

# CONNECTING AFRICA:

## ICT Infrastructure Across the Continent



### World Bank Group Commitment to Africa's ICT Infrastructure Development

Over the past 10 years, the World Bank Group has provided advice and technical assistance on ICT sector reform in more than 30 countries in Africa. Recent Bank projects are also increasingly focusing on regional connectivity:

- IFC-co-financed EASSy connecting 10 countries from South Africa to Sudan;
- World Bank Regional Communications Infrastructure Program opened to 25 countries in East and Southern Africa (\$424m);
- World Bank Central African Backbone Program opened to 12 countries in Central Africa (\$215m);

Between 1999 and 2009, the IFC, the private sector arm of the World Bank Group, has invested in private operators in 41 African countries, providing \$941 million in debt, guarantee and equity financing in its own account and mobilizing another \$558 million for the account of syndicated banks in form of B loans and guarantees.

- 38 percent of Africa's Population use mobile phones and over 65% lived within reach of wireless voice networks by 2008 up from less than 1 percent ten years ago; today over 400 million mobile phones are in use in Africa (against less than 2 million in 1998);
- Mobile technology innovations and widespread liberalization of telecommunications markets have stimulated over US\$56 billion in private sector investment in mobile sector in the continent between 1998-2008;
- With the right enabling environment, the private sector could extend voice service coverage to 95 percent of the people and basic Internet coverage to 89 percent;
- In Sub-Sahara Africa for instance, extending the coverage of wireless networks to make basic voice and basic Internet available to the entire population would require US\$17 billion investment over the next ten years. The private sector could account for close to US\$12 billion<sup>1</sup>;
- Providing the right enabling environment can notably include:
  - Completing the reform agenda (increased competition throughout the sector).
  - Revising the licensing framework and reforming radio spectrum allocation and management to accommodate rapid technological change and emerging competition and spur innovation.
  - Promoting sound and predictable level of direct and indirect taxation.
  - Ensuring low-cost national and international access infrastructure by preventing monopoly control over bottleneck facilities.

<sup>1</sup>Source: Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic (AICD) Report, 2010, Chapter 7



THE WORLD BANK



**IFC** International Finance Corporation  
World Bank Group



Innovate. Connect. Transform



Korean Trust Fund

Governments, businesses, and people across the African continent are using ICTs to make public services more efficient, grow businesses and strengthen and expand social networks

## Africa is Transformation-Ready



- Innovations in data access using ICT are already transforming the way many Africans are conducting business and government delivering services.
- With continued increases in access to high-speed communications, the transformative nature of these advances will continue to spread across Africa.
- Africa is **Transformation-ready** and new and innovative technologies are helping change the development paradigm.
- Examples of how governments, businesses and people in general are using ICTs to make public services more efficient, grow businesses and strengthen and expand social networks are apparent in every corner of the continent.

### Transformation through Innovative ICT Applications

- **Ghana:** Customs clearances went from 2-3 weeks to 1-2 days with a 50% increase in revenue 18 months after introduction of the IT systems and Business Re-engineering.
- **Kenya:** Kenya Agricultural Commodity exchange - Farmers in remote villages of Kenya are using mobile phones to access the most current crop prices. This can translate in up to 70% revenue increase for the farmers.
- **Kenya:** Vehicle registration – Corruption eliminated and time to register a vehicle decreased from 30 days to 1 day.
- **South Africa:** WIZZIT Banking the unbanked: using mobile to make payments and receive money.
- **Rwanda:** TRACnet by Voxiva – Using mobile phones to combat HIV/AIDS (Efficient management of ARV drugs inventories for clinics across the country, monitoring of patient use of drugs).

