



Banrisul launches debit card via cell phone

Sérgio Bueno, Porto Alegre
12/19/2007

Brazilian bank Banco do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul (Banrisul) has taken advantage of the beginning of the summer season to launch the payment service which consists of a debit card via cell phone, in a partnership with cell phone company Claro, and EverMobile, a company that specializes in the development of mobile applications for financial operations.

The package offered by the bank, presented yesterday, also includes the possibility to check balances and statements, and allows for the wire transfer of resources between accounts and the payment of bills through a mobile phone.



Banrisul's CEO, Fernando Lemos: Service might attract 12 thousand customers

The new service is linked to the Banricompras system, which offers the payment with a debit card, including deferred payments, in nearly 60 thousand stores in Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina states.

The bank's goal now is to attract to the network service providers, sellers, small-sized restaurants and taxi drivers which cannot afford a POS (point-of-sale), starting with those which have operations in Rio Grande do Sul's coast.

According to the bank's CEO, Fernando Lemos, for shoppers or service providers to be accredited to the "Banrisul Celular" service they must register a mobile phone number from any cell provider and a checking account to receive the payments. No connectivity fee will be charged until December 2008. The bank's customers will pay a R\$2.50 fee per month to Claro (part of this amount will be passed through to EverMobile), plus an average R\$0.05 fee per operation.

With the new system, the bank's customers will pay for their purchases through a deposit in the account of the seller in an operation validated by a personal password. The credit is confirmed by a voicemail to the phone number of the store or service provider, said Lemos. Receipts can be printed on the bank's home banking or office banking sites on the internet.

Banrisul's CEO believes the cell phone services might attract another 10 thousand to 12 thousand customers accredited to the Banricompras system in the first year of operations alone. From January to November this year, the bank recorded 46.4 million transactions, worth a total R\$2.5 billion, said the executive. The bank has 3 million customers.

The new service was developed in one year and, according to Sérgio Goldstein, EverMobile's director, it runs in GSM cell phones which have the Java application (MIDP 2.0), and the information traffic is 100% encrypted. According to the executive, the package offered by Banrisul is the most complete among the ones available in the country, because it offers the possibility of debit card payment integrated to the other banking operations.

The software used in Banrisul Celular's operations is downloaded to the cell phone, and other mobile companies can join the system, as long as they integrate their cell phones to the bank's servers. The cost to develop the system was irrelevant for the bank, because it operates on Banricompras's platform, said Lemos.

Source: Valor Online