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Groundtruth partnership with Orange, Sierra Wireless, and NOKIA to demonstrate how next-generation wireless protocols can help smallholder farmers in the developing world

WASHINGTON, DC - Groundtruth announces a partnership with Orange, Sierra Wireless, and NOKIA to test a new, ultra-low power communication protocol in its weather stations. This partnership will enable deployment of smart weather stations that monitor agricultural conditions via the cloud and can be used to help smallholder farmers adapt to climate change in rural areas with 2G cellular coverage. Over 900 million users access the internet via global 2G networks¹.

Named Extended Coverage GSM (EC-GSM-IoT), this protocol piggybacks on existing 2G networks and is specifically designed for Internet-of-Things (IoT) devices to be deployed in rural areas with limited 3G or 4G connectivity. Groundtruth will conduct a demonstration of its technology with EC-GSM-IoT as part of the GSMA Innovation City in Hall 4 at the 2017 Mobile World Congress in Barcelona February 27-March 2.

According to Nicolas Damour, Senior Manager, Business and Innovation Development at Sierra Wireless: "The latest revolution in 4G technologies for the IoT, LTE-M and NB-IoT, will enable Cellular IoT Solutions to serve billions of devices rather than millions thanks to their Power Optimization and their Extended Coverage features. However, 4G service will remain evasive in a lot of places in the world, which is why we believe that the 2G EC-GSM-IoT technology, that provides Power Optimization and Extended Coverage too, will be extremely valuable."

"With IoT emerging as one of the key drivers of growth for the operators, GSM will surely be amongst its key enablers, owing to its wide reach and affordability. We believe that EC-GSM-IoT has all the essential ingredients for the successful adoption of IoT, be it coverage, extended battery life, seamless integration or low device cost," said Andy M. Smith, Head of Business Product Management, GSM, MN Products at Nokia.

Groundtruth's low-cost weather stations collect granular weather and agronomic data. These data cross-validate crowdsourced rainfall reporting from farmers against global satellite imagery for better disaster response, climate models, and validation of global weather datasets. They also support more effective financial instruments such as weather insurance for smallholder farmers. By combining multiple data streams, Groundtruth provides a data management platform that offers weather data at a higher frequency and resolution that satellite data alone can provide.

"We are excited to be testing this range extending technology that brings the possibility of cloud-managed agricultural decision support to new areas. This partnership brings new technology with global reach and allows us to collect data further into rural farming areas. More data and analysis can only help us better tackle big problems facing global food security such as climate change and water availability," said Ralph Lin, Principal at Groundtruth.

¹ GSMA Digital Inclusion Report, 2014