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## **MSF updates strategy for 2009**

*IPTV, LTE, EPS and more frequent interoperability events on the agenda*

**London, March 17<sup>th</sup> 2008:** The MSF (MultiService Forum) today announced major initiatives in advance of their next GMI interoperability event in 2010. Having established the viability of IMS technology in GMI2006 and GMI2008, the emphasis now shifts to the practical implementation of evolving standards in the core network, notably 3GPP's Evolved Packet System (EPS), and new mobile broadband access technologies such as LTE. Also announced was the launch of a carrier led Services Working Group (SWG) to provide market-led high-level service descriptions and compelling use cases to maximize value for NGN operators. Most radical of all was a decision to supplement their highly successful biennial GMI interoperability events with an ongoing series of smaller events specifically addressing specific areas such as IPTV and LTE/EPS.

"GMI 2008 broke all previous records with some 225 networked devices under test" explained Roger Ward, President of the MSF. "For our members, being able to test product concepts in interlinked carrier-hosted global real world network scenarios was too good an opportunity to miss. However, the depth of testing required to embrace continued development in the face of rapidly maturing technology means we must move beyond concept testing to embrace resilience testing, and that puts a lot of pressure on a two-week event. Also the pace of development is accelerating — so testing of important new functionality just can't wait for the completion of another two-year cycle. So specific areas will be addressed in dedicated interoperability events, allowing those areas to progress independently before coming together in the combined full-scale GMI 2010".

An important aspect of GMI 2008 was the ground-breaking partnership between the MSF and the Alliance for Telecommunications Solutions (ATIS) for validating two key standards developed by ATIS IIF for IPTV – demonstrating the value of increasing cooperation between standards organizations. The IPTV testing in GMI 2008 was based on specifications under development and these specifications will be completed in 2009 and IPTV-specific interoperability testing is expected to be conducted in cooperation with ETSI and ATIS later this year. The results will provide critical groundwork for coordinating and managing elements and services in the IPTV ecosystem and will speed up real world deployments of IPTV and advanced IPTV services.

The emphasis on services adding value for NGN operators drove the formation of the MSF's Services Working Group (SWG) to guide the communication and entertainment sectors by putting new and emerging NGN services to the test under realistic conditions. The SWG will define high-level service description and use cases that describe the interaction of the end users with the network. SWG is already analyzing MSF architecture and Standards-based implementation of the following NGN services: (1) blended/converged IPTV services & time-, place-, and device-shifted multi-media services, (2) priority and emergency services, (3) QoS services over carrier interconnection, (4) personalization of converged services, and (5) multimedia services continuity.

"MSF's mission is to make NGNs work" explained Bhumi Khasnabish of Verizon Network and Technology and SWG Chairman, "so it is imperative that the SWG focuses on creating value for the NGN operators by defining these services jointly with other industry groups like ATIS, ETSI, 3GPP, 3GPP2, OMA, ONA, and CCSA. That's what the SWG set out to achieve at its inaugural meeting in San Jose, CA, USA in February 2009."

New broadband access technologies continue to emerge, and the 3GPP's "Long Term Evolution" is one of the hottest, with ABI Research predicting that by 2013 operators will spend over \$8.6 billion on LTE base station infrastructure alone. So there is already a lot of interest in the MSF's plans to add an LTE access tile to its architecture and to put it to the test, together with EPS on the core network, probably in Q4 2009. Naseem Khan, Principal Member of Technical Staff at Verizon Labs was among the first to comment: "Verizon Wireless expects to offer commercial LTE-

based service in the United States, starting in 2010, and the MSF LTE/EPS activities this year will be very timely”.

“Interoperability testing on the MSF scale will be a vital contribution to the drive for commercial development of LTE” according to Dave Hutton, Vodafone’s Standards Strategist. “We are working closely with Verizon on field trials in the US and Europe, and demonstrating impressive access speeds. Full LTE coverage requires massive investment, and the industry demands exhaustive testing on the GMI scale to ensure multi-vendor deployments.”

“The MSF is clearly doing a great job of boosting interoperability in the communications market” commented Dan Bieler, Consulting Director, European Telecommunications and Networking, IDC Germany. “IDC recommends that more major telcos should consider taking part, especially carriers in developing markets with different network infrastructures and service mixes than in developed countries. Also the MSF should reach out to software providers and systems integrators as key players in the emerging IP-based communications landscape. Equipment vendors should also continue to participate as a way to work out the kinks in their offerings. Following the principle ‘you get out what you put in’, we recommend new members to participate actively in future MSF interoperability events.”

**About the MSF**

The MultiService Forum (MSF) is a global association of service providers, system suppliers and test equipment vendors committed to developing and promoting open-architecture, multiservice Next Generation Networks. Founded in 1998, the MSF is an open-membership organization comprised of the world’s leading telecommunications companies. The MSF’s activities include developing Implementation Agreements, promoting worldwide compatibility and interoperability of network elements, and encouraging input to appropriate national and international standards bodies.

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