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5G solution providers sign up to SONIC

Eight 5G solution providers have joined the SmartRAN Open Network Interoperability Centre (SONIC), a joint programme between Digital Catapult and Ofcom to test interoperability and integration of open networking solutions. SONIC begins with Open RAN and focuses on open software-centric networking. SONIC will be operational from May 2021, coupling laboratory capabilities with real world indoor and outdoor deployments.

The solution providers taking part in SONIC include Accelleran NV, Phluido Inc, Effnet AB, Benetel Ltd, Mavenir, Foxconn, NEC and Radisys, with more to come. These vendors and system integrators, with products of varying maturity and with diverse solution models are working together to combine and deploy Open RAN solutions. Digital Catapult and Ofcom are seeking to understand the readiness of Open RAN for real world applications, and the vendors and integrators are seeking to build new products and solutions, learning and sharing best practice. The opportunity to experiment with multiple 5G Open RAN deployments through SONIC will enable the investigation of product deployment across multiple architectures and integration models, the implications of cloud and virtual architectures.

In addition to telecoms solution providers of all sizes, SONIC will supply insights to network providers – including national operators and smaller private and neutral networks. Large businesses can explore future deployments such as private and virtual networks, while smaller companies can test the integration potential of their early stage products.

Digital Catapult Chief Technology Officer, Joe Butler says, "SONIC will foster an ecosystem in the UK of large and small telecoms suppliers, with multiple providers for each element in the technology stack. Providing a neutral environment for testing and demonstration with eight solution providers will surface the opportunities and challenges of interoperability. We will collectively learn what works and what does not in terms of integration, technology and processes."

Simon Saunders, Director of Emerging & Online Technology at Ofcom added, "With the first vendors on board and more expected to follow, this is an exciting step in the journey of the SONIC project. SONIC offers a unique opportunity to shape what the UK's supply chains of the future could look like and support innovation. So we encourage companies across the telecoms industry to express their interest in participating, as we get set for the project to go live in May."

Register interest in SONIC at www.digicatapult.org.uk/for-startups/other-programmes/sonic.

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