



# MAGYAR TELEKOM

## FROM RED TO GREEN





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*Since Hungary emerged from Soviet control, Magyar Telekom has been making rapid progress towards sustainability, recently earning an A+ rating from the Global Reporting Initiative*

**WRITTEN BY: JEFF DANIEL  
RESEARCH BY: DAVID BROGAN**







Germany's "T" brand is popular in Hungary

After more than four decades of Soviet control, the late 1980s saw a whole swathe of Eastern Bloc countries again become the masters of their own destiny. In Hungary, the transition occurred in 1989 and within just a few months, the country's infrastructure was being modernised.

The road to where the communications network is today began when Hungarian Post was split into three and the telephone service hived off as the separate state owned company Matáv Hungarian Telecommunications. In 1993, the service went private and a consortium of two telecommunications companies, Deutsche Telekom and Ameritech International acquired a controlling interest and Magyar Telekom was born. Under the guidance of Deutsche Telecom, the German's "T" brand was promoted to a Hungarian populace itching to catch up with the rest of the industrialised world.

With such a backlog of technological catching up to do, you'd hardly be surprised if observing the niceties wasn't so high on the agenda. And yet, barely into the first years of operation, Magyar Telekom had already put special emphasis on environmental protection.

Under the guidance of Katalin Szomolányi, head of the Corporate Sustainability Centre at Magyar Telekom, the business gained the distinction in 2007 of being awarded Hungary's first A+ rating, signifying it operates in full compliance with the third



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generation guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI G3).

“The company has had a Group-level Environment Protection Policy since 2003,” she says, “and sustainability has been on the agenda since 2004, meaning that in addition to

environmental considerations, social and economic dimensions also receive special attention. Our sustainability strategy has been in place since 2005 and not only does it have to be approved by each member of the



top management team, they have to commit themselves to implementing it.”

Since 2002, Magyar Telekom has been issuing regular environmental reports describing its environmental performance, a practice that then formed the basis

of the subsequent sustainability report. The implication of the higher level of compliance that comes with A+ rating is greater transparency and more opportunity for being judged.

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In order to encourage the same level of commitment and performance within its supply chain, Magyar Telekom has initiated an annual award to suppliers who demonstrate leadership in their own sustainability endeavours. "It's known as the Delfin (dolphin) Award," says Szomolányi, "and is an acronym for the Hungarian name of the initiative, which translates

into English as: Prize for a Committed, Sustainable, and Innovative Generation."

From its position as leader of the telecommunication industry, Magyar Telekom is setting examples which it wants others to follow in the harmonisation of business, social and environmental interests and in the process, reward suppliers for their help in achieving its sustainability goals. Applications can be made in one or more of four categories: innovations that have already been completed and which promote positive change in social and environmental effects; the promotion of equal opportunities



Katalin Szomolányi

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and anti-discriminatory practices; investments and developments aimed at climate protection; and training and education raising awareness about sustainability.

As an example of sustainability projects, aimed at benefitting society as a whole, Szomolányi describes the Digital Bridge initiative. "Certain sectors of society," she says, "are at risk of being left behind in the technical era.



This is not just a function of age or affluence but also location. Digital Bridge is directed towards isolated settlements of less than 3000 inhabitants, teaching people personally how the internet can be tailored for their own personal needs and interests for

them to have a more fulfilling way of life. The really rewarding aspect of this programme is that Magyar Telekom's employees participate on a voluntary basis

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laminated-glued timber tower family, which can be used for electric poles, advertising, lighting, or windmills. The 30 metre high prototypes are already operating as base stations. Our experienced team is now ready for the challenge of producing a 40 metre high wooden pole which blends into the surrounding landscape.

2010 was a successful year for Ecopol, when the Hungarian patented tower was granted design protection. Moreover, it won the Dolphin Award, nominated and awarded by Hungarian Telekom in the category of 'Innovation Came True'. The project gained recognition for setting an example in the field of sustainable growth by fulfilling all three pillars of sustainability in the environmental, economic and social dimensions.

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A Digital Bridge event

and since 2004 there have been more than 150 events involving thousands of people.”

Since 2008 Magyar Telekom has been holding an annual focus event, in conjunction with a number of NGOs, under the banner ‘Sustainability Day.’ The event has a complex agenda, serving multiple purposes. Interactive panels featuring group discussions on current issues regarding the environment, society and economy are led by prominent and well respected representatives of their related fields. Last year the environmental focus was on water, while poverty and responsible communication were the social and economic issues. The event also discussed how the role of volunteerism could be promoted.

The Sustainability Day, despite the fact that it is organized by a large corporation, differs in format and appearance from traditional branded events with the emphasis very much remaining on the topic and substance. The event is becoming more and more successful as years go by with participation doubling each year along with extensive increases in media coverage. From an initial attendance of 300 in 2008, the number of delegates grew to 3000 last year.

In a more commercially oriented programme, specifically aimed at doing business in a greener way—and with very measurable results—Magyar Telekom is encouraging the use of technology to remove the need for travel. In 2009 it installed TelePresence video-conferencing facilities at strategic sites within Hungary and at its international affiliates in Macedonia and Montenegro, as well as the majority owner

Deutsche Telekom. In the first year alone, the group saved 476,410 kilometres of flights by using this service. In the subsequent year it saved 1,368,361 km of international flights and 164 tons of carbon dioxide.

At the same time, audio and video-conferencing facilities with document sharing abilities were installed on all workstations enabling small groups of three or four staff to communicate without the need for travel. All in all, Magyar estimates that it saved almost 2,000,000 km of air or road travel that year alone.

In coming years, Magyar Telekom has

# 150

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Number of Digital Bridge  
events since 2004

set itself some ambitious targets for spreading the message, understanding and application of sustainability, throughout all levels of the organisation and within the wider community. “We want Magyar Telekom,”

says Szomolányi, “to be recognised by the public as the leading advocate of sustainability and to be admired for our championing actions.” **BE**

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RECOGNISED AS THE LEADING ADVOCATE  
OF SUSTAINABILITY AND TO BE ADMIRER  
FOR OUR CHAMPIONING ACTIONS”

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Magyar Telekom visit:  
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**MAGYAR TELEKOM**

1541 Budapest

T +36 1 458 0000

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