lithuania, says the investment Bité had already made in Ericsson infrastructure meant implementation was quick. "Ericsson was able to help Bité launch in

under three months," Kalvaitis says. "The operator had standard Ericsson RBS 2206s, which are virtually EDGE ready, so it was just a matter of downloading software and installing the EDGE transceiver units."

"Development of EDGE has been at an advanced stage for some time at Ericsson. The technology is proven and the expertise and experience we were able to draw on meant rollout of the network was straightforward."

Coverage is available in Lithuania's capital, Vilnius, and the country's next two largest cities. Henrik Hansen, chief commercial officer at Bité, says the aim was to first cover the main commercial areas. "Business customers are the priority: Mobile Internet and e-mail users significantly benefit from the high speeds and data rates available through EDGE," he says.



Henrik Hansen, chief commercial officer at Bité.

"We have had considerable success with the mobile-content services we offer, and plan to expand and provide for all types of customers as the need arises."

Like other Baltic states, Lithuania is experiencing rapid economic growth, which is sparking an interest in data services. Mobile penetration exceeds that of fixed and more than 60 percent of the country's 3.5 million people own mobile phones. Bité has seen GPRS use increase ten-fold over the past year, and those users hungry for more bandwidth will be the main beneficiaries of EDGE. The operator estimates that EDGE will account for more than 50 percent of its GPRS revenues by 2006.

"EDGE will stimulate high-speed data use and promote the benefits of mobile 'broadband' services."

Ericsson has a long-standing relationship with Bité dating back to the operator's beginnings in 1995. Zilvinas Jurksus,

chief technical officer at Bité, says the close cooperation between the two companies was the key to the successful EDGE launch. "Our mobile network consists entirely of Ericsson systems and this made it easier to integrate EDGE, saving us considerable time and resources," he says.

"Everything from placing the order to the equipment arriving and being installed went smoothly. Ericsson is a truly global vendor and has expertise and competence locally, which is very important. We are able to have direct contact on a daily basis and we are extremely satisfied with the support we have received."



Zilvinas Jurksus, chief technical officer at Bité.

Lithuania is expected to issue WCDMA licenses later this year. EDGE is a complement to WCDMA, particularly in rural areas, and Bité is in a strong position to meet its customers' future needs. "We expect the market for advanced data services to become more mature," Jurksus says.

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Highlights

Customer

Bité, Lithuania

Customer objective

Increase user data rates and boost capacity over existing infrastructure.

Ericsson Solution

EDGE (Enhanced Data Rates for Global Evolution) – a 3G radio technology that enables operators to provide high-speed services.

Customer benefits

- Fast rollout of high-speed networks
- Triple the data capacity of GPRS
- Easy implementation
- Low-risk investment