

CONEXT

The Official Newsletter of the Digital Council Africa

June 2023 Edition

CELEBRATING YOUTH MONTH

Government publish
ECA Amendment Act

Digital skills competency mapping in
the Global Business Services sector

Q&A with Harambee's Fran Swart:
"When you get to do what
you love, every day, all day!"



Digital
Council

Issue #013



WELCOME FROM JUANITA

Welcome to the winter 2023 issue of Conext, the official Newsletter of the Digital Council Africa and its members.

The aim of this publication is to not only let our members know what we have been busy with within the organisation, but also, and probably more importantly, to provide a platform for our members to let us know what they are up to. As always we strongly encourage participation in this platform where you are invited to share more about your company.

In a post-pandemic world, our way of thinking, attitudes, and behaviours have radically shifted towards a more progressive, individualised future involving a hybrid lifestyle that combines face-to-face with virtual activity. This shift towards remote working and digitalisation has placed a spotlight on the importance of access to technology and connectivity as a means to actively and equally participate in the digital economy.

As Youth Month draws to a close, we are resolved to continue our efforts in bridging the digital divide and its negative effect on education in disadvantaged communities. We aim to continue to speak on the tremendous opportunity that the digital economy poses for the future of young people in this country and seeking ways to harness and leverage its power effectively and responsibly to create a fantastic future.

As many of you may know, we have a very strong partnership with Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator. This relationship has allowed us to embark on several projects that seek to ensure that connectivity becomes a reality for all our young people. Harambee and the Digital Council Africa believes that by working together we can support the creation of thousands of jobs through active participation in the digital economy.

We believe that partnerships and collaborations such as these are the key to driving broader efforts to build an inclusive digital economy that will unlock growth and economic recovery. Ensuring resilience and growth in the wake of the pandemic are of vital importance to not only national economic recovery, but also future prosperity of the Republic of South Africa.

As part of this recovery and job creation, the collaboration of the full range of stakeholders in the ICT and Telecoms sector and also outside of the sector becomes critical to debate and promote the adoption of innovation frameworks through government implementable policies that will spur innovation and competitiveness. Such policies will help leverage the adoption of digital services to enable rapid growth in key economic sectors.

In the last quarter several policy directions were published and the DCA are hard at work seeking to understand the impact these may have on our sectors. We strongly encourage participations in the working groups we establish to craft a response to these. Feel free to join the discussions on an ongoing basis and ensure that your company is represented.

As always, please share feedback with us.

Thank you for your continued support,

Juanita

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FROM THE OFFICE

What is Conext?

“CONEXT: a relationship in which a person or thing is linked or associated with someone or something else.”

In a world that is becoming increasingly digital, it is important to ensure that ongoing engagement takes place. The Digital Council Africa strives to remain in contact with its members, and to provide its members with ongoing communication about its activities. Conext is the answer to staying engaged. Member engagement is encouraged through participation in events and working groups and through the distribution of the Conext Newsletter.

The DCA strives to offer members opportunities to network and collaborate and discuss best practice frameworks that is in the best interest of all, solving complex issues through dialogue and policy recommendations and we encourage dialogue between government and private sector from a platform that is independent and product agnostic. Conext belongs to the members of the Digital Council Africa. We welcome and encourage submissions from our members in the form of conversations related to the development of the digital economy as well as thought leadership articles you have written or would like to share, advertorials, adverts and any information that may be of interest to the ICT sector as a whole.

Contributions can be sent to Nadene Reignier at nadene@digitalcouncil.africa

Social Media

Social media is a fast, effective way to reach our target audience and create awareness of not only the Digital Council and our work but also for our members and as a means to share relevant industry news and updates. We have close to 6000 followers across our 3 platforms and had an organic reach of over 3000 on LinkedIn over the last 3 weeks alone. We plan to keep increasing our social media reach and leveraging it to grow awareness of the work of the Council and its members.

LET'S STAY CONEXTED. FOLLOW US ON



Want to feature your company in the upcoming Conext?

This publication belongs to the members of the Digital Council Africa. We welcome and encourage submissions from our members in the form of conversations related to the development of the digital economy as well as thought leadership articles you have written or would like to share, advertorials, adverts and any information that may be of interest to the ICT sector as a whole.

Contributions can be sent to Nadene Reignier at nadene@digitalcouncil.africa

Member Webinars

The Digital Council invites all members to participate in upcoming webinars, which will focus on key topics pertaining to the industry. These webinars will be held on an ad-hoc basis via the collaboration platform and will be communicated via the member mailing list. Please note that members may also request to host a webinar, provided that the content is relevant and informative. Please contact Reesha Iyer at reesha@digitalcouncil.africa.

Welcome

Welcoming our new Member



Digital Parks Africa (DPA) is a Carrier Neutral Up-time Tier III Design Certified Data Centre that operates multiple sites across, Gauteng, South Africa.

The facility is Africa's largest modular Data Center and provides best-in-class services with unrestricted interconnect between carriers and customers, creating an open access network. Thus, providing customers with a secure, flexible, high-available, and cost-effective Data Centre environment for their ICT infrastructure. The datacentre is equipped with INXZA, Africa's oldest and largest IXP, enabling customers to improve network performance and lowering IP transit costs.

For more information visit www.dpa.host

Member Benefits

By joining the Digital Council Africa members have a competitive advantage because they become informed members of their industry as the council actively engages and represents its members at government level. Council members who lead busy professional lives can depend on the organisation to represent and brief them on important industry trends, new legislative rulings, and advances in technology. The main platform the Digital Council Africa (DCA) uses for this is through its annual conference. This event aims to attract C-level speakers and best of breed OEM's and distributors to keep industry informed and updated on the latest trends in technology and legislation. **To find out more visit our [website](#).**

Annual Invoicing

As a not-for-profit, the DCA is reliant on membership fees to effectively run the organization. In this regard, we ask members whose fees are outstanding to make payment ensuring that the Council can continue its work.

Thank you to all member companies who already made payments for the 2023/2024 membership year and thank you for your continued support.



SAYouth.mobi is part of the "Presidential Youth Employment Intervention" and is supported by Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, the Department of Employment and Labour, the Department of Higher Education and Training, the National Youth Development Agency, and the Development Bank of South Africa.

Visit SAYouth.mobi website at: <https://sayouth.mobi/>



Coachmee: AI-Powered Guidance and Support for Unemployed South African Youth

By Brent Davidoff, Network Experience Specialist, Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator



While debates surrounding technological progress focus predominantly on job losses, at Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, we have a different perspective. By combining cutting-edge technologies with the talent and resilience of young people, we're empowering more young people with insights about themselves to support their job-seeking journey.

Coachmee is a WhatsApp-based conversational agent or chatbot. Designed specifically for the youth of South Africa, Coachmee provides personalised support, guidance, and content to help individuals feel productive and accomplished. While it is suitable for first time work-seekers to top business executives, the chatbot has been specifically designed to address young people's growing desperation.

Coachmee is seamlessly integrated with the omnichannel sayouth.mobi contact centre. It blends the expertise of our contact centre guides with advanced conversational AI technology—the result is a customer support chatbot that maintains an imaginative and empathetic conversation that reflects the lived experiences of unemployed young people.

Keamogetswe says Coachmee is like having heartfelt conversations with a real person who genuinely understands what she's going through. "Coachmee always knows the right words and advice to give, and I'm amazed by how accurately it captures my feelings. With its guidance, I've achieved most of my goals. The motivating quotes I received during our sessions kept me going, reminding me of my capabilities. Even after completing the program, I still follow the advice I received."

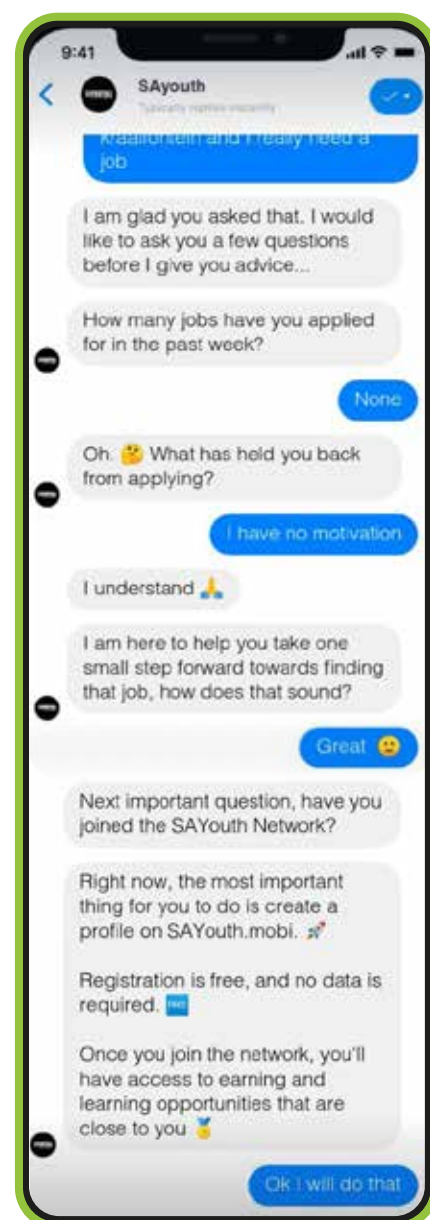
The AI has helped Harambee address the challenge of coaching and developing human guides—Harambee's call centre agents—without removing them from their core responsibilities. The tool is a bite-sized personal mastery mentor—it delivers personalised content such as affirmations, meditations, and adaptive goal-setting methods. Together, call centre guides and work-seekers work through individual goals and celebrate quick wins daily.

Because the AI tailors support and resources to individual needs, it ensures sustained engagement with positive outcomes.

What sets Coachmee apart is its availability on WhatsApp. By choosing this platform, Coachmee ensures a seamless and familiar conversational experience for users while overcoming language barriers and ensuring inclusivity.

Coachmee has over 6,000 registered users who, this year alone, have had a combined 37,610 coaching conversations. Word-of-mouth recommendations have significantly influenced organic growth, reflecting users' value and positive experiences.

Users have overwhelmingly praised Coachmee for helping them achieve their long-term goals. Astonishingly, 97% of users who completed



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



20 check-ins credited Coachmee as their primary motivator and accountability partner. In addition, 15 work-seekers specifically attributed their job success to the support they received through Coachmee.

Xolile, who started a salon business from home, reports that Coachmee "has been a game-changer". She says: "I found it incredibly helpful, filled with valuable teachings and experiences. Starting my mornings with Coachmee has become a peaceful and calming ritual, allowing me to learn and grow at the same time. But my absolute favourite part has to be the morning meditations. They set the perfect tone for the day and have become an integral part of my routine."

It's important to note that the development team actively mitigates

risks and prioritises privacy protection for all users. Safeguards are also in place to identify and address potential biases, ensuring fair and inclusive support for all individuals.

The development of Coachmee has also created new roles within Harambee and beyond. The team now includes young AI and automation specialists, conversion designers, and professionals who shape and refine the platform—job roles that didn't exist a year ago.

Regardless of your perspective on digitisation and artificial intelligence, it is clear that nobody can escape their impacts. We believe that by harnessing these innovations to serve and influence South Africa's most marginalised group—unemployed youth—we can all reap the benefits.

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

Sign up for Coachmee today and start building habits that will help you find work, feel happier or start generating income for yourself.

Sign up on WhatsApp using this link sayouth.me/Coach it could change your life!

Want to know more about Coachmee before you sign up, click on the following link: <https://sayouth.me/3uGEaXy> or save this number +27 87 240 5122 start the conversation and say "Coach" it could change your life!

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Digital skills competency mapping in the Global Business Services sector

by Judy Robison
& Coral Albertse



BPESA is the recognised trade association and industry body for Global Business Services (GBS) in South Africa. BPESA's mandate is to market South Africa as a top offshore location for outsourced services, stimulate local job creation and economic growth and to support the sector with skills development for a suitable talent pipeline.

Why is digital skills competency mapping a priority for the GBS sector?

Digital transformation has affected almost all sectors and industries across the South African economy. Digital skills are a critical success factor for the sector's ability to transform, scale and remain competitive particularly across international markets. According to Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, we lose about R8.5 billion in export revenue due to a lack of suitably skilled talent to service the local demand for Digital and ICT jobs. This puts a big focus on the development of the local digital talent stack as there is a big opportunity to reshore digital jobs to South Afri-

ca over and above the broader focus on supporting the digital transformation of the sector.

The challenge for South Africa, and specifically the GBS sector, is that our targeted local talent pool is predominantly comprised of disadvantaged and marginalised South Africans with poor educational backgrounds and lower levels of highest educational attainment (HEA). This creates an impact on traditional sourcing and recruitment methods relying on traditional indicators for aptitude, potential and role fit which does not support inclusive hiring methods – at the heart of the sector's growth strategy.

Compounding this challenge is the fast pace at which the digital economy has shaped skills development and credentialing impacting on

businesses' articulation of digital skills requirements and consequently market signals for talent.

By aligning to an adopted competency framework for digital skills for digital jobs and digitally enabled jobs, we will create a common language supporting a greater synchronisation between demand and supply in our sector.

What is the future vision for BPESA and the Future Skills platform?

BPESA mobilised a Learning Experience Platform powered by EdCast Cornerstone in May 2022. The platform is a shared sector resource and a key supply side enabler with a focus on digital skills for entry

level talent through to senior and executive talent. At the heart of its value proposition is a rich and quality content marketplace supported by bespoke expert curated content and machine curated content to support demand-driven learning experiences for a plethora of learning requirements.

The vision for Future Skills is to support the sector's growth targets for 2030 by enabling half a million South Africans with access to online skilling to support their careers. Great focus is being placed on creating sector endorsed and recognised training for in-demand roles where competency is demonstrable and there is a strong fit between skills and job opportunities. Future Skills will aim to align sector identified priority digital roles (digital and digitally enabled jobs) to the DSFOne to enhance the credibility of Future Skills acquired credentials driving relevancy for the incumbent workforce and employability for disadvantaged South Africans.

How will Future Skills get started with the incorporation of the Digital Skills One Framework?

In 2023, the Future Skills team will be developing a sector-focused digital work readiness programme with the intention to accredit and offer as a formal qualification to all job seekers using Future Skills to support their journeys to employment. The work readiness programme is not only being developed to align to the DSFOne framework but to put a focus on fundamental digital skills which are required for the increasingly digitalised economy and which are transferrable to support fluidity in the fast changing job market.

Sector Collaboration for Digital Transformation and related skills development.

The GBS/ BPO sector has a highly collaborative nature when it comes to skilling the current and future talent pipeline. Representative sector bodies like BPESA, Cape BPO and related advisory bodies are led by sector thought leaders. They have worked extensively on the digital future of the sector and the skills necessary to support its ongoing growth.

Current sector digital transformation research is underway and aligned to the research, traditional role profiles are being reviewed for new skills needed to perform in a range of roles from agent to executive in the sector or related sectors.

There is a recognition that digital skills are transferrable skills, yet do often take on a unique application in the GBS/BPO environment.

Future Skills development is being geared to meet these role competencies. The sector recognises the importance of embedding a strong foundation of digital skills from a schooling level and are engaging heavily with education and economic development department stakeholders to embed Digital Job Readiness at various stages within the education process. In addition Impact Sourcing, a well applied strategy in this sector, Work Readiness programmes are, as above, being aligned to the Digital Skills Frameworks, both our own DSF1 and broader global frameworks where relevant.

Globally recognised micro certification, high impact learning content and tool partnerships' and access to aligned digital skills are a key pillar for the sector transformation strategy.



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OPERATING THE LARGEST MODULAR DATA CENTRE ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT



Digital Parks is the leading Data Centre Operator that has deployed modular data centre technology. This technology is visibly different from large traditional data halls which accommodate many clients within the same environment.

Modular technology is segmented into physically separate data centre “PODS”, each of which accommodate a pre-determined number of racks. Each POD deploys its own “COLD AISLE/HOT AISLE” environmental technology and optimises the area where cooling & humidity control takes place.

This allows to optimise the Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE), which is the most critical parameter in any data centre. The deployment of separate pods also introduces an effective data centre wholesale concept.

BENEFITS OF MODULAR DATA CENTRE TECHNOLOGY:



Reduced start-up costs - Costs are minimised by up to 30%, offering lower hosting fees to clients and are faster to market to meet demand.



Decreased market time - Traditional data centres have a startup time between 2-3 years from design to operation, whilst modular designs achieve the same within 6 months.



Scalable growth - Pre-manufactured modules have improved quality controls & testing methodology, reducing the risk of construction errors on site during the build phase.



Greater flexibility - Easier customisation to different power densities, rack sizes, mechanical structures and cooling technologies.

MODULAR VS CONTAINERISED DATA CENTRES

Containerised data centres are converted shipping containers with data centre equipment, typically used for temporary deployments. On the other hand, modular data centres are custom-made modules that can be designed to any dimension and appearance. They are aesthetically similar to traditional data centres and offer the same functionality without any visual differences.

At Digital Parks SA, we operate three data centres in Gauteng and are in the planning phase for a fourth facility in the Western Cape. Our modular structure enables us to provide optimized hosting environments for various needs, including colocation, enterprise clients, hyperscale cloud deployments, and Edge hosting, all within the same facility modules.





Government publish ECA Amendment Act

The Draft Electronic Communications Amendment Bill was published on Friday, 23rd June by the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies.

According to the bill, a number of government policies, plans and reports have, over many years, called for the reduction of the cost to communicate and, most recently, the cost of data due to its importance in bringing more people and business into the digital economy. As such the Competition Commission issued a Data Services Market Inquiry (DSMI) report on 2 December 2019. The Commission found that affordable data is becoming essential for every citizen and, the move towards a digital world is hampered by high data prices.

It further states that universal access to affordable data is vital to both communication and the ability to access information. The cost of data will, more broadly, become increasingly important within the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the projected upsurge of the digital economy. A lack of access to affordable data is a socio-economic and social exclusion of South Africa's citizens.

The DSMI report makes recommendations that include legislative changes aimed at ultimately increasing the level of competition in the market and driving down prices. An amendment of the Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act No. 36 of 2005) is necessary to give the effect to the recommendations.

The Bill aims to:

- Amend the Electronic Communications Act, 2005, so as to provide for a new licence category for electronic communications facilities services
- Enable the Minister responsible for local government to make a national standard by-law on rapid deployment, to enable spectrum sharing
- Regulate roaming and mobile network services
- Improve the facilities leasing framework and its pricing principles
- Provide for improved competition regulation
- Provide for matters connected therewith.

The DCA have been engaging its members with a view to making a submission in this regard. 3 Working Groups have been set up to represent DCA members. Tower Companies, Fibre Network Operators as well as Data Centre Companies. All members are encouraged to participate in the working groups. The DCA have been engaging with external legal counsel to support the formulation of an industry response. For more information or to participate in a respective working group please contact Reesha@digitalcouncil.africa

Download the full document [here](#).



Going further with fiber: Case study of the Festival La Nuit de l'Erdre

by Cathy Ducker

The return of events post-Covid

After a long hiatus, concerts, festivals, sports games and other major events are finally returning to their pre-pandemic glory. The recovery of the event ecosystem is moving faster than expected.

The event industry experienced a real boom during the summer of 2022 and everything suggests that the number of events and their respective attendance should reach and even exceed pre-pandemic levels in 2019, for the years to come. Connected events are becoming a necessity in a digitalized world. New features are emerging around connectivity to facilitate the customer experience: cloud-hosted telephone reception, cashless offering that allows for dematerialized sales, mobile coverage, Wi-Fi as well as FTTH (Fiber To The Home) connection.

When art and innovation meet

The festival "La Nuit de l'Erdre" was born in 1998. It is located in the grounds of the Port Mulon park, in the heart of the Erdre et Gesvres territory, the town of Nort-sur-Erdre. Today, it takes place on 4 consecutive evenings and welcomes about 20 000 people every night in addition to their partners, volunteers and technicians. This festival has made decisive choices in its organization favouring an inclusive audience, with the presence of families: children as well as adults. La Nuit de l'Erdre decided this year to go digital for all its own processes and for services such as Cashless, live video to benefit most the festivalgoers. La Nuit de l'Erdre chose to offer a full captivating experience to festivalgoers thanks to the use of fiber optics throughout the event site.

"Everything is based on optical fiber and its connectivity as well as its signal distribution. Corning is an essential partner because they are the ones who set up the fiber optic network on the entire site," said Marc Jolys, president of the association La nuit de l'Erdre.

A local fiber optic network for a totally immersive experience

The festival chose to use fiber optics to cover greater distances. The venue hosting "La Nuit de l'Erdre" covers 5 hectares. The copper network is constrained to distances that are today too short to cover the entire extent of a festival, a concert, or a major sporting event.

The optical loop becomes essential for events. The Evolv™ solution chosen by the festival allows complete lines to be drawn with no additional action to be taken other than the connections. This technology allows to set up a reliable and high-quality network that remains waterproof in any weather. This is obviously a crucial element when running an outdoor festival.

"Corning's Evolv Solutions with Pushlock™ connectivity meet our needs in that it is very quick to set up and adds considerable time savings to the technical teams in charge of organizing and running the festival," adds Pascal Briand, technology manager for the Nuit de l'Erdre Association.

"This new technology brings a real quality and watertightness that guarantees a successful festival without obstacles or technical problems. We brought a new experience with the VIP village, where we brought back via fiber a giant screen where they can continue to enjoy the boxes and see the concert broadcast" continues Thomas Canale, technology manager for the Association la Nuit de l'Erdre. Evolv is a generation of drop cable and terminals that brings real speed to fiber deployment. This solution allows for a simple, scalable, much faster and lower cost fiber network deployment.

What else made La Nuit de l'Erdre 100% connected event?

Low latency video

A fiber optic line reaches each screen to retransmit the signal from the stage with very low latency. The optical loop processes the image directly within it. It is thus possible to have a very low latency between the moment the action is filmed and the moment the image is broadcast less than 100 milliseconds in total. Festivalgoers can still enjoy the dressing rooms and see the concerts in real time for an even more immersive experience.

The Cashless method

The Cashless solution is a completely dematerialized system which allows to pay and to cash in points of sales during events such as festivals, on sports sites or tourist places. A convenient and above all secure method that allows for quick and easy payment, which facilitates the festivalgoers' experience.

Everyone attending "La Nuit de l'Erdre" festival received a wristband to make all their payments through a cashless method. To enable this cashless process, a high-speed internet connection is essential.

100% Connected events: A long-term objective

Event tech will continue to thrive as the larger COVID-inspired tech boom continues through this year and beyond. According to Bizzabo 2020 event marketing report, 90% of event marketers believe that technology can have a major positive impact on the success of their events. For example, some festivals add AR and VR technologies to include a new dimension to the artists' performances. For this AR/VR, low latency is necessary which means fiber optics to bring the virtual world to life.

Future events will provide a connected and immersive experience for all participants. The use of the optical loop will be particularly useful for large-scale events such as the 2024 Olympic Games or the Rugby World Cup, and many others.

There are several challenges to be met to connect large events in optimal conditions.

For an event such as the 2024 Olympic Games, there will be 10 million spectators on site, and more than half of the world will be watching on a delayed basis. It will therefore be necessary to connect new sites, and this in a sustainable way, by leaving the



installations on site or by reusing what will have been brought elsewhere. The fiber will have to be brought on other competition sites, training centers and will have to be put aside at the end of the games. It is therefore necessary that the optical loops can be reused. These facilities can be left on site and redeployed in the future for other events such as sports competitions or festivals.

Many events have already been made possible by Corning technologies. One of Corning's most recent projects includes the installation of Everon™ mmWave technology in the SoFi Stadium suites for the 2022 Superbowl.

Common to these various projects and Corning solutions is the desire to create a 5G and/or fiber network capable of supporting increasingly digital and immersive experiences while meeting consumer and fan expectations at a major event.

Thanks to fully reusable optical loops, with solutions for FTTx (Fiber-to-the-x: bringing optical fiber closer to the user) and enterprise network applications, mass events both in and outdoor can benefit from bespoke solutions.

To watch the video, [click here](#)



What is SA Youth?

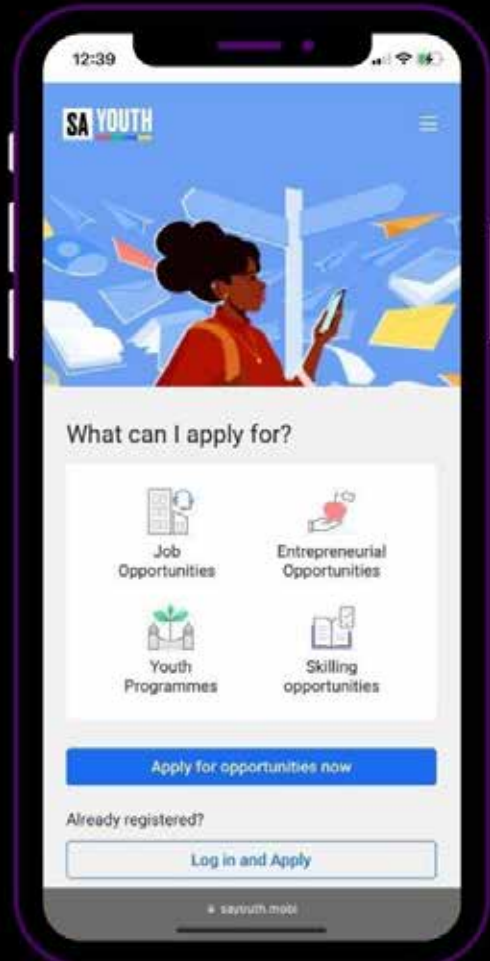
A place for all young South Africans to come to find work opportunities, learn new skills, find out how to become more employable, and get support.

How can you become part of the network?

- STEP 1: Go to sayouth.mobi on your phone's browser and register. NO DATA NEEDED!
- STEP 2: Answer a few questions that will help us get to know you better so that we can connect you to job opportunities that match your profile.
- STEP 3: Log in regularly to search for new jobs
- STEP 4: Build your profile and keep it up to date

What can you do on sayouth.mobi?

- Look for work
- Access work-seeker resources to help to become employable
- Access a list of hustling support resources to help you start or grow your own business.



Need help?

- Call us toll-free between 9am - 5pm Mon-Fri on 0800 72 72 72
- Email us at support@sayouth.org.za
- Chat to us on our Facebook page

To find out more:

- Click on the following link <https://sayouth.me/3zsKdRH> or
- Find us on [Facebook](#) and search for "What is SA Youth?" on the content tab

To access resources you will need to be registered on SAYouth.mobi first



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Operation Vulindlela & COGTA work together to finalise Bylaws for Deployment of Telecommunications Infrastructure on Municipal Land

Ms Ditshego Tsebe recently shared some insights with the Digital Council Africa about the promulgation of The Policy on Bylaws for the Deployment of Telecommunications Infrastructure in Municipal Land.

PROMULGATING POLICY ON BYLAWS FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE ON MUNICIPAL LAND

Operation Vulindlela supports the President and Cabinet to ensure priority structural reforms are implemented effectively. Focus is on 26 priority reforms in network industries, which includes 3 digital communications projects

- Increase available spectrum
- Migrate from analogue to digital TV
- Rapid deployment of electronic communications networks and facilities, including
- Streamline approval of wayleave applications at municipal level (National Standard ByLaw for deployment of electronic communication facilities 2023)
- Finalising policy and policy direction

Broadband is key to economic inclusivity and promoting youth employment, which has been significantly amplified by Covid-19. Deployment of broadband infrastructure is intended to expand access to affordable, high-quality internet connectivity, in particular to low-income neighbourhoods.

Currently, access through high-speed fibre is concentrated at upper income levels:

- 10.4% of South African households had access to fixed-line internet at home (StatsSA 2019)
- Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants is 2.14 in 2019 (up from 0.95 in 2009) (Statista)
- This slow access due to, for example:
- Non-standardised, cumbersome and costly municipal wayleave application processes which discourages deployment in lower income areas
- Aerial and street furniture not fully accommodated by municipalities; yet more cost effective

FUTUREPROOFING TOWNS AND CITIES CREATING AN ENABLING REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT ARE CRITICAL FIRST STEPS TO GREATER ECONOMIC INCLUSIVITY

Increasing access and usage of broadband infrastructure in rural areas (and the amenities, digital skills, online education, and job search opportunities that come with it) lead to higher property values, increased job and population growth, higher rates of new business formation, and lower unemployment rates. But the critical first step to rapid roll-out of broadband infrastructure is an enabling regulatory environment at local level.

Municipalities make or break the ability of network communications operators to invest. Many municipalities are not adequately prepared and they lack wayleave bylaws to govern broadband infrastructure investment; and policy that enables more cost-effective alternative deployment necessary for deployment in low-income areas (i.e. utilising existing 'street furniture' or aerial deployment). Development of a Model Bylaw for broadband was

identified to get off the starting blocks at the local level. The national standard ByLaw process promulgated in February of this year and aims to ensure implementation and use of broadband by low-income residents, and youth in particular. The National Standard Model Bylaw for deployment of electronic communication facilities was promulgated in February 2023, through a phased approach and is now adopted. The 3 steps:

Step 1: Ensuring that municipalities have model bylaw to streamline broadband infrastructure investment as a majority of municipalities lack expertise to draft bylaws

Step 2: Ensuring that municipalities adopt draft model bylaw through a second phase following promulgation to educate, speed up adoption and implementation

Step 3: Ensuring and supporting municipalities to install streamlined systems / processes (on the basis of the National Standard ByLaw for deployment of electronic communication facilities)

Ultimately, having broadband access can unlock economic opportunities for those in low income neighbourhoods, such as employment and new business opportunities

FEATURES OF THE BY LAW

The Model Bylaw covers the following activities and any combination thereof:

1. Trenching and micro trenching and related work in the Municipal Road Reserve.
2. The siting and erection of poles and stringing of optic fibre cable in the Road Reserve or within the Municipal Area.
3. The stringing of optic fibre cable on existing poles in the Road Reserve or within the Municipal Area.
4. The erection of base stations, towers, or masts for the location of radio apparatus within the Municipal Area, including micro-cell deployments on Municipal Street Furniture.
5. Maintenance and operational activities related to already deployed electronic communications infrastructure.

Public Consultation

The Municipality may during the Wayleave application processing period consult with the applicant regarding aesthetic considerations and concerns relating to the planned Works and may require that:

1. the applicant conduct a public participation process in respect of affected persons; and /or
2. terms and conditions relating to the preservation of the aesthetic character of an area are included in a Wayleave issued.

Exceptions

- Heritage impact assessment with public consultation component
- Environmental impact assessment
- Prior public consultation satisfactory to municipality

We envisage that the second phase of implementation for Phase 2 of the project through partnership with SALGA and the Digital Council Africa, will assist the two, including an additional ten municipalities from SALGA through peer learning and have been selected by Operation Vulindlela with not only drafting but also implementing the ByLaw. This approach will assist in ensuring that policy implementation becomes a reality in South African local government.

Ms Tsebe served as Lead for South Africa's first Country Investment Strategy (CIS) in the Investment and Infrastructure Office (IIO) in The Presidency. She also formally served as a representative of Infrastructure South Africa (ISA) in Infrastructure Investment and unblocking policies of the public sector regulatory framework. Prior



she served as a Director of Social Policy at Business Unity South Africa, and Programme Manager at the Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation and Research Analyst at Mswiss Finance and Investment. She continues to serve at Operation Vulindlela, in the Presidency and Cabinet to ensure priority structural reforms are implemented effectively. The focus is on 26 priority reforms in network industries, which includes 3 digital communications projects, most notably the Streamline approval of Wayleave applications at Municipal level (National Standard Bylaw for the deployment of electronic communication facilities 2023)

Municipalities who would like more information about the bylaws and their implementation can contact Ms Tsebe on dtsebe01@gmail.com

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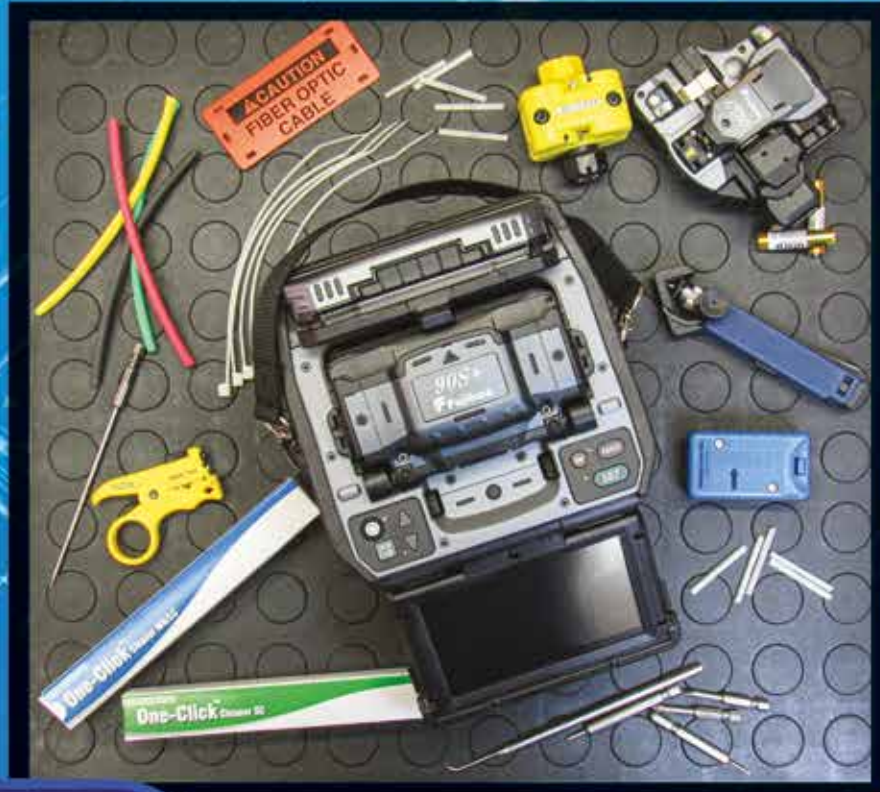
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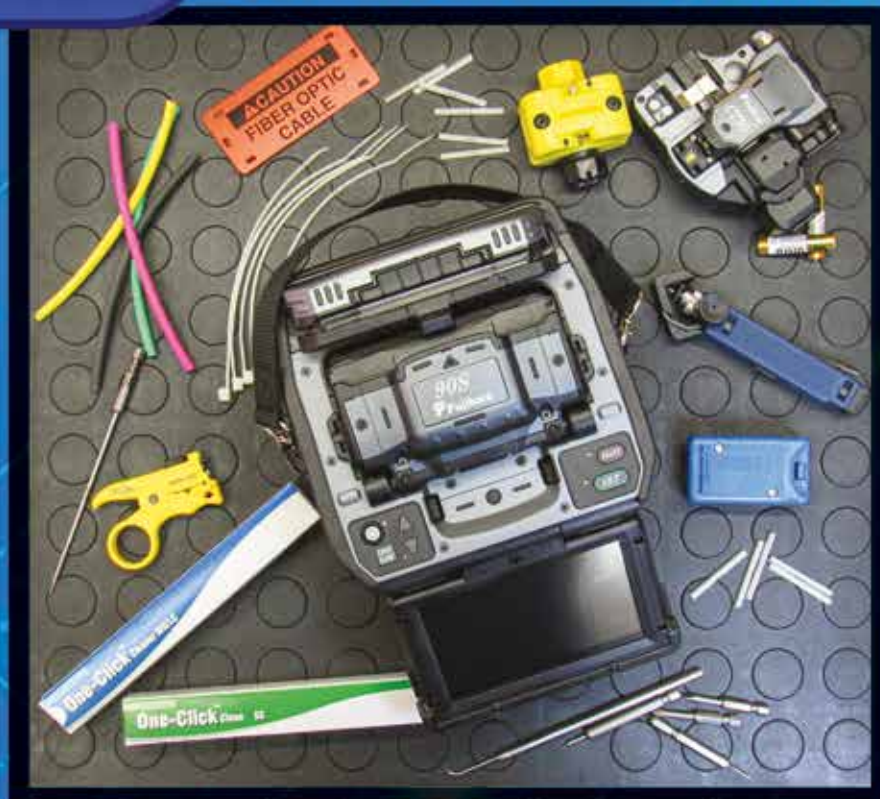
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IN CONVERSATION WITH



When you get to do what you love, every day, all day!

I am Fran Swart, I work for Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, looking after Partnerships and Strategic Client Engagements. I have been with Harambee for 5 years and love what I do and the people and partners I work with. At Harambee we wake up every morning looking at how to solve the problem of Youth Unemployment in South Africa – a large and critical task. I am a wife and mother to two sons, two stepchildren, three cats (one adopted who still lives in my garden and won't let me touch her) and I pretend to love running but really only do it because then I can eat sweets.

Q What energises you about your work?

I am fortunate that my work allows me to make a meaningful impact on people's lives, getting up every day doing purposeful work – really making a difference. Seeing people succeed and achieve their goals is incredibly rewarding, and it brings me great joy to help them reach their full potential.

Q What's one piece of advice that greatly impacted you and your career trajectory?

Something that has greatly impacted my career trajectory is to always be kind, empathetic, and understanding towards others. By fostering a culture of kindness and care, we can create a positive and supportive work environment that empowers everyone to succeed.

Q What is something that you believe now that had never occurred to you before?

It has to be the incredible power of compassion, empathy and mostly sincerity in leadership. By actively listening to and understanding the experiences and perspectives of others, being the best version of yourself, you can, and to build strong relationships and create a culture of trust and support.

Q Do or did you have a woman leader as a mentor or are there specific women who inspired you and why?

Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to have had the support and guidance of several caring and compassionate mentors, both male and female and even today I am fortunate to work for several amazing women. Many of them act as mentors for other women without them even knowing it. Their leadership has helped me grow both personally and professionally, and I continue to be inspired by their kindness and generosity. When I started out at Harambee I worked for Maryana Iskander (previous CEO of Harambee and current CEO of Wikimedia Foundation). I recall being intimidated by her but as I got to know her I was astounded by the fact that you can be very strong and very kind at the same time. Through her example I learnt many lessons about leadership and about being a better human being in general.



IN CONVERSATION WITH

Q How do you unplug from work?

I make it a priority to disconnect and engage in community-care activities that help me recharge my batteries and bring balance to my life. I am actively involved in my community, this includes the adoption of a nearby park, involvement in a feeding scheme, part of my local ward committee. I also think there is nothing wrong with a little bit of retail therapy 😊

Q What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders?

Lead with kindness, empathy, and compassion. By embodying these qualities, we can create a nurturing and supportive environment that inspires our teams to achieve their full potential and create positive change in the world.

Q What's a leadership lesson that you've learnt that's unique to being a female leader?

As a female leader, I value and actively foster a supportive and inclusive workplace culture that cultivates diversity and encourages everyone to speak up and recognises the importance of their unique contributions. Kindness and compassion can unlock a team's full potential and inspire greater innovation and creativity.

Q What is the CollectiveX & How can companies get involved?

A new initiative I am fortunate to be involved in is the CollectiveX. With the ever-increasing unemployment rate in SA, we understood that we had to widen this spectrum and after significant research realised that there are conservatively at least 66 000 digital vacancies across the economy. Much of this work is sadly outsourced to alternative geographies and could be delivered in South Africa, particularly in a time when our country desperately needs these jobs.

The problem we aim to tackle is the critical shortage of digital skills in our country. We have identified several pain points that require collective action, focused effort, and targeted solutions:





1. Critical shortage of digital skills in the country.
2. Lengthy and costly process to build and scale the digital skills pipeline.
3. Fragmented and systemically broken skilling architecture and enabling system.
4. Businesses lacking the bandwidth and capacity to address the crisis individually, as it goes beyond individual spheres of influence.

The Collective X initiative proposes a comprehensive solution to these challenges. We have established a single national digital skills initiative that enables the digital skills supply chain to deliver the right digital skills at the right time and at the right price through a coordinated ecosystem approach. This initiative will be facilitated by the CollectiveX Entity, a legal not-for-profit entity that will serve as a private sector-led intermediary, activating and coordinating the digital skills ecosystem to achieve our national digital skills goals. We believe that by leveraging mutual interests, collective strength, and collective action, we can make a significant impact on the digital skills crisis in our country and that together, we can influence ecosystem innovation, drive systemic change, and implement best practices.

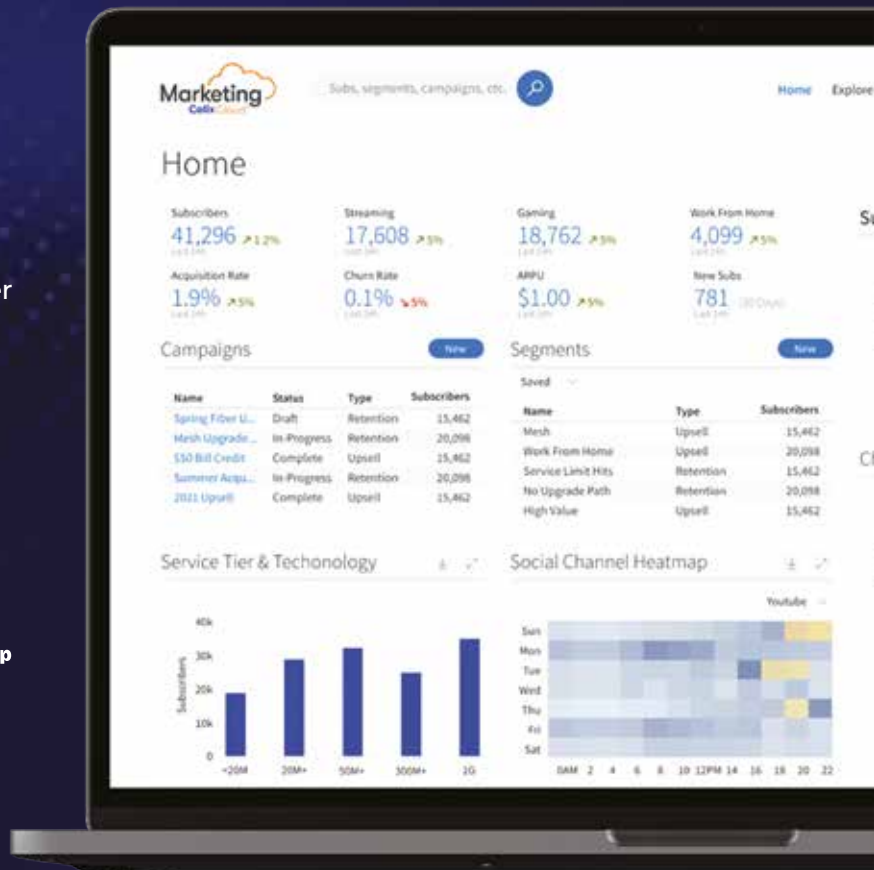
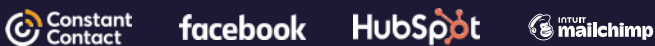
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The award-winning Calix Marketing Cloud is the only platform that is purpose-built for the broadband industry, enabling Altnets/ISPs to generate powerful insights so they can:

-  Attract and engage new audiences
-  Identify low, medium and high subscriber churn risks
-  Identify upsell opportunities
-  Segment your subscribers to deliver messages that resonate

Integrated with best in class digital platforms.



Itayi Mangonga appointed as New Country Leader for South Africa

Software AG is pleased to confirm the appointment of Itayi Mandonga as the organization's new country leader for South Africa, effective from 1st July. Mandonga will use his responsible and principled approach to technology implementation and working with the strong team in Software AG, will help customers to adopt emerging and innovative technologies and extend their integration into the cloud.



With cloud technology as the foundation for ongoing and accelerated digital transformation, Software AG aims to empower businesses in South Africa to not only achieve cost and efficiency benefits but also establish robust security and compliance processes.

Itayi Mandonga commented: *"I am very passionate about the use of technology to help companies achieve ambitious business objectives. Today, more than ever before, being a connected organization is a minimum requirement, and being innovative is how you move forward. Software AG helps companies to do both. I am taking the leadership role at an exciting time in Software AG. We have recently added StreamSets data integration into our offering and have some exciting hybrid integration announcements in the pipeline that will really help our customers with their digital transformation."*

Itayi Mandonga brings extensive experience in the ICT industry, having held positions at BSW Data, Paradigm Systems, and Oracle before joining Software AG in 2019. He succeeds Kholiwe Makhohliso, who has departed the company. Mandonga holds a BSc and a Masters in Business Leadership.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT)

BUDGET VOTE 2023

Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, **Mondli Gungubele** accompanied by Deputy Minister, **Philly Mapulane** to deliver the DCDT's Budget Vote Speech

17 May 2023 15h00 Cape Town International Convention Centre, Western Cape

#BudgetVote2023

- @MondliGungubele
- @PhillyMapulane
- @CommsZA
- Department of Communications and Digital Technologies
- @ParliamentofRSA

Juanita Clark was invited to attend the budget vote speech in Cape Town, as well as the dinner hosted by the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, Mr Mondli Gungubele. Juanita was invited to make a short speech during the dinner which comprised of leadership from the ICT sector.

communications & digital technologies
Department of Communications and Digital Technologies
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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WIOCC Group appoints Mohammed Bouhelal to help accelerate the DRC's digital transformation

WIOCC Group, Africa's converged open-access digital infrastructure leader, has brought in experienced senior connectivity and data services professional Mohammed Bouhelal to establish its presence in the DRC – an important new market for the company, with the potential to become one of the fastest-growing digital economies on the African continent.

Mohammed will work with major enterprises in DRC, particularly within the banking, insurance and financial services sectors - as well as international and local carriers, cloud operators, content providers, fixed-line and mobile telcos, and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) - to help them take advantage of the wealth of opportunities presented by the country's improving access to digital infrastructure and enhanced international connectivity.

"I want to establish WIOCC Group, the parent company of Africa's digital hyperscale carrier WIOCC and the continent's fastest-growing data centre company, Open Access Data Centres (OADC), as the leading enabler to the DRC's digital transformation", stated Mr Bouhelal, Managing Director of OADC DRC, a WIOCC Group Company.

Unique converged open digital infrastructure offering

Bouhelal added: *"Our unique converged, open-access digital infrastructure (CODI) offering - carrier-neutral, open-access data centre facilities connecting to resilient, hyperscale, open-access, subsea and terrestrial networks - and a rich, vibrant digital ecosystem will help boost the DRC's economy and will expedite digital transformation in the country".*

DRC's first open-access, carrier-neutral data centre

WIOCC Group is building the DRC's first open-access, carrier-neutral data centre, OADC Kinshasa, which will stimulate the country's digital ecosystem and economy by delivering converged open digital infrastructure services, including tailored colocation and reliable connectivity, when it goes live later this year.

Located in Kinshasa, within TEXAF's Silkin Village - one of the largest digital hubs in Central Africa – the 2MW-capable OADC Kinshasa is a partnership between transformational pan-African data centre operator, OADC, and TEXAF, a major long-term investor in the DRC's economy.

As the first third-party colocation data centre in the country, OADC Kinshasa is a strategic foundation for digital infrastructure improvement in the DRC, which the World Bank reported was one of the most under-developed digital economies in Africa. It will not only offer businesses a viable alternative to self-build and self-manage data centre facilities, with all the dedicated resource, expertise, management time and cost benefits that come with that, but also support the cloud infrastructure needs of a wide range of businesses and enterprises, en-

abling them to improve efficiency, expedite digitisation initiatives and more effectively service business and customer needs. Carriers too will benefit, because OADC Kinshasa offers them connectivity revenue opportunities and the opportunity to extend their service portfolios, by including a managed colocation service capability.

Within the open-access, carrier-neutral facility, WIOCC will create a unique and vibrant digital ecosystem – including international cloud operators, content providers, multiple carriers and ISPs – that will transform the country's digital infrastructure ecosystem.

As the country's first open access, carrier neutral data centre, OADC Kinshasa is expected to be influential in stimulating the country's internet penetration growth, which was only 17.4% at the start of 2022, compared to 43% for Africa as a whole and 68.6% for the rest of the world.

The quality of the facility, which will be Tier-III Certified by the Uptime Institute, together with its vibrant interconnect ecosystem, will draw key cloud and content services into the DRC. Improved access to connectivity, cloud and internet services is expected to increase consumer use of online applications such as Facebook. In April 2022, only 5.4% of the DRC population subscribed to Facebook, compared to 18.6% for Africa as a whole and 38.1% for the rest of the world.

Kinshasa-based Mohammed, formerly CEO of fibre company Benya DRC and before that CEO of Liquid Telecom Sudan, will be supported in his work to help accelerate the DRC's digital transformation by DRC telecoms sector specialist Huguette Kalala, Country Marketing Manager - DRC.

OPERATION VULINDLELA

Supporting the Implementation of Priority Structural Reforms



PROGRESS UPDATE 2023/24 Q1 Report



national treasury
Department:
National Treasury
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Since the establishment of Operation Vulindlela in October 2020, government has made meaningful strides in implementing structural reforms to stabilise South Africa's energy supply, establish a competitive logistics network, reduce the cost and improve the quality of digital communications and reform the visa regime to enable businesses to attract the skills they need to grow, and to make it easier for tourists to experience a world-class African destination.

Operation Vulindlela (OV), which is a joint initiative of the Presidency and National Treasury, is focused on accelerating the implementation of 35 priority reforms which have been identified for their potential impact on economic growth and job creation. New reforms which have been identified since OV was initiated include creating an enabling environment for hemp and cannabis; developing a strategy for the devolution of passenger rail; putting in place an enabling regime for State-Owned Enterprises to procure efficiently; and eliminating the backlog in title deeds for subsidised housing. The progress dashboard below provides an assessment of the current status of each of these reforms.

As of the first quarter of 2023, eleven reforms (or approximately one third) have been completed. A further 14 reforms are on track or progressing well. This report demonstrates that over half of the OV reforms are now either completed or on track to be completed within the next 12 months, with work ongoing to ensure the delivery of all priority reforms.

There has been notable progress in several areas since the previous quarter: the number of completed reforms has risen from three to eleven. Newly finalised reforms include the re-engineering of the water-use license application process; regulatory changes to enable municipalities to procure power

from independent power producers; streamlining the process for wayleave approvals; and the gazetting of the rapid deployment policy and policy direction. The long-anticipated release of the work visa review and accompanying implementation plan has been an especially important step.

The figures in the report present a detailed summary of the current progress dashboard, indicating changes since the previous quarter.

Download the full report [here](#).

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



Expert Speakers

OPENING & WELCOME - **Juanita Clark**, CEO, Digital Council Africa

KEYNOTE ADDRESS - **Tracey Swart**, Portfolio Executive, Digital & GBS, Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator



Jennifer Latifi
Optic Fibre
Student Leader



Thabang Mkhuma
Technical Advisor:
4IR, MICT SETA



Palesa Antony
4IR Programme
Coordinator, mLab



Luvo Grey
Managing Director,
EC Internet



Kemoneiloe Phatoli
CEO National
Youth ICT Council



Anda Ngcaba
Co-Director,
UCT FinHub

In celebration of Youth Month, the Digital Council hosted a virtual panel discussion on Digital Youth Development. A phenomenal lineup of speakers discussed key strategies to support and grow the digital economy in Africa through digital inclusion for youth as well as how we can actively pursue opportunities for youth participation in the economy.

Juanita welcomed guests and speakers reminding us of the tremendous opportunity that the digital economy poses for the future of young people in this country and that we need to harness and leverage its power effectively and responsibly to create a fantastic future.

The keynote address was delivered by **Tracy Swart**, Portfolio Executive for Digital at Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator. She encouraged unemployed young people to join and make full use of the [SAYouth.mobi](#) platform and all the wonderful opportunities it has to offer.

The discussion was led by **Kemoneiloe Phatoli**, CEO of National Youth ICT Council. She was joined by **Anda Ngcaba**, Co-Director of UCT FinHub, **Jennifer Latifi**, Optic Fibre Student Leader, **Thabang Mkhuma**, Technical Advisor: 4IR at MICT SETA, **Palesa Antony**, 4IR Programme Coordinator at mLab and **Luvo Grey**, Managing Director of EC Internet.

Some of the goals of this discussion:

- To contribute to continued studies into the growth of students and young professionals operating in the Digital Economy.
- The key objective is to close the gap in the digital divide amongst young people, by engaging on the gap digital skills and opportunities.
- To educate young people about the future of work and opportunities it holds (4IR initiatives)
- To develop programs with our stakeholders, that will have direct impact to the development of young people in our country.

A recording of this insightful and thought provoking conversation can be found on our [YouTube channel](#).

MAKE A DIFFERENCE THIS YOUTH DAY WITH SMARTWORKS

Empower young work-seekers with second-hand, work-appropriate clothing for interviews and first jobs.



EVERYONE CAN GET INVOLVED THIS YOUTH MONTH!

This Youth Month we would like to invite you to join us in this incredible opportunity to make a meaningful difference and help unlock the potential of our South African youth by decluttering your closets and donating your gently used, work-appropriate clothing to Smartworks.

Smartworks is an initiative driven by our social partner Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, that provides young work-seekers with quality second-hand work-appropriate clothing to wear for an interview or to help them dress appropriately for their first job.

GET YOUR ENTIRE OFFICE INVOLVED!

Print or digitally distribute [*this flyer*](#) to your co-workers and employees!

Collected clothing can be dropped off at:

Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, 5th Floor, 19 Ameshoff Street, Braamfontein, 2000
Please mark all packages for the attention of Sandile Ngakane and Smartworks.

GUIDELINES:

- List of the items needed: suits, coats, jackets, formal shirts, skirts, chinos, shoes, ties, belts, handbags, briefcases, and more.
- We accept clothing for both men and women, of all sizes.
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Your contributions will go a long way in empowering and inspiring young individuals as they embark on their professional journeys.

Let's join hands to make a positive impact in our community.

If your company would like to get involved in a drive, but don't know where to start, [**contact us**](#) and we will help!

Thank you for your support and generosity.



Connecting You to the Future
Connectez-vous au Futur

Afrifiber launches its state of the art fibre optic network in Djibouti

Afrifiber held a launch ceremony at the Djibouti Palace Kempinski to inaugurate a state-of-the-art fiber-optic network that is providing internet services to businesses and consumers in the Republic of Djibouti. The launch of Afrifiber marks a significant move to democratise access to broadband and revolutionize internet service provision and connectivity.

This landmark event is not just about technology - it's about empowering communities, bridging the digital divide, and creating limitless opportunities for progress. By enhancing digital connectivity, Afrifiber will improve the productivity of workers and businesses, increase access to markets and information, and foster innovation and entrepreneurship.

The event was attended by His Excellency Radwan Abdillahi Bahdon, the Minister of Communication, Posts and Telecommunication, His Excellency M. Mohamed Abdoukader Moussa Helem, the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, His Excellency M. Kassim Haroun Ali, the Minister Delegate for Decentralization, His Excellency M. Hassan Houmed Ibrahim, the Minister for Infrastructure and Equipment, His Excellency M. Moustapha Mohamed Mahamoud, the Minister for National Education and Vocational Training and His Excellency M. Moumin Hassan Barreh, the Minister of Muslim Affairs and Wakfs.

“ *The Government of Djibouti, under the leadership of His Excellency the President, is executing Vision 2035, a clear roadmap developed by the Government to raise per-capita income through diversification of the economy and investment in human capital. This is a hugely exciting and optimistic time for the nation, and we are privileged to be a part of it.* ”

Sohail Sultan
Chairman iibGroup Holdings

www.afrifiber.com



Get in touch

+253 21 341 610

info@afrifiber.com

From top to bottom:

- M. Radwan Abdillahi Bahdon
- M. Moustapha Mohamed Mahamoud & M. Kassim Haroun Ali
- Sohail Sultan
- Amira Ahmed & Ifrah Ali Cheik
- Wiaan Vermaak





The Digital Council Africa has welcomed the published National Policy on Rapid Deployment of Electronic communications Networks and Facilities, which was signed in March 2023 by incoming Minister Mondli Gungubele.

Following consultation with relevant Ministers, the Authority, other stakeholders and the public, the policy was approved by Cabinet and signed into force.

THE POLICY STATES: National coverage of broadband infrastructure is necessary for the creation of a digital economy and digital society. All spheres of government must enable the rapid deployment of broadband infrastructure to enable universal digital services. Red tape across government spheres must be reduced to eliminate delays in granting approvals and minimise costs for the deployment of broadband infrastructure.

The intention of the policy is twofold.

Firstly it is to provide a process that licensees should follow to access property in order to install services – it in doing so it protects the rights of property owners, and secondly it seeks to provide a mechanism to deal with disputes, including financial compensation, which may come about between property owners and licensees, and other affected parties.

In Section 6.1 the policy re-iterates the rights of licensees to enter upon any property to deploy broadband infrastructure, provided they exercise these rights respectfully and with due caution and comply with relevant rules for access. It states:

6.1.1 Licensees have the right to enter upon and use public and private land nationally for the deployment of broadband infrastructure, subject to paragraphs 4.4 and 6.4.

6.1.2 Licensees are entitled to select and access land nationally to construct, maintain, repair, alter or remove broadband infrastructure, subject to paragraphs 4.4 and 6.4.

6.1.3 Licensees retain ownership of any broadband infrastructure constructed.

It further states that:

- Rapid approvals are required to access property to deploy broadband infrastructure;
- Government entities in all spheres of government must permit licensees to use its servitudes to deploy broadband infrastructure and must share its property and infrastructure for this purpose;
- A dispute resolution mechanism is required to resolve disputes about the manner a licensee intends to exercise its rights and disputes about compensation;

Duplication of Infrastructure

The policy further seeks to deal with duplication of infrastructure deployment through the implementation of a tracking system. The Department of Communication and Digital Technologies will be compiling geographic information about the type and location of broadband infrastructure which is critical for coordinating and implementing rapid deployment. This will ensure that the location of existing infrastructure is identified accurately and speedily, sharing of infrastructure to minimise duplication, and prevention of damage to existing infrastructure. Access to such information will furthermore reduce planning complexity and assist stakeholders with identifying under-served areas.



The objectives of this policy are to:

- a. Balance the rights of licensees to enter onto private and public land with the rights of property owners, by ensuring compliance with reasonability and due care;
- b. Facilitate access to rights of way, wayleaves, servitudes and other approvals with emphasis on intergovernmental co-operation;
- c. Enable the rapid deployment of broadband infrastructure in an efficient, cost-effective, environmentally responsible manner;
- d. Facilitate the achievement of the goals and targets set out in the National Broadband Policy, 2013 - SA Connect;
- e. Promote the sharing of broadband infrastructure;
- f. Enable the development of a dispute resolution mechanism.

Juanita Clark, CEO of the Digital Council Africa said that it was 'pleased' that the policy has finally been published. Earlier this year government published the Model By Law for Deployment of Electronic Communications Facilities, a critical first step to deploy broadband infrastructure in local authorities. The model bylaw's intention is to create an enabling regulatory environment at local government level. "The National Policy on Rapid Deployment of Electronic communications Networks and Facilities, combined with the Bylaws for Deployment of Electronic Communications Facilities at Municipal level, will certainly aid in the rapid deployment of telecommunication infrastructure, if implemented correctly. We will continue to work with the new administration to provide the necessary support to ensure that our members are made aware of these policy changes and employ them" she said.

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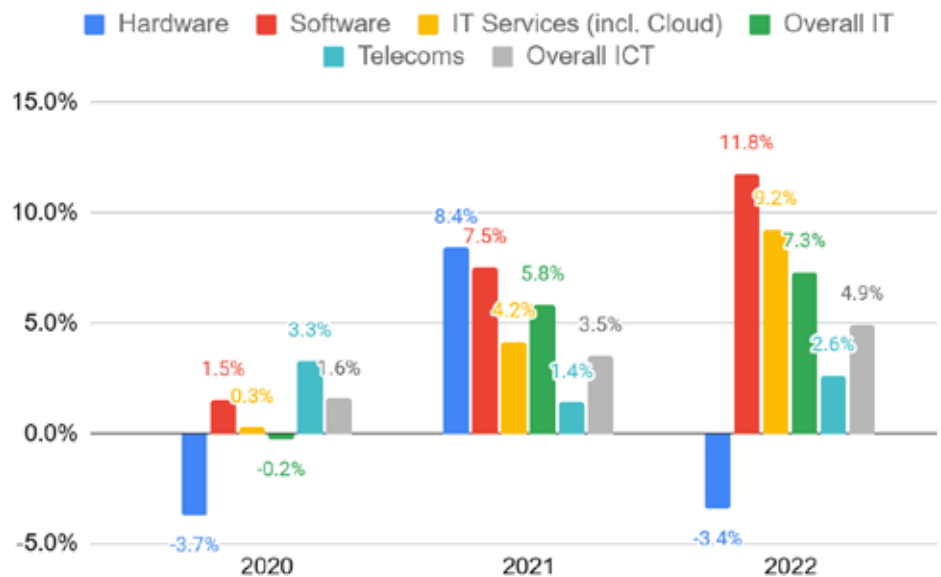


BMIT Shines the Spotlight on Diverse Performances in the ICT Sector

BMIT's recent *South Africa ICT Market Sizing and Overview Report*, confirmed good revenue growth in the ICT sector at almost 5% overall during 2022, but one had to look for the opportunities as we saw very uneven fortunes across different segments

These differences can be seen in this market summary chart for the last three years, which also shows slightly higher growth for three years running now.

It was the sterling 40% growth in IT software and services, itself boosted by public cloud services, which supported the health 7.3% growth in the sector as a whole. The significant pace of migration to cloud has been sustained since the early days of lockdowns. Much of the business is going to multinational hyper-scalers, who have invested both in local real estate and in packaging advanced features to clients, such as data analytics and deep artificial intelligence capability, which is now becoming widely imbedded in applications.



SA ICT Market Growth in 2020 - 2022 (BMIT)

Cloud migration and remote working have changed the nature of demand for broadband connectivity. Ironically, just as users are becoming more dependent on connectivity to reach cloud, loadshedding and vandalism have impacted reliability. Cybersecurity has also become more critical and more complex, as companies strive to become POPIA compliant, whilst enterprise networks now extend to homes and smartphones. BMIT's direct enterprise research showed that a Zero-Trust security framework and Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) are the top newer technologies larger organisations have implemented, with another 30% of these respondents indicating their intention to implement these technologies.

BMIT forecasts the growth outlook for 2022 - 2027 at 12.3% CAGR for Cloud services and other IT Services combined.

Hardware slow-down

Hardware sales, on the other hand, have witnessed a considerable slow-down, following the surge in demand for PCs during the pandemic, and further overall hardware refresh spending in 2021. The introduction of Windows 11 has failed to drive demand for new PCs which has dropped, with a notable exception in education. BMIT's research reveals that revamping government procurement processes could unlock growth opportunities.

Telecoms

Revenue growth in the telecoms sector was more modest than for IT, but positive nevertheless, at 2.6% year-on-year. The FTTH market continues to be a strong driver of growth, in spite of consumers feeling the pinch, as work-from-home remains popular and the spirited fibre 'land grab' has continued apace, shifting from leafy suburbs (which are now all but covered) to smaller towns. There is also a widespread shift in focus 'down the pyramid' to lower-income suburbs, where some interesting deployment models based on pay-as-you-go (and even 'pay-as-you-can-afford') principles are emerging, which could expand rapidly if they prove to be feasible and scalable. Nevertheless, coverage gaps remain a barrier for those in under-served areas, where fixed-wireless services continue to be an important gap-filler. Loadshedding has pushed up costs while reducing available customer spend.

The business segment saw a slight bounce-back in 2022 following softening of the market in 2020 and 2021, but would have been better without loadshedding as businesses require highly reliable links for their mission critical applications, and even more so now that their applications have been migrated to the cloud and where security depends on connectivity to monitor for, and respond to, threats.

Business fixed data services growth also continues to be dampened by the move to lower-cost broadband connectivity and substitution of traditional VPN services by SD-WAN, even though overall demand for connectivity is increasing.

Mobile Growth

Mobile operator growth is still driven by data services, although this growth is moderating, whilst voice revenues are actually declining. Operators are successfully turning to new revenue streams from content and financial services

South Africa has been lagging the global MVNO growth trend until recently but we are now catching up as mobile operators open their networks - pushed by ICASA and pulled by the opportunities presented. This provides a unique opportunity for the industry to participate.

Mobile operators are investing heavily to increase the uptime of their sites during loadshedding, whilst battling with battery theft in urban and remote sites.

The Report's projections across the various sectors indicate a positive outlook for the sector, and BMIT's view on which sub-sectors should see longer term growth trends, and which are flat or in decline, even as the industry navigates its way through the difficulties and uncertainties of loadshedding.





m4a

OUR PRODUCTS BUILD NETWORKS

m4a (Pty) Ltd is a specialist manufacturer of composite and plastics products with a focus on utilities networks and infrastructure markets.

In-house design, tool making, and our various manufacturing capabilities, provide end-to-end development, manufacture and supply of solutions to the client.

m4a complies to global mark and specification schemes, and is ISO9001 certified. Investment into injection moulding, compression moulding, and extrusion technologies make m4a a novel manufacturing enterprise.

Our flagship product lines include:

- **axsCHAMBERS™** - A range of round grade level vaults (also referred to as underground chambers), and access points, for use in telecommunication, water, and other utility network builds.
- **fibreFLEX™** - Rectangular or square vaults similarly used in network builds.
- **fibreDUCT™ and optiDUCT™** - Telecommunication utility network conduit systems.
- **corruDUCT™** - Structured wall, lightweight piping used extensively in telecommunications, electrical, agriculture, and civil engineering infrastructure.
- **civilworks™** - Polymer and composite infrastructure products for the deployment of civils, electrical, water, telecommunications and other utility networks applications.
- **cnktCLOSURES™** - A selection of connectivity solutions including splice enclosures, cable and accessories which encourage "Right-fit Architecture" for cost saving network design.
- **fibreCABLE™** - End to end solutions including Heavy Duty Duct Cable, Micro Blown Cable and Aerial Cable Short Span for telecommunications networks.

Our raw material processing capability:

m4a continues to grow rapidly, and we will process some 1300T per month in 2023. This includes:

- **DMC** - A fibre-glass based composite product range of products.
- **PP** - Polypropylene, a plastic used in injection moulding.
- **HDPE** - High density polyethylene, a plastic used in extrusion of ducts and pipes.

Our factories and warehousing:

m4a is headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa and is the manufacturing hub that supplies our domestic, African, US, UK, European, and Asian customer base. Our manufacturing facility covers 38 000 sqm (409 000 sq. ft) with 7 000 sqm (75 000 sq. ft) under roof.

Where we operate:

We have our manufacturing plant in Johannesburg, South Africa: with Sales and (Philippines), Cedar Rapids (USA), Bucharest (Romania) and London (UK).

In summary:

m4a is the leading manufacturer and supplier of composite products serving multiple industry sectors across the globe.

The team of dedicated personnel ensure that our ethos of dynamic, innovative, customer-centric service is upheld and that our customers always come first.



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www.m4a.co.za

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WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



Juanita shared her insights about the State of the Digital Economy at the NEPAD Business Foundation's digital knowledge-sharing series themed, "Envisioning Digital Transformation to solve challenges through technology enablement and how to get started."

The primary objective of this session was to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, perspectives, and context regarding crucial digital transformation readiness topics between the private and public sectors. With the aim of establishing greater alignment on creating the most efficient and expedient growth pathways for a burgeoning digital economy, with the ultimate goal of closing the knowledge and strategic direction gap between the private and public sectors.

This session was attended by key decision-makers, policy-makers, Chief Information Officers (CIOs), Heads of Departments (HODs), and Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) from both the private and public sectors.

Travel Indaba



Juanita Clark was invited to speak at the 2023 Travel Indaba where she discussed the growth in digital transformation and how it has enabled the platform economy and job creation.



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AFL HYPERSCALE

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LOST AND FOUND

The Digital Council Africa has an [Equipment Monitoring page](#) on its website. The aim is to curb theft of equipment.

To view a list of stolen equipment, you can access the list [here](#).

We encourage members to regularly send through the serial numbers of stolen equipment, and inform us when equipment is recovered to ensure that the information remains up to date and accurate.

Information can be sent to Reesha Iyer at reesha@digitalcouncil.africa

In addition, it remains the responsibility of the industry to regularly do spot checks against the serial numbers of contractor equipment to ensure that stolen equipment is identified and that culprits are eradicated from the industry.

Companies wishing to purchase second hand equipment should compare the equipment serial numbers against those listed on the website.