

Kyocera positions Indian center for wireless development

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BENGALURU, India — Kyocera Wireless Corp., which opened an engineering development center here in 2003, will position it as a global center for innovation in product design and R&D.

Kyocera also has research centers in Yokohama, Japan, and San Diego.

The Indian center initially employed 30 engineers, but the total has jumped to 580 workers. At least 300 more engineers are expected to be added this year. The center initially focused on software engineering for Kyocera's wireless handsets. It will now handle all aspects of wireless handset engineering, said Samarth Raghava Nagabhushanam, managing director of Kyocera Wireless (India) Pvt. Ltd.

The center is also being expanded to develop emerging technologies like near-field communications, biometric sensors, dual-mode handsets and wireless broadband networks beyond 3G.

The center is also being expanded to support Kyocera's pending deal to acquire Sanyo Electric's wireless handset business. The deal is expected to be completed soon, but Kyocera executives declined to comment.

When the Sanyo deal is completed, Kyocera's wireless business will grow by \$2 billion in annual sales to about \$4.5 billion.

Kyocera is one of the last of the major handset makers to enter the Indian market. Competitors have been busy expanding manufacturing here. "I know that the Indian market for wireless services is seeding explosive growth, with millions of subscribers being added by the month," said Rodney Lanthorne, president and chairman of Kyocera Wireless Corp. "The market for wireless handsets at the entry level is very competitive, and that is not the market we want to be in."

Kyocera has also launched talks with domestic CDMA service providers like Tata Indicom. "We are studying the possibility of entering the market, and also whether handsets can be manufactured in India," Lanthorne said. Flextronics is among Kyocera's possible manufacturing partners.

Kyocera is also among the leading manufacturers of solar power cells and modules but has yet to enter the Indian solar market. "If we have to sell our solar power products in India, we have to have a sales office," Lanthorne said.