

*Karl Classen, President and CEO, ND Satcom*



*Dieter Dreizler, Director Sales, ND Satcom*



*Marc Logez, Director European Contribution Services, GlobeCast*

## Long-term sustainable partnership

ND SatCom has a long standing relationship with GlobeCast dating back some nine years. It has recently culminated in the delivery of the 50th satellite newsgathering vehicle to GlobeCast. Helen Jameson talks to key executives from both companies to see why the relationship has been so successful, and why the ND SatCom SNG product offering is one of the best available.

**Question: Congratulations on your long-standing partnership and the delivery of the 50th SNG vehicle to GlobeCast. Can I ask you when the relationship between ND SatCom and GlobeCast began and why?**

**Marc Logez:** We began working with ND SatCom in '99. So it's a long time ago and the beginning of our partnership was at first an RFP we got at GlobeCast regarding the launch of a French news channel and that required a solution with remote DSNG and that sort of equipment didn't exist at this time. They wanted to find a roof-to-roof solution. We tried to find a provider who would be able to help us to provide that kind of system. We finally found ND SatCom (it was not ND SatCom at this time) and very soon we developed a very good relationship. I would say from a customer-provider relationship with ND SatCom we moved very quickly to a technical partnership in order to be able to deliver 29 DSNG trucks based on very innovative technology.

**Karl Classen:** We started this co-operation before ND SatCom was founded. At that time

it was Nortel Dasa and our satellite communication team was a division in this joint venture. It was one of the major milestones that finally led to the formation of ND SatCom in the year 2000. Just one year after we built a big network solution together in France. And I remember this time very well. We received this order in April/May time and delivered to the channel in November. We delivered all 29 vehicles and provided training for the staff and they needed two or three people for each of these vehicles.

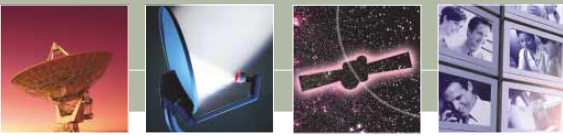
So it was a challenge to do this within the six months. And I think that, to this day, it's the biggest ever SNG network in one media contribution network. Before that big contract, we integrated some single SNGs, but after that we extended to many television companies in France. We have become also very active in Italy now and we are very much looking forward to extend our cooperation there too.

**Question: What does ND SatCom bring to the relationship with GlobeCast and its other customers and what benefits does**

**the strong partnership bring to both companies?**

**KC:** First of all ND SatCom is by far the European market leader for SNG especially in combining SNG in media networks via VSAT solutions. We use for this our well-known SkyWAN® technology and its features are able to manage such media networks very efficiently.

I believe we contribute three major elements: Firstly, we are used to working together with partners in a long-term sustainable partnership as we do with Globecast. This is a very good example of how we like to work with our partners – we know each other, we learn a lot about their requirements, and we know the sales and technical teams. So it is easy to work together and it is good for our customer base. Secondly, we have the capabilities and the equipment to provide sophisticated technology within the media industry. ND SatCom itself likes to provide VSAT solutions that address the specific demand of the customer to be served. We use our core VSAT technology SkyWAN®, but also within the SNG package



*Delivery of the 50th SNG vehicle to GlobeCast at ND SatCom headquarters in Friedrichshafen, Germany  
From left to right: ND SatCom Account Manager Gérard Elineau, GlobeCast Technical Manager Dominique Orain, ND SatCom Managing Director & CTO Dr. Gerhard Bommas and ND SatCom System Engineer Amir Lagumdzija.*

we have our own reliable products such as high power amplifiers or antenna control units. Many people have already known us since 2004 for our SkyRAY antenna subsystems.

We have in-house developed software systems such as the automatic pointing system that enables antenna pointing by one-button operation. It is very easy to handle for non-technical journalists and camera people. Except for this, presence is important. I think is important to be quite close to your customer and to have global expertise. ND SatCom has presence from China to the US and into Asia and the Middle East and we monitor the trends in markets all over the world and are able to combine them to give the most innovative technology solutions.

**Question: Mr. Logez, would you please explain why satellite provides such an effective form of newsgathering and how has it evolved over the years?**

**ML:** Satellite plus DSNG trucks or fly-aways are the ultimate tools for newsgathering. It is fast, reactive, you can use it everywhere and I think that now it's very, very common for any broadcaster to have its own equipment or to rent satellite equipment from a service

provider like Globecast. How it has evolved? I would say that it has advanced, of course, due to technological innovations. The first step was going from analogue to digital and then moving from MPEG2 to MPEG 4. The next big step will be IP. News channels don't only need equipment but also services. In 2007 what you can use has been improved since '99 but not so far, despite the fact that technology and needs are changing very quickly.

In addition, I think that the next step will be IP based on lightweight – VSAT equipment. We shall use file transfer, streaming and, in addition what we want to do at GlobeCast is to be able to provide a service that meets our customer's needs instead of pure equipment and technology. The equipment we are working on will be a mobile office. We shall use state of the art technology with an IP-based encoding system.

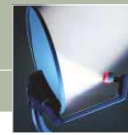
The mobile office is the response to the need in the field. It is lightweight equipment instead of using a truck. It is a solution that can provide to journalists the same tools that they have at their newsdesk: Voice over IP, direct contact to their Intranet and internal workflow, play-out to any location or broadcaster premises and even live transmission

with streaming technology.

**Question: Nowadays, a technical team is not necessary to operate SNG equipment. This is of huge benefit but what happens if something goes wrong? What support can you provide?**

**ML:** We provide in our global contribution services trucks, satellite network management and space segment. In addition we have a full package, a hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week driven by a very skilled team of experts. Coming back to our experience since 1999 I would say that 90 percent of any phone calls we have regarding any trouble on our DSNG network are solved by phone. So it works well and in the meantime, working together with ND SatCom is expanding our field experience as a service provider and means we have a very good interface with the user – the journalist or the camera crew. We are constantly striving to improve the way that the final user can manage the DSNG. We can also remotely check any equipment in any DSNG from our local premises.

**DD:** I think this is what Marc just was saying, that GlobeCast has built up a really excellent team of very qualified personnel and



specialists who provide this 24-hour, 7-day hotline. And I think that, from my understanding, and from what I have got to know over the last years, is that this team can help remotely maybe more than 90 percent of all the queries. And we are available, too. I am sure that Marc can confirm that all of his team is very good and that he gets all the necessary support from the ND SatCom service people. So I think this is excellent co-operation.

**Question: ND SatCom is a leader in the European broadcast market. What is the secret of your success?**

**DD:** First I would like to mention our experience and the market knowledge. So far, ND SatCom has integrated and has in operation about roughly 275 SNG vehicles worldwide and due to this experience I think we are able to deliver field-proven and reliable technology.

Regarding the SkyRAY antenna subsystem. It was introduced at IBC 2004 and very soon, we will have delivered more than 200 of these antenna systems. I think that SkyRAY is the most successful antenna system in the industry.

Secondly, we are always looking for very strong partners in different regions like we have with Globecast. Another point is that besides the standard portfolio we are very responsive to customer wishes of the different partners or end customers. I think this is also one of our key strengths. I think ND SatCom is very innovative. For example, just recently at NAB in Las Vegas we were able to introduce a new member of our SkyRAY antenna family – the so-called SkyRAY Light version – lightweight, mobile and easy to use. I think that the response from the market so far is that it is the best 1.2 metre SNG antenna of its class. We also have the full portfolio for broadcasters and service providers. It's not been mentioned but we have Fly-Aways and then SNGs for news applications or for production that work as standalone vehicles or which are operated more and more in managed media networks. And finally we deliver fixed uplinks and complete teleports.

And I should also add that ND SatCom is a premium partner with respect to customer support and training throughout the lifetime of all our systems in the field.

**Question: What portion of ND SatCom's business does SNG represent? Do you see this growing over the next 12 months?**

**DD:** Well I think that our SNG business is a very important portion for ND SatCom. Not only with respect to the delivery of single SNGs but also SNGs operating in the frame of managed media networks. Generally I can say the market is growing. We especially see a growing demand in Southern and Eastern

Europe and my colleagues in the Middle East are also telling me that they have a growing demand. We see also growth in the US and Asia. Based on the traditional SNG demand more and more IP-based camera car team systems are requested by our customers. This is a new market area and I think we are ideally positioned for that due to our VSAT product portfolio.

**Question: I am just going to digress here slightly. Speaking of HDTV and IPTV, they are starting to become more popular and are expected to grow substantially in the future. Can you summarise how you will be meeting the demands for these applications?**

**ML:** Firstly, I would say that the evolution of customer requests are not new. We have been working on HD services since September 2005. We were the first in Europe to provide, in September 2005, one HD DSNG responding to a market request and I think we have, again with ND SatCom three more HD SNGs.

In the past with one SNG you could cover many usages like news, sports and so on. But now we have to have to be able to provide specially equipped DSNGs for sport in HD, we are to be able to provide new equipment for newsgathering with VSAT and IP technology so it means that this evolution will be good for the technical provider and manufacturer like ND SatCom.

**Question: What is the 'must-have' equipment for a broadcaster today?**

**DD:** I think this depends very much on the required application. For instance, for reporting from events, broadcasters will certainly need fully redundant, very reliable and, as we said, HD ready SNGs. Whereas for news production, broadcast and service providers will need mobile SNG vehicles, easy to use and more cost effective which increasingly have to be operated in a managed media network environment. And again the point is that the mobile office mentioned by Marc, is in high demand so the SNGs have to be equipped with the appropriate IP infrastructure at reduced cost in an IT environment.

**Question: Can you tell us about the new media services that ND SatCom will be offering in the future?**

**DD:** Certainly ND SatCom will concentrate on further developing hardware and software solutions in order to enhance the capabilities and features of these managed media networks. Through these networks we are supporting existing and new partners worldwide. We have other partners like the WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk), a public broadcaster based in Cologne or Danish broadcasters – they are managing media networks based on our technology. I would like to specifically mention that ND SatCom is now in-

roducing, together with its partner in Germany, RT.1, a new service. This is a managed contribution network service comprising of fully automatic vehicles equipped with our SkyRAY system and with our antenna pointing system. We are just about to roll out the service so I think that within a few weeks it will be available more or less for the German speaking countries and Benelux so we are not starting out covering all of Europe, we are starting with the German speaking countries.

I should not forget that since the middle of last year, ND SatCom has become a 100 percent owned company of SES Astra in Luxembourg so we will also be able to offer this network service inclusive of the necessary transponder capacity if it fits to the network requirements. Astra is offering us transponder capacity and also, SES Sirius, but more for the Nordic and Eastern European countries.

**Question: For GlobeCast, what does the future hold in terms of your SNG services?**

**ML:** Today, the market will be thinking of services instead of technology. As I said previously, big broadcasters will have a wide range of needs that we will have to fulfil by providing a wide range of equipment. In Europe today HD is more focused on sports, entertainment and IPTV on news but the story is not over. We still have many requests for newcomers. For example in the French market we have a lot of local small TV networks that are growing very fast and they are not able to pay for a wide range of SNG services and they would like to have just one piece of equipment dedicated to their needs including sports, news and that kind of stuff.

So we have two roads to follow. The first one is to be able to provide a wider range of services – SNG services to the main broadcasters and to deal with the day-by-day business in terms of the old-fashioned SNG for local broadcasters. It's the way we are working towards next year but, as you may know, in our business we cannot do a 9 or 10 years business plan but we can at least do a two years business plan.

We didn't talk about the Fly-away system. We are working very closely with broadcasters and customers so that we are able to deploy an easy-to-use fly-away solution to be first on the spot when anything happens in the world. This could be a good relay of growth especially in the African and South American markets.

**DD:** I think also that the future is to operate SNGs in media networks and I think that smaller broadcasters will have to look for their own smaller network or to look for network partners to be more competitive and certainly to be more responsive, because to work in a traditional way and apply for transponder capacity - this takes too long. ■