

Sciencemed: A Cyber-City for New Companies in Algeria

By **Azzedine Bensouiah**

The Cyber Park will be the heart of Sidi Abdallah, the futuristic city that will appear at the gates of Algiers in 2020. The person in charge with the project, Sidi Ahmed Kerkouche, from the Ministry of Technology said that "the first centre for study and realisation of the cyber park, which will accept the first companies in an environment exclusively dedicated to communication technologies, will be operational by 2008".

This cyber space, which will expand over an entire neighbourhood of the city, a bridge between the zone dedicated to information and communication technologies (ICT) and the zone dedicated to scientific research and innovation, "will be a dynamic place created especially for the companies that need high tech infrastructures such as 'intelligent offices' and laboratories".

Sidi Abdallah, which is planned to become a centre similar to the Silicon Valley in the United States and the cyber city of Dubai (the United Arab Emirates), "will offer reasonable prices and tax rebates", Kerkouche explains adding that "it will be capable of attracting foreign investors". However it



Sidi Abdallah is planned to become a centre similar to the cyber city of Dubai

will not be a centre for international companies only. The new city which will be built 30km west of Algiers "will be an incubator for small and medium-sized Algerian companies, it will support the local telecommunications both

public and private". The objective is to create a strong ICT sector in Algeria capable of exporting throughout the world and stopping the 'brain drain' that is typical for the North African country and the African continent in general. "The

technology will be the key for the creation of new jobs and for the economic development of the entire north-western region of the country," the project's manager said. According to the Algerian authorities, the cyber park will

include an institute for telecommunications, an Internet agency, a technology school for deaf-mute, while the area reserved for scientific research will comprise a medical centre specialised in cardiovascular surgery. Launched in 1995 by the wilaya (Algerian regional administration) of Tipasa within the new urban plan, the project was entrusted in 1997 to the National Agency of the New City of Sidi Abdallah' and was approved by the government in 2004.

The new city, which is being developed by Chinese and German companies, will cover a surface of 3,000 hectares and will be surrounded by a perimeter of 4,000 hectares destined to agricultural terrains and conceived to preserve the agricultural character of the region. The city will be 25 minutes away from the capital and 40 minutes away from the international airport. It will also help relieve Algiers from the traffic becoming home to 200,000 people, who will live in the specially built 50,000 residences. Some 25% of the urban space will be covered with green areas.

The city will also have luxurious hotels, a golf course, an auditorium as well as research centres, laboratories, design and architecture studios.

MSN gains new Maghreb portal



By **Quintin Smith**

Microsoft has launched a new French-language Maghreb portal for its MSN service, which will provide up-to-the-minute news and entertainment for its users in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria.

The project is a joint venture with LINKdotNET, managing operators of MSN Arabia and a subsidiary of Orascom. The announcement was made by Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer and Orascom board member Khalid Bichara at a press conference in Skhirat.

The companies have stated that their co-operation forms a combination of the local media expertise of LINKdotNET with the global expertise and content relationships of Microsoft.

At the conference Balmer commented that "With a large population of young people who are making the online world a bigger and bigger part of their daily

lives... the Maghreb region is a very attractive market for Microsoft.

By integrating MSN and Windows Live, MSN Maghreb will provide seamless access to compelling content and services and deliver a large and engaged audience for local advertisers".

Orascom CEO Naguib Sawiris added: "The rapid growth of the Internet has created an extremely sophisticated market in the Maghreb region, one which expects new, creative and interactive online services. The market is primed for the kind of rich, interactive services that the MSN Maghreb portal offers and will become a daily part of how online users work, live and play."

Microsoft and LINKdotNET launched the first MSN regional portal, MSN Arabia, way back in October 2001. The site is now attracting two million page views a day as the region's 2.7 million Hotmail subscribers log in to MSN.

Agreement between Tunisie Telecom and Capgemini Group



Ahmed Mahjoub, "Tunisie Telecom" Chairman and managing director, and Laurent Bally, representative of Capgemini group, world leader of management and information technology consultancy services, signed, in Tunis, a contract for the development of a new system of Telecom invoicing. This new system will allow "Tunisie Telecom" to further develop its billing services and better manage its customers' accounts.

This project, worth several million Dinars, will also see the contribution of LHS Company, as a sub-contracting party which will bring logistic and professional support for the achievement of this project. Other Tunisian specialised companies in the information technology field will also take part in carrying out this project. Laurent Bally said the Capgemini Group is proud to sign this contract with the leader of telecommunications in Tunisia, expressing his readiness to offer a new platform of high-technology billing and an efficient tool for Tunisie Telecom which is seeking to be the preferred service-provider of all Tunisians.