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Telkom FutureMakers unveils Eastern Cape business incubation centre.

Telkom today unveiled a partnership with Eastern Cape business incubation centre Propella FutureMakers Hub in Port Elizabeth. This is the second business incubation centre to be unveiled under FutureMakers, Telkom's enterprise development programme, after the Bandwidth Barn in Cape Town.

"The heart of the FutureMakers mission is to enable, empower and inspire entrepreneurs, particularly within technology, by providing ongoing support and coaching, in order to grow young, small businesses into big businesses," said Ian Russell, Telkom's chief administration officer. "Ultimately, by supporting innovation throughout the technology sector, we can create jobs, improve digital access and develop a stable and competitive supply chain."

In May 2015, Telkom announced it would invest more than R100 million into FutureMakers, an initiative supporting entrepreneurship and business development within the technology sector. Since then, the FutureMakers Fund, which provides seed capital to entrepreneurs, has invested more than R28 million in seven companies. In addition, FutureMakers is supporting and training more than 600 entrepreneurs through business incubation programmes in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth.

As part of the Propella sponsorship, Telkom has installed a dedicated 100MB fibre link. This is the fastest business data line available in the Eastern Cape, and can download a 2MB movie or equivalent in just 25 seconds. The high-speed line will help accelerate the establishment of successful new businesses in the Eastern Cape.

"This fibre link will enable local tech entrepreneurs working on app development to have adequate connectivity and capacity. In addition, our advanced manufacturing enterprises will be able to share engineering files and collaborate with other entrepreneurs around the world," says Wayne Oosthuizen, managing director of Engeli Enterprises.

Engeli manages the Propella hub in partnership with Innovolve, the commercialisation company of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU).

"Having the Propella Futuremakers Hub will help keep our highly sought-after computer science and information systems graduates in the metro," says Jaci Barnett, chief executive officer of Innovolve and chairperson of the Propella board. "It is important that we retain the skills in order to grow the economy of our city in order to create sustainable jobs," she says.

Alumni from the mechatronics, engineering and chemistry departments are also being encouraged to stay and develop their own advanced manufacturing businesses by the support being offered at the Propella Business Incubator.

"In the converged world of what is known as Business 4.0, it is as important for manufacturers to have high-speed data connections as it is for them to have the research back-up and equipment that we provide through the Propella programme," she says.

The same data speeds are being made available to businesses in Port Elizabeth and surrounds.

Other Propella sponsors, in addition to Telkom FutureMakers, include the Industrial Development Corporation, BASF and General Motors South Africa.

Propella's objective is to support and grow local manufacturing business opportunities resulting from research and development being conducted at the NMMU. Sectors include renewable energy generation, energy efficiency and related technologies, advanced manufacturing, creative arts and textiles.

Businesses accepted into Propella are offered office and factory space and business support services. Propella can accommodate up to 10 technology start-up businesses on its premises per year, and will expose up to 1150 individuals annually to training, pre-incubation, hackathons, incubation and other entrepreneurial initiatives.

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As of 30 September 2015, we had approximately 3.3 million telephone access lines in service and 1,030,441 ports connected via MSAN access. We offer business, residential and payphone customers a wide range of services and products, including:

- fixed-line retail voice services using PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) lines, including ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) lines, and the sale of subscription based value-added voice services and calling plans;
- fixed-line customer premises equipment rental and sales services both voice and data needs and these include PABX, Computers, Routers, Modems, Telephone handsets and other ancillary equipment;

- interconnection services, including terminating and transiting traffic from South African mobile operators, as well as from international operators and transiting traffic from mobile to international destinations;
- fixed-line data services, including domestic and international data transmission services, such as point-to-point leased lines, ADSL (Asymmetrical Digital Subscriber Line) services, packet-based services, managed data networking services and internet access and related information technology services;
- Data Centre Operations includes e-commerce, application service provider, hosting, data storage, e-mail and security services;
- W-CDMA (Wideband Code Division Multiple Access), a 3G next generation network, including fixed voice services, data services and nomadic voice services;
- mobile communication services, including voice services, data services and handset sales through our mobile navbar-brand called Telkom Mobile;
- information and communication services including cloud services, infrastructure services, workspace services, global service integration management and hardware and network equipment sales locally, in seven African countries, the UK and Dubai through Business Connexion Group; and
- other services including directory services, through Trudon (Pty) Ltd, wireless data services, through Swiftnet (Pty) Ltd.
- Convergence is one of our key strategic initiatives in building a sustainable future for Telkom. We will lead the provision of converged services in South Africa in support of our mission statement: Seamlessly connecting people to a better life.