

Manifesto of the African Broadband Forum

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Imagine Africa, Connected. Ongoing investment to extend the internet's capacity and reach is essential to the health and growth of Africa's economy. The African Broadband Forum is encouraging the penetration of broadband into Africa and aims to lead the rapid deployment of 3G and 4G technology systems based on open standards encompassing all core architectures. This will lead to a massive increase in the use of the internet to meet the needs of markets in Africa.

The Broadband Challenge in Africa

With internet penetration at only 2%, Africa has more to gain from broadband than any other continent. An abundance of fiber capacity to the coastline will soon be a reality. The challenge is to make the capacity available to the 880 million, mostly rural, inhabitants living in the 48 sub-Saharan countries. The African Broadband Forum (ABF) is playing a major role in the solution to assist in overcoming the many obstacles. It is a web-based forum with a number of experienced solution providers in all technologies: regulators, fiber network suppliers and operators, backhaul carriers and wholesale service providers, equipment manufacturers, trade Forums, the media and academia.

The African Broadband Forum assists new and established operators to enquire and gain knowledge about best practices via white papers, in-house conferences, web meetings and specific consulting, where appropriate. These operators are shown which technology choices could be made for the most costly part of a network, the last mile, and which technology and suppliers can bring an optimum backhaul solution for his needs. Insight to best practices for regulators as applied worldwide and especially in other African countries is a major objective as countries succeed with broadband network deployments. The ABF helps in the practicalities of planning and budgeting for a broadband network, raising finance, staffing and training. The Forum itself is a nonprofit corporation.

Bring the Internet Quickly to Africa

Encouraging ongoing investment to extend the high speed internet's capacity and reach is essential to the health and growth of Africa's economy. This bodes



well for the arrival of innovative, broadband - driven advances that bring quality education, health care, and good governance to our communities. The availability of robust broadband services and applications across the continent hinges on policies that encourage vigorous, private sector investment in this essential modern infrastructure. However, many entrepreneurs are confused on which path to take and technology to use. The goal ABF and its members is to help them make the right choice.

The ABF's Plan of Action

- ABF arranges visits to operators in Africa. Their broadband challenges and needs are assessed and catered for
- ABF promotes best practices followed by winning countries
- ABF urges you to attend conferences in Africa and promotes the ideals and aims to all interested parties of the ABF, encouraging them to join the Forum
- ABF provides the facility of using the web-based forum. This includes White Papers with links to founding members and technology suppliers. Current news on the front page is included together with terminology definitions, event advertising and notifications, staffing requirements and a Q&A Forum Service page. A private members section with lists of operators and vendors and their private contact details is extended. The Forum has published conference presentations, minutes of aggregation buying meetings and country regulator best practices, recommendations and more details
- ABF holds annual regional conferences on specific and pertinent topics with founding members having a priority access to speakers and exhibitions
- ABF entices active participation in international conferences with emphasis on the goals of the ABF and its members.

ABF will help you lobby and champion the spectrum and licensing requirements for all broadband technologies with individual country regulators.

The ABF website is at www.4gafrica.org, please have a look at it. We promise you a rich and informative experience. Should you wish to enter the Private Members section, send us an email to request a temporary password. In this section you will gain access to all of the operators' and vendors' private addresses and contacts, the minutes of the handset buying group meetings, together with recommendations, conference photographs and conference papers. With your active participation we will make the site and service even more valuable to operators in Africa. I am contactable at bill@4gafrica.org or at +27 82 990 4443 for an in-depth consultation on what our company can offer you and for specific queries.

Bill Hearmon, Chairman and Founder, African Broadband Forum