

ETECSA and its development, always looking for a greater connectivity

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Mayra Arevich Marín, CEO of ETECSA (Cuban Telephone Company), said that, while the company is responsible for the development of the infrastructure and services within the informatization program, the latter was accelerated in the last few months by the high demands of communications and especially, by the Covid-19 expansion nationwide.

*"We must highlight that all workers who guarantee the company services have been working tirelessly amid this pandemic to achieve the infrastructure upgrading and telecommunications services, responding to the demands and dynamics imposed by Covid-19,"* argued Arevich.

With the measures adopted to stop the pandemic, residential areas demanded more communications. Mobile data traffic grew exponentially in 3.9% in 2020. All these made the deployment dynamics changed and so we evolved rapidly, detailed the executive.

In 2020, 619,000 new services were created, totaling 6,661 million users with mobile lines. 816 new base stations were installed. As of today, 4,181 radio bases are deployed across the country, with 3,320 of them for 2G and 3G networks, plus 861 for LTE, a relatively-new technology in Cuba with just a year and a half of exploitation.

Arevich commented that 157 municipal seats were already offering the 4G network service by the end of February. However, the other 10 municipal seats should be enjoying this service by the end of April of this year. ETECSA's goal is to enhance its traffic capacity where needed.

Nearly 40% of the population in Cuba enjoys 4G network, almost 71% enjoys 3G network, while 85% enjoys 2G network. 4,421 citizens have already the internet service in their cellphones. However, we expect to grow in 300,000 new services.

1,250 million users connected to the Internet via WiFi, Nauta Hogar, and navigation rooms in 2020, according to the information given at the TV program Mesa Redonda. In 2021, the company foresees to grow in 1,310 million

users via fixed broadband, which is a highly demanded service among the population.

Over the past year, more than 45,000 Nauta Hogar services were done. Therefore, 189,700 homes in Cuba already enjoyed this service by the end of 2020. Soon, a new service for homes, which will work with wireless LTE network, will be provided. ETECSA will also use fiber technologies to houses and apartment buildings without leaving the ADSL technologies aside, which will allow to make the most out the copper already deployed.

About the connectivity in state-owned companies, which affect directly the economy of the country, Arevich noted that this is the best opportunity to expand the e-commerce, science, education, and the rest of sectors. There are today 51,100 institutional connectivity links and the goal is to reaching 56,000.

Transfermovil was another subject addressed. This is a six-years-old platform for managing payment and was recently awarded with the innovation award. ETECSA's CEO also highlighted 1,75 users had signed up to Transfermovil by the end of February, averaging 31,5 million transactions monthly, 13 operations per every second.

She gave more information and said that the ONAT payment, recharges of mobile lines and Nauta, the payment of the electricity and telephone bills, as well as the payment of shops' services online, are its most popular services. In 2021, it is expected the addition of new services such as the payment of fines, cultural, sports, and gastronomic booking, the *Bulevar* commercialization, *Mi Transfer* series of shops, the implementation of *Bolsa Etecsa (ETECSA Bundle)* and the Virtual Wallet, as well as the commercialization of *ToDus* and *Picta* platforms.

ETECSA will continue to work in the coming months in the deployment of technologies that favor the broadband internet access to improve connectivity in the institutional sector and in natural people. More than 50,000 broadband services in residential areas will be created and more than 32,000 wireless, the LTE network will cover all municipalities, and 50% of people councils.

Likewise, the company will continue to work in projects of connectivity of high economic and social impact, as ETECSA has been doing so far in times of pandemic along with the Ministry of Higher Education, Biocubafarma, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Public Health.

The service portfolio will be enhanced and diversified aimed at achieving higher levels of accessibility to the cell phones and Internet services. As a new service, there will be available new plans of voice mobile telephony, SMS, and Internet data; in addition to a growth in the services of the Data Center, the virtual server for natural people as well as online video conference.

Another goal is to foster the development of e-commerce in the country with the company acting as the coordinator entity among different sectors and entities, while advising with good practices and experiences gained.

As new creations, the company will launch Bulevar Mi Transfer, payment systems in ETECSA's sales offices with QR codes, ETECSA Bundle, Virtual Wallet, and ETECSA virtual store. Besides, the company will continue upgrading the infrastructure of platforms EnZONA and Transfermovil.

Similarly, the company will work hard to build alliances with suppliers of applications and services that make possible the diversification of offers in this new digital era as well as strengthening the work with companies in the same industry, universities, and research centers.

**Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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