

# Accelerating broadband connectivity in sub-Saharan Africa

Intelsat SA has partnered with AfricaOnline in order to provide a managed broadband internet service for sub-Saharan Africa.



Image by 123RF

Under the agreement, Intelsat will provide satellite services via Intelsat 28 located at 33° East, and Gondwana will provide ground support and network management services from AfricaOnline's facilities at Hartebeesthoek in South Africa. Together, Intelsat and Gondwana will deliver a Ku-band broadband service on a virtual network operator (VNO) basis.

The VNO platform, provided by Intelsat, will be used in conjunction with Gondwana's network management expertise to facilitate easier deployment of Ku-band VSAT services, according to both companies.

The large upfront capital commitment otherwise required of regional VSAT operators for both infrastructure and minimum capacity obligations will be reduced, as will VSAT operators' operational costs. This, according to both parties, is beneficial to VSAT operators, distributors and end-users alike and allows VSAT operators to focus on marketing, service provisioning/support and their customers, and not on network infrastructure.

Mathew Welthagen, CEO of Gondwana International Networks stated that: "We want to be the preferred provider of VSAT services across Africa, and this initiative with Intelsat allows us to enhance our portfolio of service offerings. The upfront

capital commitment and ongoing fixed operating cost structure of Ku-band VSAT has constrained expansion of services in Africa.

“A managed VNO platform allows for increased economies of scale, both in terms of capex and opex, and is a giant step forward in bringing cost-effective connectivity to Africa. Our ultimate goal is to drive connectivity across the continent.

“Our vision resonates with Intelsat, and this partnership allows Gondwana to continue to lead the way in providing our customers with high-quality, cost-effective, forward-looking communications solutions.”

Kurt Riegelman, senior vice president, sales and marketing, Intelsat, further commented by stating that: “Enabling connectivity to communities and businesses is at the core of everything we do, and our partnership with AfricaOnline and Gondwana International Networks will provide millions of people working in Sub-Saharan Africa businesses with access to high quality and affordable internet service.

“The continent is materially underserved with relatively low internet penetration. Leveraging the strength of Intelsat’s Ku-band satellite solutions with AfricaOnline’s ground segment services will help foster business development, enhance medical and educational services to local communities, provide critical backup support during times of crisis, and enable citizens across Sub-Saharan Africa to maintain communications with friends and family within Africa and around the globe.”

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