

## **The Global Leaders' Forum launches Communications Blockchain Network (CBN)**

*11 carriers invest in the set-up of a blockchain enabled settlement platform supported by over 10 technology partners*

**Embargoed - Atlanta, GA, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019** – The ITW Global Leaders' Forum (“GLF”) today announced that it is launching a live, blockchain-based platform, which will revolutionise the ICT Service Provider industry's commercial settlement infrastructure, representing an opportunity worth billions to the global industry from costs savings and revenues from new products and services.

The CBN, which is expected to go live in the coming months, will be governed by a collaborative structure. Several carriers have already agreed to support the establishment of the platform, with A1 Telekom Austria, China Telecom Global, Colt Technology Services, Deutsche Telekom Global Carrier, IDT, Orange, PCCW Global, Tata Communications, Telefonica, Telstra and TNZI all agreeing collaboration to ensure this blockchain-based, special purpose mechanism can become a reality. The GLF is also inviting every ICT Service Provider to join the CBN without any prerequisite.

The GLF is also announcing that it will partner with leading technology providers to develop the reference architecture and support the creation of an open ecosystem for both ICT Service Providers and technology vendors. Over 10 technology providers have already confirmed their support for the platform and their intention to participate in its development, including Amartus, Clear Blockchain Technologies, ConsenSys, CSG and their Wholesale business, Difitek, IBM, Internet Mobile Communications, Orbs, R3, Subex, Syniverse, and TOMIA, with more to be announced.

Blockchain, or distributed ledger technology (“DLT”), can provide significant benefits that will transform inter-service provider settlement processes by enabling automation and improving security. DLT-based automation can facilitate carriers to settle new types of traffic, underpinning network and service innovation, and save costs.

The objective for the platform, and the collaborative industry-wide governance framework, is to serve the wider ICT community by avoiding fragmentation and thus help accelerate the adoption of automated settlement applications. The new environment will facilitate development of open-source standards and APIs that enable service-provider interoperability of DLT-enabled services, and manage critical infrastructure elements of the platform.

Louisa Gregory, leading the GLF working group on blockchain and Chief of Staff of Colt, said: “For the past 14 months the GLF and its partners have been putting rigour and processes behind this platform and we believe that now is the time to launch. The blockchain-based ecosystem has been tested with resounding success at every stage, and we believe that this platform signals nothing less than the future of ICT financial settlement.”

Marc Halbfinger, Chair of the GLF and Chief Executive Officer of PCCW Global, said: “When we set out along this journey, it was our goal to launch a platform that would enable multi-dimensional automation for the betterment of the industry. Now we are embarking on the next stage of this process by creating a truly open platform that will facilitate settlement among every ICT Service Provider, including carriers and cloud providers for all forms of ICT traffic.”

Franz Bader, Director of Wholesale at A1 Telekom Austria said: “Making processes between carriers more efficient is only one of the huge potential benefits blockchain provides. Settlements will be our first step on that most promising path into the future. We are looking forward to many carriers joining us on that journey.”

Rolf Nafziger, SVP of Deutsche Telekom Global Carrier, said: “Smart contracts and blockchain have a huge potential not only to simplify and automate complex inter-carrier billing/settlement processes but also to handle the complexity added by new services like NB-IoT, VoLTE, etc. To avoid fragmentation, it is very

important that we move and work together as an industry. We therefore highly welcome and actively support the GLF initiative of an interoperable carrier blockchain network”

Nick Ford, President of IDT's Carrier Services, said "IDT is pleased to be part of the working group creating the GLF CBN. To focus on value for our customers, we all need to reduce the friction and costs of the back office. The CBN will be a platform to automate much of the basics between carrier partners, identify discrepancies before they become problems, and allow commercial, operations and finance teams to spend their time on elements of the business that make for differentiated service. We are happy to play a contributing role in pushing the industry towards blockchain settlement."

Emmanuel Rochas, CEO of Orange International Carriers, said “Orange has been involved from the start of the Blockchain initiative. The launch of this blockchain based-platform with 10 other carriers is a significant advancement in business development and a new way of working towards the optimisation of telecom settlements processes.”

Juan Carlos Bernal, CEO of International Wholesale Business for Telefonica, said “Blockchain will continue to deliver significant benefits across the entire wholesale sector. This important step forward showcases these real and tangible benefits from this technology and is also a positive reflection of the wider adoption of innovation in our sector.”

Jussi Makela, Director of GLF said: “From very early on, the GLF recognised the importance of the right governance structure to provide certainty to the whole industry that the platform will be open, inclusive, independent and conducive of innovation. We are confident we have the right framework in place and we are excited to welcome every ICT Service Provider to participate in the development of the platform.”

## **About the ITW Global Leaders' Forum s**

The ITW Global Leaders' Forum (GLF) is a global network of leaders from the world's largest International Carriers, who convene to discuss strategic issues and to agree collaborative activities, with the aim of upholding the principle of interoperability and ubiquitous international and technological coverage.

The mission of the GLF is to be *“the voice of the global carrier industry providing leadership and direction to interconnect the digital world”*. This encapsulates the ultimate aim of the GLF, and its members, which is to enable consumers and enterprises to communicate and transact for any service or application, on any device and any infrastructure, in any geography, thus enabling the globalisation of business and the closure of the digital divide.

The International Carrier industry is a critical part of the global ecosystem, providing the backbone that enables digital services to be distributed around the world. The GLF's primary objective is to provide leadership and direction for the industry by advocating common priorities that will limit network fragmentation and improve interconnectivity so that new digital services can be delivered at scale anywhere in the world.

[www.itwglf.com](http://www.itwglf.com)

Press Contact:

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Jussi Makela, Director ITW Global Leaders' Forum  
+442077798245 [jmakela@capacitymedia.com](mailto:jmakela@capacitymedia.com)