Open interfaces between the remote radio unit/head (RRU/RRH), the baseband unit (BBU) and the operation and management (OAM) interface simplifies interoperability between suppliers.

Palo Alto, CA - April 12, 2018 - The xRAN Forum (xRAN) today announced the Board’s approval and public availability of the xRAN Fronthaul Specification Version 1.0 – the first specification made publicly available from xRAN since its launch in October 2016. The specification has been designed to allow a wide range of vendors to develop innovative, best-of-breed RRU and BBUs for a wide range of deployment scenarios, which can be easily integrated with virtualized infrastructure & management systems using standardized data models.

The new specification delivers on important operator member requirements. All xRAN operator members extend well deserved credit and gratitude to the xRAN members who made contributions and facilitated strong collaboration within the xRAN Forum Front Haul Working Group, chaired by Verizon Communication.

“Our vision to develop, standardize and promote an open alternative to the traditionally closed, hardware-based RAN architecture is becoming a reality,” said Dr. Sachin Katti, Professor at Stanford University and Director of the xRAN Forum. “Our operator members have been very focused and clear on requirements and our ecosystem of contributing members have risen to the challenge. The Fonthaul Specification is the first of several open interface specifications we expect to be released in 2018.”

“The release of the xRAN Fronthaul Specification is a groundbreaking advancement toward enabling an open RAN architecture to support next-generation products and services,” said Bill Stone, Vice President, Network Technology Development and Planning at Verizon. “xRAN compliant radios coupled with virtualized basebands provide much needed flexibility to support rapid development and deployment of RAN products. By adopting xRAN specifications, we will be able to speed innovation, increase collaboration, and be more agile to a quickly evolving market.”

“We are pleased to have worked with xRAN members in reaching the key milestone of delivering the first open xRAN fronthaul specification,” said Dr. Hiroshi Nakamura, EVP and CTO of NTT DOCOMO. “We believe that the completion and publication of this specification will contribute in further advancing the RAN and in expanding the ecosystem in the 5G era. DOCOMO will keep contributing to this activity with the experience we had in realizing multi-vendor interoperable RAN with our partners using common interfaces for our LTE network.”

“The xRAN Fronthaul Specification is a foundational component in the xRAN architectural vision and vital to accelerating the worldwide deployment of next-generation RAN infrastructure network operators demand,” said Alex Jinsung Choi, SVP Research & Technology Innovation, Deutsche Telekom. “Going forward, by connecting these specification activities to the broad architectural scope in ORAN, we can ensure the implementations across a wider community of suppliers to promote both innovation and open market competition.”

“xRAN’s release of this jointly-developed open specification creates the first wave of a positive sea change for our industry, transforming the way next-generation RAN infrastructure will be built, managed and optimized,” said Andre Fuetsch, CTO and President AT&T Labs. “Equipment that supports open specifications from xRAN (and ORAN in the future), combined with increasing RAN virtualization and data-
driven intelligence, will allow carriers to reduce complexity, innovate more quickly and significantly reduce deployment and operational costs."

The xRAN Forum fosters a growing ecosystem of innovative and interoperable RAN products catering to the varied needs of the Forum’s operator members. Interfaces defined by the xRAN Fronthaul Specification enable efficient deployment of advanced technologies like Massive MIMO & Virtualized RAN with support for LTE and NR. The xRAN Fronthaul Specification addresses several key operator-defined requirements, including:

- BBU - RU interoperability based on well specified control, user and management plane interfaces.
- Efficient bandwidth scaling as a function of user throughput and spatial layers to address increasing bandwidth needs and Massive MIMO deployments.
- Support for LTE, NR, associated features, 2T - 8T RU products and Massive MIMO beamforming antenna systems.
- Advanced receivers and co-ordination functions.
- Ethernet based transport layer solutions.
- Extensible data models for management functions to simplify integration.

A white paper detailing the specification is available on the xRAN website along with a registration link to download the complete specification.

About xRAN Forum
The xRAN Forum was formed to develop, standardize and promote an open alternative to the traditionally closed, hardware-based RAN architecture. xRAN fundamentally advances RAN architecture in three areas – decouples the RAN control plane from the user plane, builds a modular eNB software stack that operates on common-off-the-shelf (COTS) hardware and publishes open north- and south-bound interfaces to the industry.

Since its founding the xRAN Forum has gained tremendous industry momentum with leadership from operators AT&T, Deutsche Telekom, KDDI, NTT DOCOMO, SK Telecom, Telstra and Verizon. At the same time, xRAN has grown its contributing member base with strong representation from the vendor community including: AltioStar, Amdocs, Aricent, ASOCS, Blue Danube, Ciena, Cisco, Commscope, Fujitsu, Intel, Mavenir, NEC, Netsia, Nokia, Radisys, Samsung, Stanford University, Texas Instruments and University of Sydney.

For more information about xRAN Forum membership go to xran.org/membership or email info@xran.org

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