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WITSA Announces 2006 Global IT Excellence Award Winners

Austin, TX – Seven public and private sector organizations representing seven countries have been selected for the 2006 WITSA Global IT Excellence Awards, the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) announced today. Recipients will receive their awards during the May 4, 2006 Gala Dinner at the 2006 World Congress on IT in Austin, Texas.

The 2006 WITSA Global IT Excellence Awards recognize select organizations whose use of IT has exhibited exceptional achievement within three broad categories: Public Sector Excellence, Private Sector Excellence, and Digital Opportunity. In addition, a Chairman's Award is presented to a nominee selected from the entire pool of candidates from all three categories.

“This year’s award winners collectively demonstrate the power of IT to make a difference in a diverse range of societies,” said WITSA Chairman George Newstrom. “The Global IT Excellence Awards are designed to encourage the spread of true innovation in such critical efforts as bridging the digital divide, enhancing citizen services and fueling prosperity throughout the global economy.”

The award winners in the three categories, as well as the WITSA Chairman’s Award, follow:

The Chairman's Award

Octopus Holdings Limited, Hong Kong

Octopus Holdings Limited in Hong Kong is the world's leading complex automatic fare collection and contactless smartcard payment system, with daily use by over seven million citizens across transport, parking, retail, self-service business, recreational facilities, educational institutions and access control points. Octopus was recognized because of its innovative use of latest technologies, including smartcard, J2EE, handheld controller, and network technologies. It provides a simple but trusted platform to ease the lives of the customers, enhances competitiveness of the service providers through efficient clearing and settlement systems; and provides new business opportunities to the merchants in a reward program.

The Digital Opportunity Award

Ministry of Science and Education, the Republic of Macedonia

Through the efforts of the Ministry of Science and Education, the Republic of Macedonia is working to become the "First Wireless Nation." The 3,000+ square kilometers deployment, which is funded and deployed by Macedonian service provider On.net, aims to be the single largest broadband wireless network in the world, providing high speed data, voice, and video capabilities to the entire population of over two million people.

Multimedia Development Corporation, Malaysia

Malaysia's Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC) is a government owned body that was incorporated in 1996 with the aim of implementing the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project. The MSC is a long term project conceived to be the main engine to move Malaysia to the knowledge-based economy, using ICT as the key enabler. Under its charter, MDC has been given the responsibility to achieve the above objective by contributing to socio-economic development through the MSC flagship applications (including reducing digital divide); developing local ICT industry; and bringing in foreign investments. MDC has contributed to digital divide programs through various flagship applications and community projects. It also works with other government agencies to ensure that the infrastructure and other supporting framework are made available.

The Public Sector Excellence Award

Public Procurement Service, Republic of Korea

Republic of Korea's Public Procurement Service has established a nationwide integrated Government e-Procurement System (GePS), which enables all procurement from purchase request to payment to be processed online. Currently, about 30,000 public organizations and 150,000 private companies have used the GePS. It has become one of the world's largest cyber markets with total transaction volume amounting to \$45 billion in 2005. As a result, PPS's government customers have been able to more quickly and efficiently acquire the goods and services it needs to serve the people of Korea.

HealthNet Uganda

Located in Uganda's Medical School of Makerere University, HealthNet Uganda serves a wide array of users, including medical faculty, doctors, researchers, students, and other health workers. Since its inception as a Non-Governmental Organization project in 2000, HealthNet has had significant success in the use of handheld and wireless technologies. It has piloted successfully the use of handheld computers in collection of data and sharing information on a network of medical personnel from very remote regions of the country. The project works to ensure timely retrieval of data and access to health information in diagnosis, treatment and health education in a country where the doctor to patient ratio is about 1: 18,000.

The Private Sector IT Excellence Award

FORTHnet, Greece

FORTHnet brought the Internet to Greece, and began as a research team in the Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas (FORTH). For a number of years, it has been successfully active in the provision of Internet, Telephony and Telecommunications services to private individuals, organisations and professionals. FORTHnet created the first Fixed Wireless Access (WLL) network in the country, and has one of the largest alternative telephony service provision networks, which is based on **Voice over IP (VoIP)** technology. It was the first

company to allow consumers to select their telecommunications carrier by offering a complete package of telephony services under the name FORTHnet Telephony following the liberalization of the telecommunications sector.

KDDI, Japan

In 2000, Japanese telecommunications companies DDI, KDD, and IDO merged to form a new company, KDDI, resulting in a complex web of business processes and information systems. In order to address these problems, the System Restructuring Project (AICE PJ) was launched in February 2002, based on a new development method that involved building a conceptual data model, which accurately reflects business processes first, and then planning the system architecture based on that data model. The resulting project increased productivity of system development, improved customer relationship management and increased business process efficiency. For example, the average response time of first contact decreased by 18 percent and billing costs were reduced by 20 percent.

Candidates for the awards were nominated and selected by professionals belonging to WITSA's member associations, with the exception of the WITSA Chairman's Award, which is awarded by the Chairman to a nominee from one of the other three categories. The Center for Digital Government, a national research and advisory institute, worked with WITSA to oversee the awards selection process.

About WITSA

The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) is a consortium of information technology (IT) industry associations from 67 economies around the world, representing over 90 percent of the world's IT market. As the global voice of the IT industry, WITSA is dedicated to advocating policies that advance industry growth and development; facilitating international trade and investment in IT products and services; strengthening WITSA's national industry associations; providing members with a broad network of contacts; and overseeing the World Congress on Information Technology, the premier industry sponsored global IT policy event.