

China moving 3G on its own

August 15 2005

The ability to set industry standards, a combination of power and pride, is a key objective for China to sustain its rise as a telecom powerhouse, and the country took a large step in that direction late last week with the announcement that Datang Mobile and Alcatel Shanghai Bell had completed the industrialization processes for TD-SCDMA products and were ready to deliver them to market. TD-SCDMA is China's indigenous technology standard for third-generation mobile telecom. It will compete with CDMA2000 from the United States and with Europe's version, WCDMA.

"Through its partnership with Datang mobile, Alcatel Shanghai Bell is now ready to provide an end-to-end TD-SCDMA solution, including core, access, application platform and terminals," the state-run Xinhua reported Friday.

A news release issued by the two companies said the completion of TD-SCDMA was the "most significant milestone up to date in achieving full commercial deployment" since they formed a partnership to develop TD-SCDMA in November 2004.

Analysts note the Ministry of Information Industry, the Chinese government's regulatory body responsible for telecom, has devoted considerable time, energy and resources into the development of the country's own technology and industrial process standards. The policy goal is provide greater market independence for China in telecom, an industry providing jobs as well as benchmark of a nation's technical competence. A thumbnail sketch of China's mobile telecom history

during the first two generations of cell phones (analog and GSM) was one of foreign predominance in products, technology and manufacturing processes. China used market access as the means to gain a technological foothold. Now Chinese regulators want to take the next step by setting the technology standards foreign firms will have to license. Xinhua noted, "China's launch of 3G depends on the viability of TD-SCDMA."

Tang Ru'an, the president of Datang Mobile, was quoted as saying "successful cooperation between Alcatel Shanghai Bell and Datang Mobile on industrialization will advance the progress of TD-SCDMA in China." Gerard Dega, Alcatel Shanghai Bell's president, said, "Through a close partnership with Datang Mobile, we are well positioned to support our customers in China's 3G market regardless of the standard they decide to adopt."

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Citation: China moving 3G on its own (2005, August 15) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-08-china-3g.html>

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