



US ad agency enters Afghanistan

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The world's fourth largest advertising agency, JWT, has become the first such Western firm to enter Afghanistan. New York-based JWT has signed a joint venture with Kabul-based advertiser Altai Communication.

Although the Afghanistan advertising marketplace remains weak, it and the wider economy are slowly recovering since 2001's overthrow of the Taliban. Altai currently carries out advertising for the country's leading mobile phone operator, Roshan.

"After recovering from decades of conflict, Afghanistan needs economic support," said JWT Worldwide chief executive Bob Jeffrey.

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JWT's Afghanistan operations will be able to target the number of Western businesses now returning to the country, such as Coca-Cola.

"By investing in Afghanistan, we hope other companies will be inspired to join us," added Mr Jeffrey.

Altai's other existing clients in Afghanistan include Afghanistan International Bank, Afghan Telecom, Western Union, and the United Nations.

"The private sector and foreign direct investments will fuel the Afghan economy, and the presence of an ad agency is often the first thing to attract these investments," said Altai partner Emmanuel de Dinechin.

Altai Communication is part of a wider business support company called Altai Consulting, which now employs 125 people, 25 of whom are internationals.