

ISPs invited to join Telkom's high-speed pilot

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Telkom has agreed to include some members of the Internet Service Providers Association (Ispa) into its high speed broadband trials, it said on Friday, 28 September 2012.

Last month Ispa criticised Telkom for its decision not to allow its members to participate in the trial to test digital subscriber line (DSL) services of 20 megabits per second (Mbps) and 40Mbps.

It claimed that the trial would provide a competitive advantage to Telkom's subsidiary Telkom Internet, allowing it to obtain knowledge of the new services not available to its competitors, while gaining market share in the highly competitive market.

Telkom decided not to include the organisation's members in its trials citing technical reasons and the need to "balance inclusion against their desired outcomes".

Last Friday, Telkom said, following its discussions with Ispa representatives it agreed to include MWeb, Internet Solutions, WebAfrica and Cybersmart together with Telkom Internet in the pilot. This means that certain of the other ISP's customers will now be eligible to experience the higher speeds for the duration of the pilot, said Telkom.

The pilot will run until the end of January 2013. Telkom's new broadband network will offer far greater download speeds, which will eradicate the time-wasting buffering of YouTube videos to which Internet users have become accustomed.

The pilot will also serve to validate and test service fulfilment and assurance processes, assess field technical and operational readiness and evaluate the customer experience at a set service configuration.

Telkom unveiled the programme earlier this month. It will be piloted in Benmore Gardens, Fourways and Waterkloof in Gauteng; Durban North in KwaZulu-Natal and Durbanville in the Western Cape.

Managing director of Telkom wholesale and networks, Bashier Sallie said, the parties had "agreed on key conditions that will ensure the original intent and timelines of the pilot are met".

Co-chairman of Ispa, Jaap Scholten said: "Ispa is very pleased that at the end of this meeting, a 'win-win' outcome was achieved with four of our members participating in the pilot. Telkom is currently finalising the participation criteria with these providers."

Sallie said interest from the industry "is a key barometer of demand for differentiated broadband in the country. The

industry recognises the step-change potential of Telkom's plans to revamp its broadband capability and the need to have aggressive time-lines on the trial duration with serious intent to make the new high speed broadband services commercially available as soon as possible."

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