

# Etisalat Lanka expands coverage

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Etisalat Lanka initiated a network expansion programme. The expansion will cover 480 new 2G sites, taking Etisalat's standing in the Island to the top spot in 2G coverage, with a total of 1580 sites. This includes all urban areas as well as steady expanding to the North East.

The venture will introduce advanced 3G technology with HSPA+ (evolved high speed packet access). The expansion also supports the latest in value added services (VAS), billing and all IT/communication services.

Etisalat Lanka has mandated Alcatel Lucent, as the official vendor for this network expansion. Being their current network vendor, both parties are glad to continue their ongoing liaison in providing the best for consumers island wide. Roland Reynier, Country Manager, Alcatel Lucent said, "Alcatel is very happy to be selected to continue as the vendor for Etisalat, enabling us to be a part of the deployment of the latest European technology into Sri Lanka."

The project started off on a cost of US\$ 163 mn and extended over the period of the next six months.

Speaking of the expansion plan, Duminda Ratnayaka, Director/CEO of Etisalat Lanka said, "this is the project that will take this company into great heights. This is a fully funded project with very attractive terms, given Etisalat Lanka's virtually debt free profile, and high credit ratings of the UAE based parent company." Notably, the latest ratings by Fitch affirmed Etisalat at 'A+', while S & P raised Etisalat UAE's ratings from 'AA-' to 'A-1+', Ratnayaka added. "The project will take Etisalat Lanka closer to achieving our ultimate goals of moving forward, providing unsurpassable services and reaching out to our consumers, it is yet another instance of Etisalat Lanka raising the bar, just for you," he further stated.