

# CONEXT

The Official Newsletter of the Digital Council Africa

February 2024 Edition

A look-back at our first **MEMBER ONLY** conference

Diarise this: Explore Upcoming Events

Empowering Young Women - Our second group of learners commence Optic Fiber training

Government Announces Jobs Boost

Connecting Minds, Transforming Futures: The Collective X's guiding principles for an Inclusive Digital Skills Ecosystem



Digital Council

Issue #016



## WELCOME FROM JUANITA

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great excitement that we bring you the first issue of Conext for 2024. This publication is the official Newsletter of the Digital Council Africa, and its aim is to not only let our members know what we have been busy with in the organisation, but also and probably more importantly, to provide a platform to our members to let us know what they are up to.

Remember that Conext belongs to you, our members, and the publication is distributed to more than 10 000 people in sub-Saharan Africa. So we invite you to make use of this platform to share a thought leadership insight with us, an update about your company, or product information that may benefit other members.

Last year, our **Connect Member Summit** brought together our esteemed members and partners for an exclusive, members-only event. Held at the end of the year, this summit served as a platform for fostering dialogue, stimulating conversation, and connecting in an informal space. As we came together to celebrate the culmination of another year, Conext Connect served as a vital platform to equip our members with invaluable insights into the current state of the sector while unveiling the ambitious plans that lay on the horizon. As part of this commitment, we also unveiled our highly anticipated annual research during the conference, which was available exclusively to our members (read more about Connect [here](#)).

The Digital Council believes that the digital economy poses an incredible opportunity for the continent to create jobs and we remain committed to the inclusion of the youth in the digital jobs market. In our ongoing efforts to support our country's youth, the Digital Council Africa, in collaboration with our partners MICT SETA, is very proud to announce the implementation of our second Intensive Optic Fibre Training. The 25 female candidates commenced their training on 18 January (read more about this [here](#)).

A well governed environment, where the right policies enable investment, is critical to ensure that the digital economy continues to grow.

Working towards this is at the heart of what the Digital Council stands for.

As we finalise our strategic goals for the year, 2024 is looking to be our busiest year yet. We look forward to this journey with you as we build a connected continent where everyone has equal opportunity to participate in the digital economy.

Thank you for your continued support,

*Juanita*

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# FROM THE OFFICE

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## 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](mailto:nadene@digitalcouncil.africa)

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## 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**



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## 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.

**Next Issue:** April 2024

**Theme:** Freedom Day

Contributions can be sent to Nadene Reignier at [nadene@digitalcouncil.africa](mailto:nadene@digitalcouncil.africa)

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## 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](#).**



## Proud Partnership: Joining Forces to Empower Youth Futures

SA Youth was officially launched by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Youth Day June 16, 2021 as part of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) and serves to aggregate opportunities and link unemployed young people to jobs and work experiences. SA Youth is a national pathway management network, an initiative that brings together eight government departments led by the Department of Employment and Labour, in a strong partnership with Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator and other organisations, to form a network that will support young people to find pathways into the economy.

Through these partnerships, we have developed an online platform called SAYouth.mobi. Youth can create a profile, view opportunities for learning and earning, and receive support through multiple channels. SAYouth.mobi has been zero-rated by all mobile networks so that it can be accessed by young people from anywhere in the country at absolutely no cost. This complements existing efforts to create physical spaces where young people can go to access information, opportunities and support including the NYDA centres and will include the 127 labour centres operated by the Department of Labour and Employment in every province.

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

## UPCOMING EVENT

EXCLUSIVE  
MEMBER  
WEBINAR

### STATE OF THE MARKET: A look into the Digital Council Africa's Annual Market Research

We're on a mission to equip our members with invaluable insights into the current state of the sector. In line with this commitment, we will be sharing our annual research which offers a comprehensive understanding of the present landscape of the sector. Equipping members with the knowledge needed to shape the sector's future.



8 March 2024 | 10 - 11 | Members are invited to RSVP  
to [Reesha@digitalcouncil.africa](mailto:Reesha@digitalcouncil.africa) no later than 7 March 2024

EXPERT SPEAKER

Bora Varilyagci | CEO, Digitalthings



# Digital Council

# CONNECT

SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE | 30 NOVEMBER



## ABOUT THE EVENT

Our Connect Member Summit took place at the end of last year. This members-only event, dedicated to our members and partners, provided a platform for fostering dialogue, stimulating conversation, and, most importantly, connecting in an informal space.

The event offered members a unique opportunity to engage with and hear directly from top CEOs and leaders in the infrastructure sector. Delving into their strategies and gaining firsthand market perspectives.

At Connect, we were on a mission to equip our members with invaluable insights into the current state of the sector while unveiling the ambitious plans that lay on the horizon. In line with this commitment, we also unveiled our highly anticipated annual research during the conference, available exclusively to our members.



## THE LINE-UP

① The event was opened by a key note address delivered by **Minister Mondli Gungubele**, Department of Communications & Digital Technologies.

② After which **Dr Andile Ngcaba**, President, Digital Council Africa, extended a warm welcome to all attendees.

Dr Ngcaba shared valuable insights on the growth and expansion of the digital sector in South Africa over the last 30 years. He pointed out some of the remarkable milestones that was achieved by the sector in the last 3 decades. A Key take-away for the audience is that the sector has a lot to be proud of .



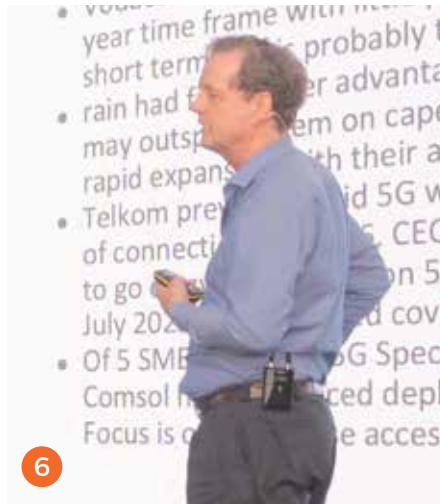
9 **Dobek Pater (3)**, Analyst, Africa Analysis, shared an insightful presentation on the topic of **Building blocks towards a Gigabit society**.



9 **Juanita Clark and Marius Engelbrecht (4)**, Senior Strategy Consultant, Huawei Technologies Southern Africa Region, had a conversation on the pre-provisioning of fibre services.



5 **Dietlof Mare, CEO, Maziv**, Presented on the topic of **Scale to Reach and how fibre network operators are getting ready to connect under serviced areas**.



6 **Christopher Geerdts, MD, BMIT**, shared a fascinating look into the **5G market and South Africa's road to 6G**.



7 **Eric Festraets**, Strategic Marketing Director, Fixed Networks at Nokia, shared a global perspective in his **Let there be light for everyone** presentation.



8 **Valencia Risaba**, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Liquid Intelligent Technologies, moderated a Panel Discussion titled **From the trenches: A look at the Fibre market in South Africa**. She was joined on stage by **Shane Chorley**, CEO, Frogfoot, **Van Zyl Botha**, CEO, Herotel, **Philip Wessels**, CEO, Open Fibre and **Toni Pellegrino**, MD, Nokia SA.



9 Moderator **Andile 'Stof' Stofile**, Founder, Leadership With A Soul Institute spoke to **Asif Valley**, National Technology Manager, Microsoft, **Eckart Zollner**, Business Development, Digital Parks, **Dr Angus Hay**, Group Executive: IT & Partners, ADC, **Michele McCann**, Head of Interconnection & Peering, Teraco Data Environments and **Dr Ayotunde Coker**, CEO, Open Access Data Centres about **Creating value: The role of datacentres & cloud in shaping Africa's economy in greenfield environments.**



10 Moderator **Nthabeleng Mokiti-mi-Dlamini** Head: Field Marketing, Sub-Saharan Africa at Nokia had a Fireside chat about **Unleashing the exponential growth of digital jobs in South Africa** with **Evan Jones**, CEO, The Collective X and **Ziaad Suleman**, Board member, The Collective X & CCO, EOH. This insightful discussion helped framed the opportunities for employment in the digital space, and how organisations can get involved.



11 Moderator **Nomvuyiso Batyi**, CEO, ACT for SA spoke to **Simon Harvey**, CCO, MAST Services, **Sean Swanson**, Commercial Director, Helios Towers and **Anne McLaren**, CEO, American Tower, South Africa on the topic of **Beyond the Steel: What's next for towerco's.**



12 Guests catching up during tea break.

13 **Juanita Clark**, CEO, DCA had an enlightening conversation with Cell C CEO **Jorge Mendes** about his plans for the future during their fireside chat **Lessons from an underdog: Building the Cell C Vision.**



**15** Moderator **Bora Varliyagci**, CEO, Digitalthings spoke to **Louise Pillay**, Telecoms Equity Research Analyst, Investec, **Marius Engelbrecht**, Senior Strategy Consultant, Huawei Technologies Southern Africa Region and **Envir Fraser**, Partner & Chief Strategy Officer, Convergence Partners, during a fireside chat on the topic of **Views from an investor point of view**.



**16** A light hearted moment during one of the networking breaks.



**17** **Bora Varliyagci**, CEO, Digitalthings had an in-depth look at the **State of the Market, unveiling the 2023 DCA Market Research**. This exclusive, members-only presentation shared insights into the Annual Research Paper of the DCA.



**18** Fantastic band 'Fire 'n Ice!' entertained guests on the terrace during the post-event Connexion party.



**19** Guests indulging in some post-event fun at the Connection Party, held on the terrace right after the event.

**Join us for CONNEXT 2024**



**Digital Council**  
**CONNEXT**

SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE | 28 NOVEMBER 2024

The official AGM of the Digital Council Africa Members



## Revolutionising Africa's connectivity as WRC-23 unveils game-changing spectrum milestones

The World Radiocommunication Conference 2023 (WRC-23) was a landmark event for the global regulation of radio-frequency spectrum and geostationary-satellite orbits. The conference, which took place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 20 November to 15 December 2023, adopted revisions to the Radio Regulations, the international treaty that governs the use of these scarce and valuable resources.

Significant developments emerged, particularly in the allocation of new spectrum for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT), which is vital for the advancement of broadband connectivity. The identified spectrum ranges encompass 3,300-3,400 MHz, 3,600-3,800 MHz, 4,800-4,990 MHz, and 6,425-7,125 MHz, with implementation taking place across countries and regions.

In an innovative move, the conference also greenlit the use of high-altitude platform stations (HIPS) – essentially flying cell towers – in the 2 GHz and 2.6 GHz bands. HIPS leverage existing IMT frequencies and devices, requiring minimal infrastructure, making them perfect for bridging the digital divide in remote and rural areas. Furthermore, their ability to maintain connectivity during natural disasters adds another layer of resilience to our communication networks.

These decisions have significant implications for Africa, a continent that faces many challenges in terms of connectivity, digital inclusion, and socio-economic development. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), only about 37% of Africans had access to the internet in 2023, compared to a global average of 67%. Moreover, only about 6% of Africans have access to 5G services,

compared to a global average of 38%. The lack of connectivity hampers the delivery of essential services such as health, education, agriculture, and e-government, and limits the opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation.

The new spectrum identified by WRC-23 can help address these gaps by enabling the deployment of more affordable, reliable, and high-quality broadband services across Africa. The low-band spectrum (below 1 GHz) can provide wide-area coverage and indoor penetration, while the mid-band spectrum (in the 3.5 GHz and 6 GHz ranges) can offer higher capacity and faster speeds. These bands can support a range of applications and use cases that can benefit various sectors and segments of society, such as smart agriculture, e-health, e-learning, e-commerce, smart cities, and public safety.

The use of HIBS can also complement terrestrial networks by providing coverage in hard-to-reach areas or in situations where terrestrial infrastructure is damaged or congested. HIBS can operate at altitudes of about 20 km above the Earth's surface and cover an area of up to several hundred kilometers in diameter. They can be deployed quickly and flexibly to meet changing demand or emergency needs.

**However, to realise the full potential of these new spectrum resources, African countries need to take timely and coordinated actions to implement the decisions of WRC-23. This would include a series of strategic steps:**

- **Develop national spectrum plans and policies:** Regulators should create comprehensive national spectrum plans that align with regional and global harmonisation efforts. These plans should clearly outline how the newly allocated spectrum will be used and managed;
- **Conduct transparent spectrum allocation and licensing processes:** Regulators should ensure that the process of spectrum assignment and licensing is transparent and efficient. This can foster competition and innovation in the telecoms sector;
- **Ensure protection and coexistence of services:** Regulators need to put measures in place to ensure that existing services are protected and that new services can coexist without interference;
- **Promote infrastructure sharing and network interoperability:** By promoting infrastructure sharing and network interoperability, regulators can help reduce the cost of network deployment and improve service coverage;
- **Facilitate access to affordable devices and equipment:** Regulators can work with manufacturers and service providers to ensure that devices and equipment needed to access the newly allocated spectrum are affordable;
- **Foster an enabling environment:** Regulators should foster an enabling environment that encourages investment in and adoption of broadband services. This could involve creating favourable regulatory conditions, providing incentives for investment, and implementing policies that promote digital literacy and internet usage;
- **Regional collaboration:** Given the transboundary nature of radio-frequency spectrum, regulators might need to work regionally to ensure harmonised implementation across countries. This could involve collaborating with neighbouring countries and regional bodies to coordinate spectrum use and avoid harmful interference;
- **Prioritisation:** Regulators should prioritise actions that have the greatest potential to improve connectivity and digital inclusion. This could involve focusing on areas with low internet penetration or sectors that can benefit most from improved connectivity, such as education, health, and agriculture.

By taking these steps, regulators can effectively implement the outcomes of WRC-23 and help their countries leverage the benefits of the newly allocated spectrum. This is the starting point for a collective effort to harness the power of spectrum for socio-economic development. For Africa, priorities should include balancing licensed and unlicensed spectrum to enable both 5G and Wi-Fi growth. Allocating more satellite spectrum to reach remote areas is promising and must be considered, as the future will be shaped by emerging technologies.

**Wydeman Coetzee** works at Access Partnership and closely monitors the ever-changing digital and tech legislative developments across Africa. Should you wish to engage or gain insights into regulatory and policy developments in the tech and digital space in South Africa or the African continent, please contact him at [Wydeman.coetzee@accesspartnership.com](mailto:Wydeman.coetzee@accesspartnership.com) or +27832001889

## WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



### Empowering Young Women

We are proud and excited to announce that the second group of learners who commenced Optic Fiber training at **Letlhakga Projects (Pty) Ltd** on January 18, 2024, have been successfully enrolled and are currently undergoing their training.

The **FemaleForce Network** crew, recruited from various parts of Pretoria North, predominantly Soshanguve, is now embarking on the next chapter of their empowerment journey and is currently undergoing training at Letlhakga Projects in Rosslyn, Pretoria, until April 30, 2024.

In our ongoing efforts to support our country's youth, the Digital Council Africa, in collaboration with our partners **MICT SETA**, is committed to assisting candidates in receiving the necessary training to enter our economy.

We will work tirelessly to ensure that they are equipped with the skills needed to secure employment opportunities upon completion of their studies.

DCA would like to sincerely thank MICT SETA and Letlhakga Projects for the tremendous support they are providing to our learners.

We wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

For any further questions, please contact Sipho Makalema at [Sipho@digitalcouncil.africa](mailto:Sipho@digitalcouncil.africa).



## WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



### Quarterly Board Meeting

The Digital Council Africa Quarterly Board Meeting took place on the 16th of February.

The Board would like to welcome Ms Morwesi Ramphenyane, Chief Administration Officer, Openserve who is replacing Althon Beukes on the board. We would like to thank Althon for his valuable contribution to both the board and the organisation.

We were honoured that Ms Nonkqubela Jordan-Dyani, Director General of the DCDT, and several of the constituents joined the meeting in an observer capacity.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### UPCOMING GOLF DAY

Watch this space for exciting updates on Digital Council Africa's upcoming Golf Day!

Get ready to tee off for a day of networking and fun on the greens.

WEBINAR

## THE STATUS OF 5G (and the roadmap to 6G)



A realistic, in-depth look at the country's roadmap to 6G in the context of where the world is heading (including the status of SA's 5G deployments)



10 May 2024 | 10 - 11:30 | Register @ <https://bit.ly/3I0JpHQ>

EXPERT SPEAKER

Christopher Geerdts | MD, BMIT

# Beyond Connectivity

## Winning the Customer Acquisition Battle: Unleash Your Brand's Potential



### Winning the Customer Acquisition Battle by Going Beyond Connectivity, With Calix

*Dan Bloch, Senior Vice President of Global Solutions at Calix, shares his insights on how independent fibre-to-the-premise (FTTP) providers can win the customer acquisition battle and unleash their brand's potential.*

Independent and alternative network operators, or altnets, will play a key role in building out a modern digital infrastructure. As altnets continue to construct fibre networks, they are also expanding their focus to subscriber acquisition—and for good reason.

“A fibre network is an amazing community asset, especially in areas that have been traditionally under-served or ignored altogether,” says Bloch. “When these networks are built using public funds, the return on investment is the building of the infrastructure itself, and success is measured by how many homes are passed. But when private funding comes into play, investors want to see financial returns. Their measure of success is defined by profitability and long-term monetisation, and the first step towards that is to connect as many homes as possible.”

### Building a Winning Brand

How can altnets adapt their business models to make this shift successfully? According to Bloch, it's all about the brand. The first step is to build brand awareness and trust that will attract and retain subscribers with value-added offerings once the network is deployed. To date, this has taken a backseat to building the actual network.

“Most altnets I've spoken with have been initially focused on homes passed as their funding was targeted on network build. Adding subscribers took a backseat in terms of focus and now we are seeing that situation turn around as generating revenue is mandatory to ensure continued operations of the business. While intentions were always there, in reality, everything needs to happen in parallel,” says Bloch.

Just as important as adding subscribers is the ability to deliver on the brand's promise at each customer touchpoint. This consistency will result in a strong, sustainable that will provide a competitive differentiator in an industry plagued by poor customer satisfaction: the average Net Promoter Score (NPS) for altnets in the United Kingdom is a dismal 12\*.

“Users' experiences are defined by how they use the networks, what they are doing while they are on them,” explains Bloch. He compares the network to a brand-new motorway with many lanes to accommodate a lot of traffic. He notes that in fact, like the Autobahn, the fibre network is capable of much higher speeds than other roads. But the driving experience is associated with the car they're steering, rather than the road they're on.

“No one driving on it knows which companies were involved in building it,” he says. “It is simply the roadway that enables the driver's experience, which is largely dictated by the car they are in. For the builders of the motorway, they get no brand equity for that experience.”

While the natural inclination is to address this by focusing on speed and pricing, the results of a 2023 Calix survey of service providers indicate that this may not be the right strategy. Most subscribers purchase half a gigabit or less, which implies that speed is simply not enough of a differentiator.

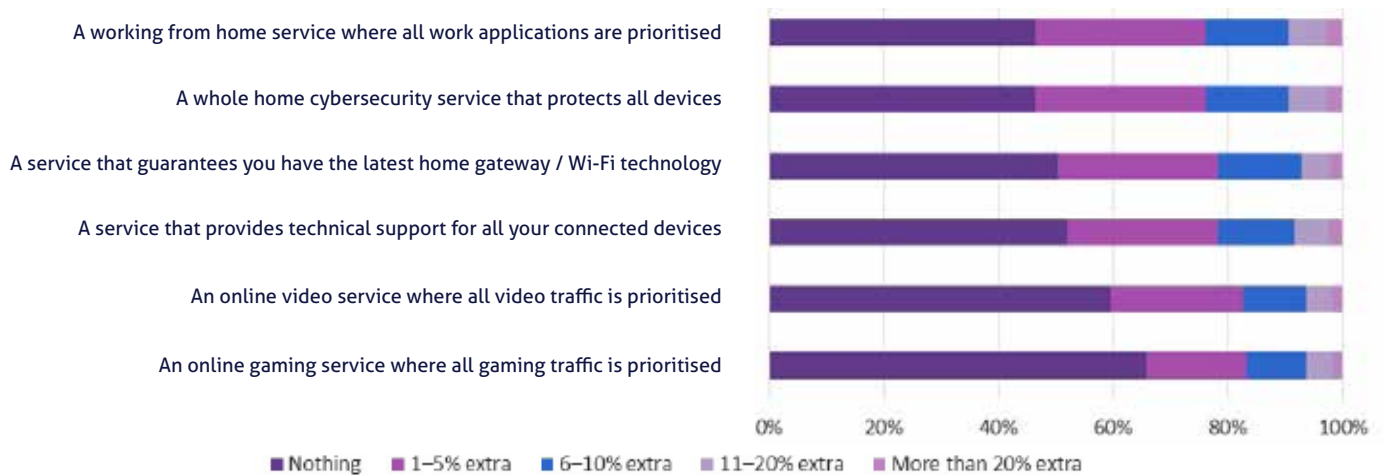
## Going Beyond Connectivity To Exceed Subscriber Expectations

Instead, successful altnets making a splash in the market are customising the in-home subscriber experience by offering value-added services coupled with a persona mindset. That means appealing to consumers based on what they care about. And it seems that subscribers are willing to pay for this level of personalisation. According to an *Omdia Digital Consumer Insights Survey*, subscribers in the United Kingdom said they would pay extra for:

- Work-from-home service and plans (55%)
- Cybersecurity options (51%)
- Advanced Wi-Fi management capabilities (45%)
- Tech support for all connected devices (43%)
- Prioritised video streaming (40%)
- A better gaming experience (35%)

### To deliver an optimal customer experience and boost ARPU altnets can provide services linked to the connected home

Percentage of responses to question "How much extra would you be willing to pay on top of your monthly broadband bill to include the following features?", Source: UK Omdia Digital Consumer Insights Survey



A unified broadband platform, such as Calix Cloud, that enables you to partner with known entities to deliver third-party, value-added services and grow your business is key, says Bloch. "Your platform must deliver the capabilities you need to sustain service delivery, keep operating costs at bay, and engage with subscribers to attract, retain, and nurture these relationships."

This includes services for small businesses currently leveraging enterprise offerings that may not meet their unique needs. Altnets made the investment to pull fibre into areas that are made up of homes, businesses, and communities. To maximise the return on investment, every possible endpoint should be connected to that infrastructure to increase network penetration and revenue.

Altnets don't need to spend millions of dollars on advertising to achieve success either, emphasises Bloch. For example, the Calix platform provides a content marketing toolkit that includes award-winning marketing content with more than 5,000 pieces of digital content that can be branded with the broadband service provider's logo and colour scheme to help them drive successful campaigns.

Bloch underscored the changing landscape and opportunities it provides for altnets, likening it to his company's own journey over the past two decades. "Calix has evolved from a network-first focus to a more holistic approach that places value-added services and persona-based marketing at the forefront of the subscriber experience," he says. "We are committed to this win-win strategy that will help altnets drive acquisition, growth, and retention."

\*Source: *Ofcom report UKRN: Moving Forward Together – Performance Scorecards 2021*.

For more information please contact Gerard Rebelo at [Gerard.Rebelo@calix.com](mailto:Gerard.Rebelo@calix.com)



AFL HYPERSCALE



# EXCELLENCE RUNS IN OUR DNA



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AFL HYPERSCALE

## EQL:HER Lounge @ Africa Tech Festival

CREATING A SPACE FOR WOMEN IN THE TECH INDUSTRY

### Partnerships that matter

The Digital Council Africa was proud to be one of the official co-hosts to the *EQL:HER* Lounge at *Africa Tech Festival*.

The lounge served as a networking hub for women at every level across the festival, creating opportunities to tune into panel discussions, fireside chats, Q&As with main stage speakers and hosted power hour networking sessions. It was co-hosted across the three days with Digital Council Africa, WomHub, and InspiringFifty.

#### AGENDA FOR 14 NOVEMBER

**Welcome** Opening Remarks by **Juanita**, CEO, Digital Council Africa

**Keynote Address** by **Sandiso Sibisi**, Founder and Open Innovation Studio Director, COOi Studios

**Panel discussion: Taking a Seat at the Table - Moderator: Nomvuyiso Batyi**, CEO, ACT  
**Busisiwe Khaba**, Regional Head of Public Policy: Economic Policy and Regulation – Africa, Middle East & Turkey, AWS, **Reshni Singh**, CEO, BPeSA, **Sanum Singh**, Lead Android Partnerships, Google

**Fireside Chat:** Cultivating a Sustainable Talent Stream for Women in Tech

**Panel Discussion:** Lift as you Rise, **Fran Swart**, Partnerships, The Collective X, **Tracey Swart**, Portfolio Executive: Digital, Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, **Charmaine Houvet**, Senior Director, Cisco

**Wellness session** with business coach **Dawn Klatzko**, author of *Art of the Suit* and *Anatomy of a Personal Brand*

**Power Hour 4iR Women Networking session**



*Left: Lift as you Rise panel discussion participants from left to right: Khayakazi Zweni, QA Engineer, DigiLink, Charmaine Houvet, Senior Director, Cisco, Tracey Swart, Portfolio Executive: Digital, Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, Fran Swart, Partnerships, The Collective X.*

*Bottom Left: The day was filled with insightful dialogues. Juanita welcoming one of the phenomenal panels to the stage.*



*Left: Wellness session presented by business coach Dawn Klatzko, author of *Art of the Suit* and *Anatomy of a Personal Brand*.*



Since 1923, the Plumettaz group has taken the world by storm with its capacity for innovation in the fields of agriculture, construction, rail, energy and telecommunications.

Plumettaz's mission has always been to lighten the load of the workforce by using its mechanical innovations. Since 1953, the design and supply of equipment for the installation of all-terrain cables for energy and telecommunications have become its core activity.

[www.plumettaz.com](http://www.plumettaz.com)

# TESMEC

Tesmec Group designs, manufactures and sells products, technologies and integrated solutions for the construction, maintenance and efficiency of infrastructures related to the transport and distribution of energy, data and material (oil and derivatives, gas, water) such as: overhead and underground networks, traditional and high speed railway lines, energy cables and pipelines. With more than 65 years of experience and more than 750 employees, Tesmec Group carries sales activities in more than 135 countries around the world.

[www.tesmec.com](http://www.tesmec.com)



## Innovating Fibre Optic Infrastructure with High-Performance Solutions

As urban fibre optic projects pose increasing challenges, the Tesmec MCT400 T670 Rocksaw stands as a pinnacle of technical innovation

The Tesmec MCT400 T670 Rocksaw represents a powerful and highly specialised solution for fibre optic projects in urban settings. Its advanced design, with radio-controlled models featuring an offset back excavation structure and an efficient bucket-loading conveyor system, places it at the forefront of innovation in the industry.

Designed for the most demanding conditions and tailored specifically for cable duct excavation, Tesmec's Rock Saw

Trenchers offer exceptional productivity, effectively cutting through hardened soil and concrete. These trenchers excel in narrow and deep-cutting scenarios, making them the preferred choice for projects requiring efficient material removal. Suitable for use in urban and extra-urban settings, they are engineered to perform reliably even in the harshest environmental conditions.

Please contact David Chabert: + 27 82 963 8252, [davidc@maraistrenching.co.za](mailto:davidc@maraistrenching.co.za).



## Connecting Minds, Transforming Futures

### The Collective X's guiding principles for an Inclusive Digital Skills Ecosystem

*By Deidre Samson, Executive for Insights & Strategic Supply Side Partnerships at The Collective X*

**In 2023, we launched The Collective X, a visionary initiative aimed at propelling South Africa into the global arena as a formidable digital powerhouse. Our mission is clear – to connect stakeholders capable of nurturing and amplifying digital skills, fostering collaboration, concentrating efforts, and devising solutions to address our country's critical digital skills shortage.**

Far from being mere rhetoric, our achievements so far in expanding partner and funder networks underscore our commitment to transforming South Africa's digital landscape. The growth trajectory of our national partner network, including training providers, employers, policymakers, technology vendors, and education providers, reflects our success in bridging the gap between the supply and demand of digital skills. This network ensures the delivery of the right training at the right time for the right price, to impact South Africa's future in the right way.

The emphasis on stakeholder collaboration extends connections that drive collective action, transcending traditional boundaries.

Collaborating with Dr Michelle Weise, a global thought leader in constructing enabling ecosystems for the future of work, has supported our development of a strategy for catalysing a scalable digital skills learning ecosystem. This ecosystem intricately links stakeholders, including learners, employers, governments, and education providers, across various domains – from natural and cultural to technological and economic.

Our ecosystem thrives on a multitude of financing solutions, content, software, hardware, data, infrastructure, and diverse interest groups, often with competing missions. To ensure its growth and vitality, we focus on the scarcest resource in our value chain – the people being left behind, the millions of unemployed youth in South Africa. The health of our ecosystem depends on their well-being. By centering on their needs, we address pain points, barriers, and frictions that could otherwise hinder the development of a healthy learn-and-work ecosystem.

**We adhere to five guiding principles to shape a learning ecosystem that caters to the needs of all people to thrive in the work of the future:**

1. **Navigable.** Job seekers need a bird's-eye view of the job market. These include all the career pathways open to them, better information to navigate complex systems and assessments to help them translate their skills and experience into better jobs.

2. Supportive. For some of South Africa's most vulnerable learner populations, the barriers to success are often outside the classroom. Job seekers need human advisers who can coach them and help them access wraparound support services.
3. Targeted. Learners need access to a precise and relevant education tailored to their needs. They need to know that the education they choose will be worth the investment. Targeted learning experiences must provide knowledge plus the human and technical skills, professional networks and hands-on practice that equip learners for the working world.
4. Integrated. Working learners need time, funding, confidence and resources to juggle education and training with their existing responsibilities. Learning opportunities should be integrated into life and work by offering opportunities to learn while earning.
5. Transparent. The hiring process must be transparent, open and fair, and it must enable job seekers to prove their competence and skills. Only when skills become the primary currency of the job market will employers stop overlooking qualified job seekers.

The Collective X is not just a network; it is a transformative ecosystem that can unlock the potential of South Africa's youth and promote economic growth, global competitiveness, and job creation for all.

Building a learning ecosystem requires a coalition of learning partners, non-profits, for-profits, businesses, and government working together toward a common vision. If you want to learn more about our ecosystem and how you can get involved, visit [thecollectivex.org](http://thecollectivex.org) or contact [Fran@thecollectivex.org](mailto:Fran@thecollectivex.org).



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IN CONVERSATION WITH

# Ingenius

## Super-charge your employees with hyper personal training



Alta Roets  
Co-founder, Ingenius

### Q Please tell us about InGenius and how it came about?

In the rapidly evolving landscape of information consumption, the learning sector has seen minimal evolution and innovation until now. With over two decades of immersive experience, educating more than a quarter-million individuals across Sub-Saharan Africa, the founders of InGenius has meticulously forged its bold global mission: to ignite a lifelong passion for learning in everyone by engineering unparalleled hyper-personalised moments of knowledge exchange.

InGenius introduces a pioneering learning platform poised to revolutionise the employee educational sphere. Our solution adeptly bridges the gap between traditional educational models and the optimal conditions for knowledge retention as defined by the learners themselves.

Marking a departure from conventional approaches, InGenius' platform stands as the first genuinely learner-centric solution in the market. It directly addresses the challenges faced by employees during organisational training, therefore significantly enhancing the value of training outcomes for businesses. By prioritising hyper-personalised learning experiences, InGenius harnesses advanced technology to provide content that is meticulously tailored to each learner's unique persona, seamlessly integrating education into the daily flow of work and life.

### Q At its core, what does InGenius try to solve?

Challenges in employee training often transcend individual frustrations, evolving into broader organisational obstacles. These include heightened levels of dissatisfaction and exertion paired with a noticeable lack of relevance, which culminates in employee development programs that are both costly and low in impact.

The InGenius platform is engineered to transcend the limitations of conventional learning and development frameworks by prioritising the learner (employee) at the core of its strategy. This methodology directly tackles the prevalent issues confronting employees, HR/Training managers, and organisations at large, such as diminished engagement, content irrelevance, ineffective employee development practices, and diminished learning investment returns.

At InGenius, our mission is to transform learning into an engaging, pertinent, and adaptable experience that aligns with the aspirations of today's learners and the strategic goals of modern organisations. We are committed to designing highly personalised, impactful knowledge exchange moments that truly resonate with each individual, thereby optimising the transfer and retention of knowledge. Our journey transcends technological innovation, focusing on human-centric development and redefining the future of professional growth and learning.

### Q Why should companies participate?

Organisations deeply committed to enhancing employee development recognize the significant advantages and value InGenius brings—not only to their operations but also to their workforce. The most compelling feedback we've received underscores a shared enthusiasm: organisations are eager to join this innovative shift in employee training.



## IN CONVERSATION WITH

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Engaging with InGenius opens the door to a more dynamic and result-oriented learning and development ecosystem. Our platform is designed to foster increased employee engagement, improved knowledge retention, and superior learning investment returns. By adopting InGenius, businesses empower their teams with the skills and knowledge they need, precisely tailored to individual preferences and learning modalities, thus driving the organisation's success forward.

InGenius specialises in a wide array of training subjects, with a primary focus on Ethics and Compliance in its current phase, positioning itself at the forefront of redefining how organisations approach employee training. Furthermore, the current phase of InGenius invites opportunities for collaboration, allowing us to co-create bespoke courses with our clients to address specific needs, ensuring a truly customised and impactful learning experience.

Q

### How can companies participate?

The journey begins with a dialogue, a mutual exploration of needs and aspirations. Companies have the unique opportunity to become pioneers in the adoption of InGenius by indicating their interest. In response, InGenius will craft a customised proposal, offering special pricing advantages for our MVP participants.

The initial step includes the acquisition and signing of a letter of intent, marking the commencement of their onboarding at the MVP launch phase. This collaborative approach not only allows organisations to influence the platform's evolution but also ensures access to a state-of-the-art learning solution meticulously designed to align with their specific educational trajectories.



Our mission is to seamlessly integrate learning into both the professional and personal spheres, fostering a culture of lifelong learning. Discover more about InGenius at [www.ingenius.inc](http://www.ingenius.inc) or reach out directly to Alta Roets at [alta@ingenius.inc](mailto:alta@ingenius.inc), and let's embark on this transformative journey together.

## WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

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*Above: Andre Wills, Managing Director, Africa Analysis, Frank Xiang, Vice President of Global Government Affairs, Huawei, Philly Mapulane, Deputy Minister, Department of Communications & Digital Technologies, Juanita Clark, CEO, Digital Council Africa speaking at the Africa Fibre Forum 2023*

The Fibre Broadband Development Initiative: Unpacking the vision towards a gigabit Society in South Africa White Paper was launched during Africa Tech Festival 2023. This is the collaborative work between Digital Africa Council, Africa Analysis, the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies and Huawei. The paper is great example of government-industry collaboration.

As we transcend this journey of meaningful digital connectivity, we hope to see more emerging opportunities in the telecoms and networking industry than before, with focus on improving network connectivity in Africa, ensuring more SMMEs and new players build their businesses in Africa, and greater collaborative partnership in fibre and cloud services.

## UPCOMING EVENT

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### ZANOG@iWeek2024 – is back!

Lord Charles Hotel, Somerset West, 12-14 March 2024

After a four year gap, ISPA's iWeek conference is back, partnering with ZANOG in 2024.

ZANOG has been organising regional and national events for South Africa's internet industry professionals and network operators since 2018.

ZANOG has excellent technical streams, [ZANOG@iWeek2024](#) with content to suit everyone of SA's ISPs. View the draft programme [here](#).

**ATTENDANCE IS FREE, but registration is compulsory, please register here: [Registration](#)**

Maximise your visibility at ZANOG@iWeek2024 with one of the sponsorship packages.

For more details, please visit <https://iweek.org.za/> or contact [iweek@ispa.org.za](mailto:iweek@ispa.org.za).

See you at ZANOG@iWeek2024.



## Connected Africa: Network Evolution from Cellular to FTTx

By Werner Smit, Technical Sales Manager Carrier Network for Africa, Corning

Africa is at the forefront of global efforts to expand connectivity. In alignment with the *African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy*, the technology and telecommunications industries aim to see every individual, business, and government entity on the continent connected to the internet by 2030. Yet despite this ambitious target, Africa currently has the lowest number of internet connections—*only 22% of Africans have access*.

Until now, most of Africa's half a billion mobile users have relied largely on cellular networks, with operators hesitant to implement the longer-term investment of fibre to the home (FTTH). Dated cellular networks aren't sufficient to drive new opportunities for businesses and people in Africa—networks must evolve. To thrive in an increasingly connected world, Africans need dependable high-speed fibre networks. Investment in this vision has accelerated over the past decade, but challenges such as cost and security remain. In this context, pre-conn solutions are particularly appealing as they offer affordable and secure infrastructure whilst rapidly establishing a strong fibre backbone.

### Transforming the Way the World Connects

Corning is in an ideal position to help empower telecommunications growth across Africa. Since ushering in a telecommunications revolution with the invention of low-loss optical fibre in 1970, Corning has been continually innovating to increase the speed and capacity of optical *fibre networks*, whilst providing technologies that make deployment easier and more cost effective. We're addressing deployment challenges by drawing on our decades of experience in network design, our track record of solving tough technology challenges, and our deep, trust-based relationships up and down the value chain.

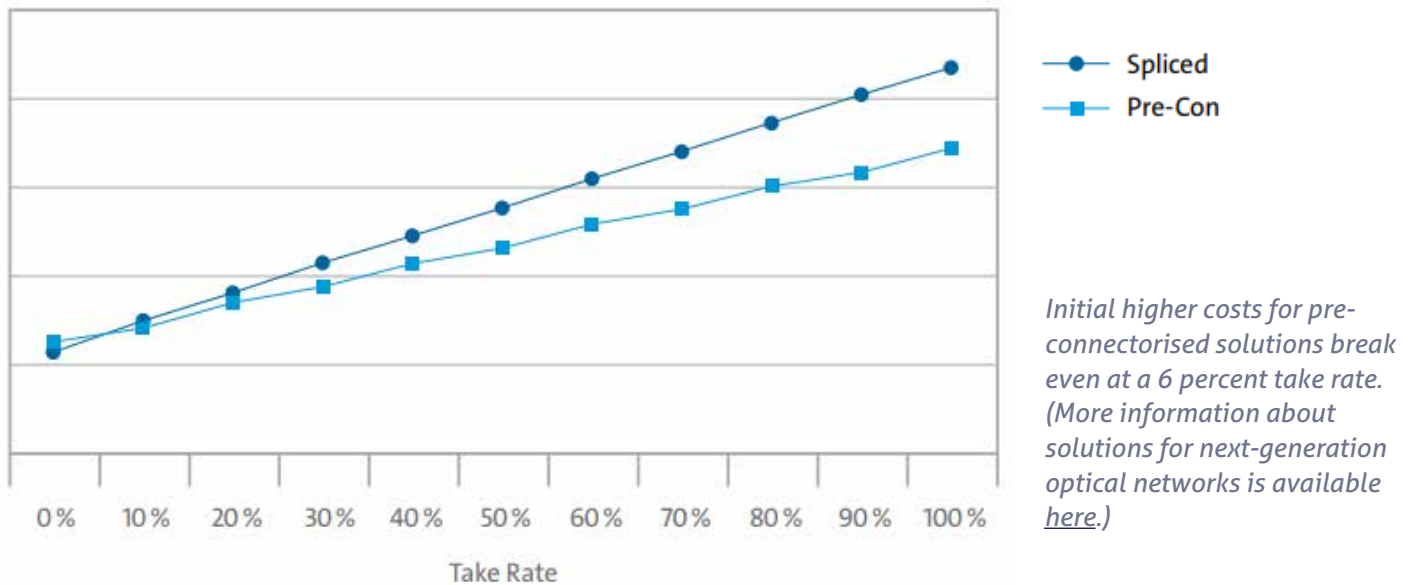
### Costs and Investment

Whilst fibre delivers strong advantages over older infrastructure, working with fibre optics requires different training than traditional copper cables. Fibre splicing in particular requires additional labour and equipment. Technicians trained in fusion splicing are in high demand both worldwide and in Africa.

On the other hand, connectors don't require specially trained splicers. With pre-connectorised FTTH solutions, previously specialised labour becomes as simple as plugging in a light. Technicians can use connectors to connect households more quickly and efficiently with fewer installation teams than before, and the process is less disruptive to residential customers. Since all components and equipment are assembled and tested in factory-controlled conditions, they are consistent, reliable, and can stand up to tough environmental conditions, a critical factor for networks in Africa.

Pre-connectorised solutions are also flexible in design, which means each module can be easily upgraded or expanded. This flexibility allows for simple and cost-efficient scalability. And whilst pre-connectorised methods do require greater up-front costs than splicing, they break even and proceed to save money at a take rate of only 6 per cent.

Installed Cost vs. Take Rate



Diversity and Infrastructure

Africa is home to more than 3,000 ethnic groups that speak over 2,000 different languages, but this diversity extends beyond cultural and ethnic differences. Networks are deployed in all kinds of environments, from booming metropolises to isolated, rural towns which may have underdeveloped civil infrastructures.

Since civil costs can account for up to 80 percent of an overall network build, it is essential to use existing infrastructure. This means flexibility is key. Across Africa, a wide variety of methods are in use, from aerial to underground, deployment in ducts, or burial directly in the ground. Especially in rural regions, aerial deployment has been frequently used. Fibre can be deployed anywhere, but as digging becomes more expensive and disruptive, aerial installation is becoming the preferred option in the region. Drop cables allow operators to easily install, access, and upgrade these kinds of networks, and there is already a variety of flexible solutions available to fit any network configuration.



Aerial deployment can make use of Africa's existing infrastructure.

Reach and Performance

Long-haul, terrestrial optical fibre networks connect cities and countries throughout the world. A connected continent will rely on quality long-haul networks. These networks range from a few hundred to several thousand kilometers and have largely migrated to 100G-based dense wavelength division multiplexing (DWDM) systems with 80 channels or more.

Corning's optical solutions meet essential long-haul needs for distance, bit rate, and capacity, and provide both high speed and low attenuation across great lengths.

In addition, they can manage the dispersion that accumulates in legacy, lower bit rate systems as light signals travel over long distances as well as the nonlinear penalties that can limit performance for existing systems.

## Bridging Africa's Connectivity Gap with Infrastructure Sharing

Infrastructure sharing can take many forms. From telecom service providers partnering to share masts and sites to spectrum-sharing and base sharing. Many innovations support these sharing models and enable operators to work faster and more efficiently whilst leveraging existing networks.

With civil works representing up to 80% of the total cost of deploying new infrastructure, particularly in greenfield projects, sharing goes a long way to overcome major obstacles such as lack of collaboration and difficulty of access.

*Aerial fibre optic installation* offers an alternative to traditional underground installation methods for the fast and cost-effective deployment of FTTH connections in rural areas. Corning has already deployed aerial cables in Australia, Canada, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States, and now Africa. This provides an attractive solution if underground installation is not possible or very expensive (such as in mountainous regions), or if there is existing infrastructure (poles or power towers) that can be utilised.

With the ease of installation and useful infrastructure already existing in many places, aerial cabling is speeding up the expansion process at a fraction of the cost and delivering long-term digital transformation for even the most remote of communities.

Corning has developed a range of innovative and lighter aerial cable solutions, including several self-supporting products, requiring no separate messenger wire between poles to support the cable's weight, such as the *All-Dielectric Self-Supporting (ADSS) cable*.

We are utilising our vast product portfolio, ongoing innovation, and industry expertise to address customer pain points and connectivity challenges in remote areas. We can support broadband services, enabled by robust fibre networks, that are instrumental in allowing communities to thrive in the long-term.

An Africa empowered by fibre optics has limitless economic potential. Those willing to make the investments needed will benefit immensely from its future success. The key to thriving in this diverse and rapidly changing continent is to embrace existing infrastructure and leverage new technologies that combat the shortage of skilled labour, whilst protecting equipment and installers alike.

Pre-connectorised solutions will be an important part of that strategy. Despite a slightly larger initial investment compared with traditional deployment methods, network operators can leverage cutting-edge pre-connectorised technology to roll out high-speed broadband networks across Africa quickly, safely, and profitably.

For more information please contact Werner Smith on [smitw@corning.com](mailto:smitw@corning.com).

## WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



### ICT Ministers promote future-oriented, intelligent digital infrastructure for Africa

On 13 November 2023 Juanita Clark attended the Ministerial Forum on Building a Future-Oriented, Intelligent Digital Infrastructure for Africa. The Forum was co-organised by the ATU and the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) of South Africa, with the aim of advancing the digital transformation agenda in Africa. The event concluded with the signing of a joint communique underlining the importance of collaboration between all stakeholders in building a future-oriented digital infrastructure for Africa.

Taking place alongside AfricaCom, the continent's premier ICT conference and exhibition, the forum provided a platform for dialogue and an exchange of views on the development of a future-oriented intelligent digital infrastructure in Africa, which is essential for achieving the socio-economic development goals of the continent.

Left: Philly Mapulane, Deputy Minister, Department of Communications & Digital Technologies - [Photo Credit and read the full article](#)



## m4a (Pty) Ltd | Utilities Infrastructure Products in application for Solar Plant Construction

**m4a (Pty) Ltd's range of infrastructure products provides modular solutions for application in the deployment of civils, electrical, water, telecommunications, renewable energy and other utility networks.**

m4a was involved in a renewable energy (solar) project, a PV (Photovoltaic) plant, that was constructed in the Eastern Cape in South Africa. m4a supplied the fibreFLEX™ chambers (axs350FF and axs500FF) and the corrugated pipe (corruDUCT™) that was used in the build. The function of the fibreFLEX™ chambers are for both jointing and pulling electric cables. The corruDUCT™ provides cable protection and allows for servicing, maintenance and upgrading of the cable as required.

This PV project has a 1.2 megawatt inverter capacity with 2248 photovoltaic panels. It has a 2000 kilowatt hour battery capacity and an additional 1250 KVA generator as back-up, the power is supplied via a 12000m overhead power line.



### **fibreFLEX™ (vaults / chambers)**

fibreFLEX™ Modular Utilities Chambers offer unmatched flexibility to the installer in underground fibre and other utilities networks. The fibreFLEX™ Range of composite utilities chambers are a state-of-the-art solution where multiple panel arrangements are supplied in a "flat pack" configuration, which are easily assembled on site resulting in various length and depth configurations.

Different combinations of panels allow for different chamber sizes and our design also allows for vertical extension where deeper trenching standards and potential road or paving upgrades exist (floating lid).

### **corruDUCT™ (HDPE corrugated pipe)**

m4a stocks a wide range and variety of HDPE duct solutions for the electrical and fibre industries. The HDPE ducts are used as underground cable conduits for electrical cables. The ducts are available in sub-duct and duct format as well as in lengths of 6m or in rolls of 50m.

**These utilities products, all manufactured by m4a, come together to create the instrumental system behind ensuring a rugged infrastructure network for years to come.**

**m4a complies to global mark and specification schemes, and is ISO9001 certified.**





## JOBS BOOST EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

### We would like to highlight an exciting opportunity for our industry.

As employers in South Africa in the digital space we believe that you are interested in solving for the digital skills crisis in South Africa.

The Collective X urgently need to identify organisations that are ready to co-invest in the digital skills development of youth and absorb talent into in-demand junior digital roles. A number of private and government funded skilling initiatives are underway, and your participation in these initiatives can significantly benefit your organisation and contribute to building the digital skills pipeline for our country.

Therefore, below please find a formal expression of interest process aimed at employers of digital skills to partner with The Collective X on immediate private and public sector (Jobs Boost) funded initiatives, some of which are underway.

### Who is The Collective X?

A not-for-profit organisation born from the consolidation of the TechXit Initiative and The Digital Work Accelerator, both seeking to address the pressing shortage of quality digital skills in South Africa. In this partnership we are focused on facilitating the right training at the right time, for the right price, to impact our future in the right way.

We are now in the process of submitting a proposal to the Jobs Boost Outcomes Fund.

### Participate in this programme by expressing your interest to employ high-quality digital skills

The Collective X is looking to partner with employers who are willing and ready to co-invest with The Collective X in skills development and bolster their digital skills pipeline. We are inviting you to partner with us by offering you the opportunity to employ young, digitally skilled South Africans trained to the highest competencies for in-demand junior digital roles, a list of which is included in the expression of interest document.

### What's in it for your organisation?

- Partnering with The Collective X team to co-create and accelerate digital skills solutions
- Access to a work ready skills pipeline for the most in-demand digital roles
- Innovative outcomes funding models with co-investment opportunities
- Thought leadership on globally recognised best practice quality standards for digital skills
- Access to assets and IP in The Collective X
- Access to research, knowledge and market insights

### Next steps

Completing the attached expression of interest, which includes:

- Agreeing to the specific criteria of immediate programmes
- Providing your demand forecast for junior digital skills for the year ahead
- Providing relevant company information

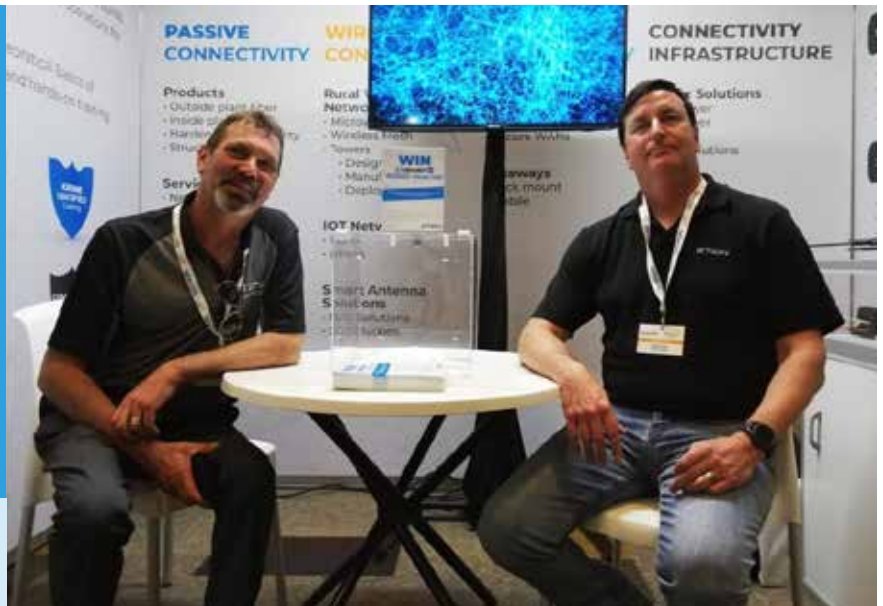
The Collective X will assess each response to identify employer partners interested in participating in the Jobs Boost programme (most urgent) and other programmes we are launching this year.

### Here's how to submit your expression of interest

- Complete the expression of interest survey. *Please download the file [here](#).*
- Reach out for assistance if needed to [hello@thecollectivex.org](mailto:hello@thecollectivex.org).
- Submit a signed, non-binding letter of intent to support your participation
  - On a company letter head
  - Signed by senior representative with the relevant authority
  - Outline your projected junior digital skills requirements
  - Your ability to adhere to the criteria
- Ensure all submissions are completed online via [this submission portal](#) by 17h00 on Tuesday, February 20, 2024.

We appreciate our timelines are very tight as these are largely driven by the timelines prescribed to us by Jobs Boost. We encourage partners to get started and to use email channels in the meantime for any queries.

**ETION  
CONNECT  
CONTINUES TO  
POWER THE FTTX  
REVOLUTION  
13 YEARS ON**



*Right: Etion Connect veterans Fred Janse Van Rensburg (Product specialist) & Sean Vilas (Sales Executive) at a Digital Council Africa event*

**FTTx networks are the backbone of the ongoing technological revolution toward a comprehensively digitally driven society. With their ability to deliver ultra-fast, reliable, and scalable internet connectivity, FTTx networks lay the foundation for emerging technologies and digital services. As the world and South Africa become increasingly connected and data-driven, the implementation of FTTx is vital to drive innovation, economic growth, and social development.**

Etion Connect is a Value-Added Re-seller (VAR) that serves the FNO, MNO and carrier network roll-out segment in the telecommunications sector. The Company has been at the centre of South Africa’s transition from copper-based networks to fibre-optic based access and long haul networks. Etion Connect has customised and distributed US Multinational OEM CommScope’s range of passive fibre connectivity products to network operators and their installers and enabled all the carrier-grade networks in SA the last 13 years. The Company assist its clients in designing their network architecture, and through this process, ‘design-in’ its solutions which creates stickiness to their offering. Etion Connect’ impressive track record in enabling the fibre revolution in SA and SADC years include:

1. Building of most of the large carrier rooms for the Mobile Network Operators throughout the country.
2. Rolled out central office business for leading national Telco.
3. Designed leading edge solutions for national carrier’s outside plant network.
4. Rolled out a large Multi-Service Access Node together with large turnkey.
5. Assisted Open Access Fibre Infrastructure provider with the design and rollout of new POP (point of presence).
6. Etion Connect was first to start the initial proof of concept sites and pioneering FTTx networks with a leading national Telco.
7. When South Africa’s largest fixed line carrier company began with an aggressive FTTx rollout, Etion Connect was accepted as the strategic supplier of choice.
8. Etion Connect designed a DRU (Disaster Recovery Unit) for leading mobile service provider and also installed the units in various regions.
9. Through piloting new network optimising strategies for its customers, Etion Connect has saved its customers hundreds of millions in capex. It assisted South Africa’s largest fixed line carrier with their project excess which was aimed at both optimizing their network and the deployment of it.
10. When the Covid pandemic struck in 2020, Etion Connect had positioned itself very well to take advantage from increased demand from the Covid pandemic which led to people working and studying from home.
11. Presently, Etion Connect continues to synchronize the aggressive rollout of FTTx of all customers including managing the global logistics value chain. The Company continues to work with its clients as strategic partners to optimise network design and architecture to ensure speed of deployment.

Etion Connect privatised through an MBO during the 2022 Financial Year, supported by commercial market funding. The Company is geared towards maximizing continued fibre growth in the SA, SADC and African market as a whole. It has total billings of gross revenue that exceeds R2bn in ZAR from inception till end of the 2023 Financial Year with a staff complement of 35 people.



*Etion Connect Leadership team from left to right: Chantelle Dalziel (Executive Supply Chain and Logistics), Zaheera Vangeria (Chief Financial Officer), Sean Vilas (Executive Sales) and Sammy Mafu (Managing Director).*

For more information contact Sean Vilas, Executive Sales Manager at [svilas@etionconnect.co.za](mailto:svilas@etionconnect.co.za) or [intsales@etionconnect.co.za](mailto:intsales@etionconnect.co.za) or call 012 450 0800.

## UPCOMING EVENT

**ABOUT WIA:** The Wireless Infrastructure Association (WIA) represents the businesses that build, develop, own, and operate the nation's wireless infrastructure. WIA advocates for the widespread, responsible deployment of wireless infrastructure to enable connectivity everywhere.

**THE DIGITAL COUNCIL AFRICA IS A PROUD SUPPORTER:**



# Accelerating 5G Deployment in South Africa

**12 and 13 March**

CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria

Supporting the  
**Buildout of 5G Networks and Infrastructure throughout South Africa**



To register for this free event, please email [Alexander.Golden@wia.org](mailto:Alexander.Golden@wia.org)

## WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



# Africa Fibre Forum 2023



In Partnership with



Held on 13 November 2023 The Africa Fibre Forum 2023, hosted by Digital Council Africa (DCA) and co-sponsored by Huawei and the World Broadband Association (WBBA), took place in Cape Town and saw a multitude of stakeholders commit to accelerating the rollout of fibre across Africa.

Set against the backdrop of Africa Com, the continent's largest technology conference, the event brought together more than 100 industry leaders and experts from 50+ organizations, and several media outlets. Among the consensus points reached during the event is that digitalisation and globalisation have made the fibre infrastructure industry more important and relevant than ever. As such, having the right policies and ecosystems in place is key to accelerating fibre infrastructure deployment. In line with this, many African countries and operators will launch more fibre strategies and establish practices in support of it, setting the continent up for a fibre broadband explosion.

During the forum, representatives from the African Telecommunications Union (ATU), Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) of South Africa, major operators, vendors, associations (DCA and WBBA), and consultants (Africa Analysis) held in-depth discussions on the key challenges of accelerating fibre coverage in Africa, and fibre strategy and policy, and how to accelerate broadband adoption, and promote the overarching broadband service economy in Africa.



*From left: to right: Andre Wills, Africa Analysis, Martin Creaner, Director General, Worldwide Broadband Association, John Omo, Secretary General, African Telecommunications Union, Samuel Chen, Vice President, Huawei Southern Africa region and Andile Ngcaba Digital Council Africa President.*

*[Photo credit and full article](#)*

## WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



Juanita shared valuable insights during an ITWeb On The Road interview, recorded at the ITWeb Cloud and Data Centre Summit 2023. Outlining the Digital Council Africa's goals for the continent, including policy directions, policy development and how it is assisting governments in this regard.

She described how Africa is undergoing a rapid digital transition, which is driving more demand for connectivity. During the video interview she highlighted the role satellite communications will play in Africa's future connectivity architecture. Emphasising the need for satellite communication to close the connectivity gap, particularly in underserved areas. She highlighted the importance of data centres in managing Africa's expanding data demand and pushed for infrastructure sharing to achieve economies of scale.

"I think a lot of the problems that we face as sector is that we want to put connectivity into boxes. So, we look at either mobile technology as the single saviour of the continent, or we talk about how to achieve ubiquitous fibre connectivity. But there's a space for all connectivity methodologies to co-exist. "There's not going to be one single technology that's going to solve all of Africa's problems," she said.

Watch the recording of her conversation [here](#).

The advertisement background features an aerial view of a residential or commercial development with winding roads and buildings. A large, diagonal red graphic element with white diagonal stripes cuts across the image from the bottom left towards the top right. The MTD logo is prominently displayed in white on a dark background to the right of the red graphic.

# MTD

CIVILS & NETWORK PLANNING

With extensive knowledge in making your fibre network a reality our team can assist with acquiring wayleaves and community engagement, planning a fibre network, building a fibre network, maintaining an existing fibre network as well as manage installations for all your clients.

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For more information visit [www.mtdcivils.com](http://www.mtdcivils.com)

# CONTACT US

---



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## POPI ACT INFO

The Digital Council Africa respects your right to privacy and we aim to ensure that we comply with the POPI Act (Act 4 of 2013), which regulates the manner in which we collect, process, store, share and destroy any personal information which you have provided to us. Your personal information is strictly confidential and we will notify you immediately should we become aware of any unauthorised use, disclosure or processing of your personal information. Kindly note that you may choose to opt out at any time from all marketing and other communications by contacting Reesha Iyer at [reesha@digitalcouncil.africa](mailto:reesha@digitalcouncil.africa).

## 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](mailto: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.