IBM Newsroom

IBM and Airspan Networks Plan to Work to Accelerate 5G-enabled Open RAN Adoption in Europe

Via IBM and Airspan's planned testbed in Germany and France, European telco customers would have ability to trial edge applications and network slicing over long distances using 5G-enabled Open RAN

Munich, Germany and Boca Raton, FL – September 21, 2021: IBM (NYSE: IBM) and Airspan Networks Inc., which provides groundbreaking, disruptive software and hardware for 5G network solutions, today announced plans to collaborate on the launch of a 5G-enabled Open RAN testbed across the IBM Watson Center Germany and IBM's Global Industry Solution Center (GISC) in Nice, France, to showcase long-distance control over 5G-enabled edge computing.

The goal of developing this testbed is to help clients across Europe innovate and develop multi-vendor solutions designed to address different customer use case requirements, based on open, interoperable standards, while optimizing performance. IBM Global Business Services and Airspan plan to work together to accelerate the adoption of Open RAN technology and its ecosystem incorporating IBM's leading global hybrid cloud and AI orchestration services. IBM Global Business Services, a leading systems integrator in the telco industry, is focused on processes, methodologies, and edge experience to deliver value and transformational projects with emerging technologies.

The Open RAN testbed is intended to advance the development of Open RAN software and hardware solutions, and end-to-end interoperability testing with private 5G stand-alone core networks. The two companies plan to provide partners and customers with the opportunity to collaborate, integrate and test features for next generation campus networks.

As part of the intended collaboration, Airspan Networks is providing its Open RAN AirVelocity 2700 indoor radio unit and virtualized Open RAN Centralized Unit (vCU) and Distributed Unit (vDU) OpenRANGE software to help customers test and validate 5G private network solutions using Open RAN. IBM is expected to provide its Global Business Services technology integration services, as well as IBM Cloud Pak for Network Automation and IBM Cloud Pak for Watson AIOps, to allow customers to more efficiently manage and orchestrate edge cloud implementation and applications. In addition, the IBM Global Business Services team is planning to implement a visual inspection application for customers to further extend Industry 4.0 5G edge computing use cases on Open RAN.

"Open approaches and standards-based technologies are vital to help unleash the full potential of 5G and edge computing. That's why, in collaboration with Airspan, we hope to work to advance emerging use cases that harness Open RAN and bring new value to telecom clients. The planned expansion of the Open RAN testbed will allow us to demonstrate these capabilities as we accelerate 5G and edge computing innovation," said Marisa Viveros, Vice President of Strategy and Offerings, Telecom, Media and Entertainment Industry at IBM.

“Through critical collaboration with leaders like IBM and testing in these labs, which could help accelerate the development of Open RAN and 5G solutions and the open architecture ecosystem, we believe Airspan can continue to be at the forefront of innovation and industry disruption through end-to-end Open RAN solutions,” said Airspan Chief Sales and Marketing Officer Henrik Smith-Petersen.

This year, IBM announced the Open RAN Center of Excellence in Spain to accelerate the progress of Open RAN and standards-based technologies in Europe. In May 2021, Airspan announced the opening of a 5G Innovation Lab in the UK as a showcase and demonstration facility for partners, customers and government institutions, to focus on the development of Open RAN software, 5G sub 6 GHz and mmWave indoor and outdoor equipment, and private network use cases.

IBM Global Business Services and Airspan are working toward definitive agreements detailing joint plans to accelerate the adoption of Open RAN technology and its ecosystem incorporating IBM’s leading global hybrid cloud and AI orchestration services. Statements regarding IBM's future direction and intent are subject to change or withdrawal without notice and represent goals and objectives only.

About IBM Global Business Services:
To learn more about IBM Global Business Services, please visit https://www.ibm.com/services

About Airspan

Airspan Networks Holdings Inc. (NYSE American: MIMO) is a U.S.-based provider of groundbreaking, disruptive software and hardware for 5G networks, and a pioneer in end-to-end Open RAN solutions that provide interoperability with other vendors. As a result of innovative technology and significant R&D investments to build and expand 5G solutions, Airspan believes it is well-positioned with 5G indoor and outdoor, Open RAN, private networks for enterprise customers and industrial use applications, fixed wireless access (FWA), and CBRS solutions to help mobile network operators of all sizes deploy their networks of the future, today. With over one million cells shipped to 1,000 customers in more than 100 countries, Airspan has global scale. For more information, visit www.airspan.com.

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