

Media Q&A's

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Media related frequently asked questions and OBSAI's response.

1. What is the OBSAI Initiative?

Open Base Station Architecture Initiative has been set up to invite companies to participate in defining and agreeing on open standards for base station internal architecture and key interfaces. This specification will be available for all member companies. Module vendors can develop modules with the specified interface and sell them to base station manufacturers.

2. What are the objectives of OBSAI?

The objectives are threefold, firstly to define and agree base station architecture on a modular level. Secondly, to develop and provide an Interface Specification between the main functional modules Thirdly to ensure the availability of world-class modules for the next generation base stations that can cost effectively deliver the requisite technical performance.

3. What are the benefits of this initiative?

Base station manufacturers will see benefits from focussed costs, since companies will not need to do all R&D themselves. They will also benefit from improved time to market for products and access to the best technologies in each module. Operators will benefit from improved product quality, functionality, cost and development speed. These factors combined will give direct benefits to end users in terms of cost and variety of services.

4. What key market/technical trends have lead to the formation of this initiative?

Telecommunications service offerings are becoming broader every day. This has led to more complex mobile networks being required, which in turn means ever-increasing investment in research and development. Simultaneously new services require increasingly greater levels of bandwidth, which need to be delivered at a more cost-effective rate. These trends create new challenges for network equipment manufacturers. Openness is one way to address these challenges.

5. How does this differ to other standard based initiatives?

We fully support bodies such as 3GPP or ETSI. These bodies serve those players who mostly benefit from network and element-level standardization, i.e., network suppliers and network operators. However, these bodies do not standardize network elements' internal interfaces. For this purpose we need industry forums such as OBSAI

6. How do you become a member of OBSAI?

All base station, module and component manufacturers are welcome to join the initiative, by either signing a promoter company agreement or by signing a Supporter Agreement with existing member companies. Please refer to www.obsai.org

7. Who will benefit from this Initiative?

In the long run the entire industry will benefit through more cost-effective, efficient networking systems. Manufacturers will enjoy reduced costs and better targeting of internal expertise. This in turn will benefit operators who will be able to offer customers a greater variety of services. Consumers will then benefit from being able to access a far wider range of services in the full confidence that they will work well.

8. How will this change the original base station internal infrastructure?

The main difference is that the interfaces will be commonly defined. The base stations implemented with this architecture will be available for rollouts in 2004-2005. Thus, the architecture will need to allow the use of latest technologies.

9. Does it have any impact on the ability to develop new services?

This will ensure that the base station infrastructure will develop in such a way that facilitates the development of innovative new services at competitive prices.

10. Is it mandatory that all members use the architecture?

It is not mandatory to use the architecture.

11. How is compliance verified and certified?

The following steps for compliance are expected to be implemented

- The module suppliers will undertake self-certification
- System vendors will integrate required modules

System vendors will certify system specific aspects of their base stations

12. Won't this limit innovation and competition?

The emergence of an open market for modules will increase innovation and competition.

13. Will this limit market access for non-members?

No, it does not. Compliance with OBSAI is not mandatory.

14. How many modules/interfaces are there in the architecture?

There are four modules: Radio Frequency module, Baseband module, Transport module and Control module and three interfaces.

15. What is the IPR 'scheme' within the group and towards non-members?

Each member grants the other members a license to its intellectual property, which is included in the specifications. The published Interface Specifications will be licensed to all members free of charge.

16. How many members are there currently in OBSAI?

OBSAI now comprises over 100 members, please see the web site for a comprehensive list: www.obsai.org