Solar energy and cellular IoT deployment in the spotlight at AWS Summit

Eseye and SolarNow showcase power of connected technology to change lives

The Amazon Web Services (AWS) Cape Town summit which took place on 11 July at the Cape Town International Convention Centre featured global IoT cellular connectivity specialists Eseye together with SolarNow to provide insight into the latest, simplest ways IoT devices can be deployed onto AWS.

SolarNow, a social business passionate about transforming lives by providing high quality solar energy, appliances and financing solutions in East Africa successfully utilised IoT, while also integrating M2M cellular connectivity and AWS Cloud within its solutions to provide more and better services to SolarNow customers. As market leaders in IoT M2M connectivity solutions, Eseye offered a highly secure and reliable global multi-Network cellular network data through the AnyNet Secure™ SIM, with seamless integration onto the AWS Cloud.

The SIM's enhanced features enabled SolarNow to remotely and securely activate, provision, authenticate and certify deployed devices over-the-air, in up to 190 countries. By leveraging the power of connected technology SolarNow could address the unmet need for sustainable, quality solar energy through the provision of solar powered equipment, appliances and services to remote or off-grid home, farm, school, health centre and business locations. In addition, IoT and M2M capabilities further empowered SolarNow to become completely self-reliant and secure in connecting and managing its growing product portfolio.

Eseye's team, led by co-founder Paul Marshall, was joined on stage at the AWS Summit by Herman Dijkslag, SolarNow's Product Development Manager, to demonstrate how a new and advanced use of cellular for AWS is disrupting IoT's traditional deployment models. Together, the team demonstrated one of the most advanced and simplified cellular IoT use cases in the field today.

Solar has become an increasingly vital energy source for off-grid populations in the East African region; in part as an alternative to hazardous kerosene lamps, but also as means of harnessing the significant economic, social and health benefits, and entrepreneurial business opportunities reliable power sources provide.

Having worked with developers at SolarNow, Eseye also created software and supplied a reference design, which could simply be copied onto the circuit board of the microprocessor, which sits on a solar controller to SolarNow's solutions. "By taking a proven design and effectively copying it into its devices, SolarNow successfully made

the transition from a non-connected to a connected product offering, to take full advantage of the capabilities of IoT. Not only was this an avenue for huge growth potential but also greatly enhanced SolarNow's customer service offering," explains Jeremy Potgieter, SADC regional head, Eseye.

SolarNow was also able to improve other key elements of its offering by analysing enhanced system data to communicate with clients in the event of an issue with their device. System data also allowed SolarNow to build a more complete picture of their customer in order to develop product value. SolarNow says that by turning to cellular connectivity the company was able to remotely monitor the performance of its solar system. a key level of capability needed to alleviate any concerns over connectivity and which was needed for SolarNow to continue its drive to grow the use of solar as a central energy source across East Africa.

Potgieter says SolarNow successfully utilised IoT in a move that was pivotal for the company and its customers. "The power of connected technology to solve issues and truly change lives across Africa, by enabling service provision for even the most remote or disempowered members of its communities, cannot be underestimated."