



Microsoft and Viasat announce new partnership to deliver internet access to underserved communities globally

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New collaboration through the Microsoft Airband Initiative will increase internet availability for 5 million people across Africa and an additional 5 million people around the world by the end of 2025

REDMOND, Wash., Dec. 14, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- On Wednesday, Microsoft Corp. (NASDAQ: MSFT) and Viasat (NASDAQ: VSAT) announced a new partnership to help deliver internet access to 10 million people around the globe, including 5 million across Africa. Viasat, a global communications company, is the first satellite partner to work with [Microsoft's Airband Initiative](#), and together they will deepen Airband's work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States, as well as prioritize expanding the program to Egypt, Senegal and Angola to deliver much-needed internet connection, often for the first time.



This first of its kind global partnership for Airband is an important step in reaching the Initiative's expanded goal of delivering internet access to a quarter of a billion people across the world, including 100 million people on the continent of Africa, by the end of 2025.

According to the International Telecommunication Union at the UN, [roughly one third of the world's population](#) — or 2.7 billion people — have still never used the internet. Satellite allows internet access to reach remote areas that previously have had few, if any, options for conventional connectivity. Working together, the companies will combine expertise and assets to help enable telehealth, distance learning and education, precision agriculture, clean power, and other services to reach new areas through the transformational provision of power and connectivity. The companies will collaborate to provide and pilot technologies including, but not limited to, satellites (both geostationary orbit and low earth orbit) and fixed wireless.

"We believe access to the internet is a fundamental right and that digital skills create and enable economic prosperity for people, businesses and governments. Through our Airband Initiative we will extend high-speed internet access to 100 million people on the continent of Africa and to a quarter of a billion people living in unserved and underserved areas across the world by 2025," said Teresa Hutson, Microsoft's vice president of Technology and Corporate Responsibility. "Working with Viasat, we will use satellite to reach remote areas that previously have had few, if any, options for conventional connectivity. Together, we will be able to rapidly scale and expand Airband's reach, exploring a wider pipeline of projects and new countries where we haven't yet worked."

Nearly one third of the world's population is lacking online access to education, better medical care, business opportunities, connection with family and more. And most of this population lives in just 20 countries across Africa and the Global South. Universal, affordable internet access is part of the United Nations' [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), and by focusing a large portion of this new partnership on Africa, Microsoft and Viasat are working to deliver connectivity and digital literacy for better education, healthcare and economic opportunity in critical markets.

"We're proud to partner with Microsoft as it represents another important step in bringing affordable internet service across Africa, Latin America and the U.S., as both companies continue to break down barriers to bridge the digital divide and make significant progress toward digital equity and inclusion," said Evan Dixon, President, Global Fixed Broadband of Viasat. "Providing internet access to the world is a challenging and bold goal, and doing so in a sustainable and responsible manner will unlock enduring opportunities for those who need it most."

Through Airband, Microsoft and its partners have already delivered high-speed internet access to more than 51 million people globally, including over 4 million in unserved U.S. rural communities and an additional 47 million in 16 unserved and underserved countries outside the U.S. Launched in 2017, Microsoft's Airband Initiative works through partnerships with local and regional internet and energy access providers, telecom equipment makers and nonprofits, as well as governmental and nongovernmental organizations, to advance access to affordable internet and relevant digital skills around the world. Microsoft believes access to the internet is a fundamental right for everyone.

Viasat is a global communications company and an innovator in satellite communications technologies and services, focused on making connectivity accessible, available and secure for all. Today, Viasat is connecting unserved and underserved communities around the world, many for the first time ever.

This partnership builds upon the [existing relationship between Viasat and Microsoft Azure Space](#) to deliver advances in satellite connectivity and furthers Microsoft's mission to connect anyone, anywhere on the planet. To learn more about the partnership and keep up to date with our projects and initiatives, visit <http://www.microsoft.com/airband>.

Viasat is a global communications company that believes everyone and everything in the world can be connected. For more than 35 years, Viasat has helped shape how consumers, businesses, governments and militaries around the world communicate. Today, the Company is developing the ultimate global communications network to power high-quality, secure, affordable, fast connections to impact people's lives anywhere they are—on the ground, in the air or at sea. To learn more about Viasat, visit: www.viasat.com, go to [Viasat's Corporate Blog](#), or follow the Company on social media at: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) or [YouTube](#).

Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT" @microsoft) enables digital transformation for the era of an intelligent cloud and an intelligent edge. Its mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.

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