CONEXT

November 2025 Edition

CELEBRATING CONNECTION

CONEXT

15 Digital Council

CONTENT

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

As 2025 draws to a close, we stand at the threshold of a new chapter for Africa's digital economy — one defined not just by the speed of our networks, but by the breadth of our inclusion. Across every layer of the value chain — from fibre and towers to cloud and platforms — we are witnessing unprecedented collaboration between industry, government, and academia to deliver meaningful connectivity.

In recent months, the Digital Council Africa has actively engaged in policy dialogues that are shaping the foundations of our digital future — from the DCDT ICT Policy Colloquium to ongoing work on the Data and Cloud Implementation Plan. These efforts reinforce one message: digital transformation must be inclusive, secure, and locally grounded.

The rise of artificial intelligence and data-driven technologies brings both opportunity and responsibility. Africa must be an active participant — designing its own architectures, building sovereign data capacity, and training the next generation to lead in this space. The conversations sparked at events like Conext 2025 and Equinix Engage remind us that our greatest strength lies in partnership.

As we mark fifteen years of the Digital Council Africa, I extend my gratitude to every member, partner, and policymaker who continues to walk this journey with us. Together, we are proving that digital progress is not a destination — it is a collective act of nation-building.

Warm Regards,
Andile Ngcaba
President, Digital Council Africa

NOTICE BOARD

What is Conext?

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

Conext is Digital Council Africa's **member-driven newsletter**—created to keep our community informed, connected, and engaged in shaping Africa's digital economy.

The publication not only highlights the Council's activities, initiatives, and events, but also serves as a **platform for members** to celebrate achievements, share ideas, and showcase the incredible work being done across our community.

We welcome contributions from DCA members, including:

- **Sector news, updates,** and **insights**
- **Thought leadership** and conversations on digital-economy development
- **Company** or **product updates**
- **Adverts** and **advertorials**

Conext belongs to our members—and we invite you to make your voice heard.

Next Issue: February 2026

To contribute, email Nadene Reignier at *nadene@digitalcouncil.africa*

Social Media

Follow us for the latest updates on **DCA initiatives, member highlights, and key industry news**.
We're growing our reach—and yours—by spotlighting the people and progress powering digital transformation.

LET'S STAY CONEXTED. FOLLOW US ON

Member Benefits

For **15 years**, the Digital Council Africa has **brought together** the people and sectors driving Africa's digital transformation. From fibre networks and data centres to cloud, towers, and the platform economy—**our members are at the heart of the continent's digital future**.

As a member, you can:

- Access exclusive **market research and insights**
- Join **working groups** and policy discussions
- Share content in **Conext** at no cost
- Attend **member-only webinars and events**
- Grow your network through **conferences and industry gatherings**
- Be represented in **high-level government engagement**

Want to get involved?

Email *Reesha@digitalcouncil.africa* or visit *digitalcouncil.africa/#become-member*

NOTICE BOARD

Financial Support Keeps Us Moving Forward

As a **not-for-profit organisation**, the Digital Council Africa relies on the financial support of its members and sponsors to continue driving progress across the digital infrastructure sector. Every initiative we undertake — from policy engagement and advocacy to events and industry collaboration — is made possible through these contributions.

We kindly remind members who have not yet renewed their membership or fulfilled their sponsorship commitments to please do so as soon as possible. Continued support from all members is essential to ensuring the Council's sustainability and our ability to represent and advance the interests of Africa's digital economy.

Your contribution not only enables the Council to operate effectively but also strengthens our collective impact as an industry. **Together, we can continue building a more connected and digitally empowered Africa.**

Member Webinars

We invite DCA members to collaborate with us on webinars focused on relevant, thought-provoking industry topics. Webinars are hosted on an ad-hoc basis and shared via our member mailing list.

If you'd like to **host a session** or propose a topic, we'd love to hear from you—provided the content is insightful and aligned with our sector focus.

Get in touch with Reesha Iyer at *reesha@digitalcouncil.africa*

Let's keep in touch

People move, roles change—and we want to make sure we're **staying connected** with the right people at your organisation.

- Please take a moment to **update your contact details** so you don't miss out on the latest news, event invites, or Conext submission calls.
- If there's someone else on your team who should be receiving our updates—like a **marketing lead** or industry specialist—please send their details too.

Email updates to Nadene Reignier at *nadene@digitalcouncil.africa*

Thanks for helping us keep our community strong and connected!

DCA On Demand

Explore the conversations shaping South Africa's digital future—anytime, anywhere.

Missed one of our recent events or webinars? No problem!

Visit the ***DCA YouTube channel*** to watch recordings of our webinars & events—on your schedule.

All publicly available recordings (excluding member-only events) are hosted on our official YouTube channel.

Subscribe now to stay informed, inspired, and connected.

WEBINAR
National Policy on Rapid Deployment of Electronic Communications Networks and Facilities

WEBINAR
Draft Data & Cloud Implementation Plan Presentation
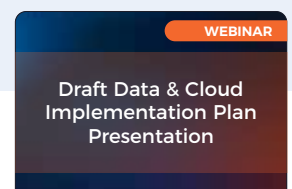
Fifteen years ago, we set out with a clear vision — to raise awareness of the critical role of digital infrastructure and to help create a truly connected country and continent. Our belief then, as now, is that digital infrastructure has the power to transform our local economy and enable full participation in the global one. By bringing connectivity — the foundation of the digital economy — to people, we have been building a truly digital Africa in which everyone can participate.

Over the past 15 years, we have built bridges between policy and practice, industry and communities. Conext 2025 reminded me why our work matters. Year after year, I've watched the conversation shift — from *why* we invest to *how* we invest — so that digital infrastructure, including fibre, towers, data centres, and cloud, translates into real participation in the digital economy.

Conext asked a simple question: **how do we turn world-class infrastructure into real-world outcomes?**
Over two days, we connected the dots — from subsea to last-mile, from data centres to the platform economy — through the lens of investment and inclusion.

What I value most is how the conversation has become real and honest. Yes, in the room we are competitors, but we also recognise that we cannot do this in isolation. There is enough opportunity for everyone. We spoke about power and policy, capital and skills, but also about inclusion — meaningful conversations on taking connectivity and its benefits to every citizen, and tough ones on what it truly takes to close the usage gap.

We moved past slogans and dug into the **architecture of inclusion**: open-access models that scale, resilient networks, smarter energy, skills that unlock opportunity, and policies that enable investment where it's needed most.

I left encouraged by the calibre of engagement — leaders willing to be practical, candid, and collaborative. If we maintain that posture, we will bridge the connectivity gap and turn usage into true impact.

Thank you for adding your voice, your data, and your commitments. Let's stay focused on outcomes — communities online, businesses growing, public services delivered, and a pipeline of talent ready to lead. The digital economy is here; together, we can make it work for everyone.

As the Council marks 15 years, I'm proud of the coalition we're building: policymakers, operators, investors, innovators, and communities — all aligning capital with policy certainty, pairing deployment with skills, and measuring success by participation. The opportunities are significant; so are the responsibilities. Our task is to deliver a digital economy that broadens access, accelerates growth, and leaves no one behind.

Thank you for showing up with solutions. Let's carry this momentum forward — aligning investment with impact, and partnering across sectors to deliver a digital future that works for people, not just platforms.

Our next chapter starts now.

— *Juanita Clark*

MOMENTS FROM THIS YEAR'S EVENT

*The event was opened by
DCA President Dr Andile Ngcaba*

*Pedal powered smoothies in the making
at the Nokia Smoothie Bike Activation.*

*Key Note being delivered by ICASA
Chairperson, **Mothibi Ramusi***

***Banele Shozi**
ICT Marketing Manager,
Huawei Southern Africa*

***Toni Pellegrino**, MD, Chairman,
Head of Southern & Eastern Africa,
Network Infrastructure, Nokia SA*

Renu Uppiah
Digital Power Business Development Director, Huawei Southern Africa

Stefano Resi, *Head of Data Center Sales, Middle East & Africa Nokia Network Infrastructure*

Jivesh Rhugbeer
Commercial Executive: MNO, FNO & Global Portfolio, Dark Fibre Africa

Daniel Padiachy
Chief Marketing & Strategy Officer, McDonald's SA

Brenden Pronk
CEO, Cammington [Starlink]

Nimrod Smit,
Senior ICT Strategy Consultant, Huawei SA

Dirk Wolmarans
Technical Manager, YOA Cables

Nehal Osman, *Nokia Fixed Networks Business Center Lead for Sub-Saharan Africa & Vodafone MEA*

Thinus Mulder
Treasurer, DCA

Sudhir Juggernath
CEO, TelCables SA

Alec Nyatanga
CEO, Tele-expert

Jan Liebenberg
CTO: Network Infrastructure, Southern & Eastern Africa, Nokia

Dietlof Mare, *Group CEO, Maziv & **Juanita Clark**, CEO, DCA*

Duncan McLeod, *Managing Editor, TechCentral; **El Kope**, CFO, Cell C & **Jorge Mendes**, CEO, Cell C*

Enzo Xiang, *Solution Architect, Huawei Optical MSSD*

Lee Perrin, *Data Center MEA Director, CBRE Global Workspace Solutions; **Alwyn Du Plessis**, CEO, Mertech Marine & **Prenesh Padayachee**, Group Chief DOO, Seacom*

Shane Chorley,*CEO, Frogfoot; **Nimrod Smit**, Huawei; **Veemal Gungadin**, CEO, Mauritius Telecom; **Ian Paterson**, CEO, CSquared Group & **Dewald Booysen**, COO, MAZIV*

Juanita Clark, *CEO, DCA; **Simon Harvey**, Executive Head: Commercial, MAST; **Justin Colyn**, CCO, IHS Towers; **Anne Mclaren**, VP & GM: SA, Philippines, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Niger · ATC; **Phil Wessels**, CEO, NTRL & **Sean Swanson**, Commercial Director, Helios*

Bora Varliyagci, CEO, Digitalthings
&*Rashika Ramlal*, Country Manager PS
& Executive Director, AWS

Leisel Ramjoo, Nokia; *Michele McCann*, Head of Interconnection
& Peering, Teraco; *Sandile Dube*, MD, Equinix & *Menno Parsons*,
Founder & CEO, MPT

Dr Fiona Asonga,
TESPOK

Ken Murage, Group Deputy CTO,
Wananchi Group & *Kgabo Seopa,*
CTO of Fixed Networks, Huawei SA

TO EVERY MEMBER, PARTNER,
& FRIEND OF THE COUNCIL:
Thank you for fifteen years of
trust, connection & partnership.

15 Digital Council

At **Nokia**, we create technology that helps the world act together. As a **B2B technology innovation leader**, we are pioneering networks that sense, think and act by leveraging our work across **mobile, fixed and cloud networks**. In addition, we create value with intellectual property and long-term research, led by the **award-winning Nokia Bell Labs**.

Service providers, enterprises and partners worldwide trust Nokia to deliver secure, reliable and sustainable networks today – and work with us to create the digital services and applications of the future. **In Africa we are the trusted partner in increasing the continent's digital resiliency and actively participate in closing the digital gap to unlock the value of the digital economy – leaving nobody behind!**

To find out more visit *https://www.nokia.com/about-us/*
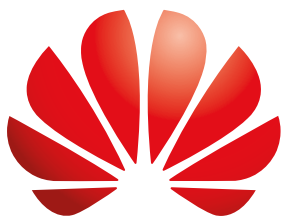
Founded in 1987, **Huawei** is a **leading global** provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices. We have approximately **208,000 employees** and we **operate in over 170 countries and regions**, serving more than **three billion people around the world**. We are committed to bringing digital to every person, home and organization for a fully connected, intelligent world.

Learn more at *www.huawei.com/en/corporate-information*

Amazon Web Services (AWS) is the world's most comprehensive and broadly adopted cloud platform, offering over 200 fully featured services from data centres globally.

Millions of customers, including the fastest-growing startups, largest enterprises, and leading government agencies, are **using AWS to lower costs, become more agile, and innovate faster**.

Whether you need to deploy your application workloads across the globe in a single click, or you want to build and deploy specific applications closer to your end-users with single-digit millisecond latency, **AWS provides you the cloud infrastructure where and when you need it**.

Learn more at *https://aws.amazon.com/*

DFA is a **leading South African wholesale, open-access fibre-infrastructure provider to Internet Service Providers** (ISPs) and other ICASA-licensed network operators, including telecoms providers, data centres and cloud platforms.

As the endorsed sub-brand of **MAZIV Group**, DFA champions technical excellence, serving as the reliable backbone of South Africa's digital economy and an unchallenged enabler of enterprise growth. Since its rollout began in 2007, DFA has deployed world-class fibre across metros, secondary cities and towns, expanding access to high-performance connectivity nationwide.

DFA partners with global leaders to integrate **cutting-edge innovation** into its network. In August 2025, this collaboration achieved a world-first fibre capacity breakthrough, transmitting 1.6 Tbps over a single wavelength, more than four times previous benchmarks. This trial demonstrates DFA's ability to **future-proof its network**, meet growing digital demands, and deliver scalable, reliable, high-performance connectivity that drives economic growth and transformation in South Africa.

Learn more at *dfafrica.co.za/about*

Founded in 2018, **TELE-EXPERT** is a leading technology company **specialising in the design, deployment, and maintenance of critical fibre optic and wireless infrastructure** across South Africa and internationally.

With a team of highly skilled engineers and technical experts, TELE-EXPERT brings extensive experience in delivering complex **fibre optic and wireless solutions** to **Fibre Network Operators and ISPs**. Through strong partnerships with **global fibre optic and wireless OEM manufacturers**, the company provides complete systems integration solutions — including **in-house technical support, installation, training, and maintenance**.

Well positioned to meet the growing demand for **robust, secure, and resilient network infrastructure**, TELE-EXPERT has successfully implemented major projects in the communications sector. By **combining professional expertise with efficient systems** for management and control, the company consistently delivers on its promise of service excellence and client satisfaction.

Learn more at *https://www.tele-expert.com/*

YOA Cable is Africa's leading manufacturer of **high-quality optical fibre cable solutions**. Based at the Dube TradePort Special Economic Zone in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, YOA Cable combines **world-leading technology** together with **local expertise** to deliver reliable, innovative solutions for Africa's growing connectivity needs.

The company **designs and manufactures** a broad range of **optical fibre cables** including **aerial, drop, microduct, general-purpose**, and **specialised solutions**. With over 300 cable configurations available, YOA Cable supports diverse applications across telecommunications, industrial, transport, transmission, and petrochemical sectors.

YOA Cable also contributes to South Africa's **socio-economic development** through job creation, **youth employment**, and **skills development**, while driving inclusion and transformation in the ICT manufacturing sector.

Innovation and quality are central to YOA Cable's operations, with manufacturing guided by **international standards** and supported by **advanced technologies**. Positioned at the centre of Africa's digital transformation, YOA Cable is helping to expand broadband access by delivering sustainable, cost-effective, and fit-for-purpose fibre solutions.

To find out more, visit *https://yoacables.com/*

Nedbank Corporate and Investment Banking is a division of Nedbank, a **leading African bank** that provides transactional, corporate and investment banking services to **local and global markets**.

Nedbank CIB's client base includes leading corporations, financial institutions, state-owned entities, and governments across Africa. With **deep expertise in the ICT sector**, Nedbank CIB partners with **technology and telecommunications** clients to deliver **innovative financial solutions** that support digital transformation, infrastructure development, and sustainable growth across Africa.

Learn more at *https://cib.nedbank.co.za/home.html*

Teraco, **Africa's leading carrier-neutral colocation provider**, is the first provider of highly resilient, vendor-neutral data environments in sub-Saharan Africa. With its **world-class data centre infrastructure** and network-dense ecosystems, Teraco forms a vital part of the African internet's backbone and is essential to the modern enterprise's digital transformation strategy.

Learn more at *https://www.teraco.co.za/*

Openserve, a subsidiary of the **Telkom Group**, is **South Africa's largest telecommunications infrastructure provider** and operator of the country's largest fixed-broadband network.

As a national connectivity leader, Openserve connects South Africa to its neighbouring countries via **robust dual terrestrial fibre routes**, geared to meet the demands of South Africa, SADC, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The company strives to stay ahead of the curve and enable partners with resilient, scalable connectivity that delivers a competitive edge.

Learn more at *https://openserve.co.za/*

McDonald's South Africa opened its first restaurant in November 1995 and today operates close to 400 restaurants across all nine provinces, serving over 8 million customers per month.

Renowned for its **training**, the company has trained and **employed more than 12,000 South Africans** at various levels (including franchisees, restaurant managers and crew) and was named a Top Employer in 2023 and 2024.

Learn more at *https://www.mcdonalds.co.za/*

Formed in 2022, the **MAZIV Group** encompasses **leading brands** in carrier, enterprise and consumer connectivity, digitally led safety and security, and telecommunications construction and maintenance, including Vumatel, Dark Fibre Africa (DFA), Herotel, Rise Telecoms, SADV, VumaCam and BritelinkMCT. Together, these businesses provide open-access fibre networks and services that reach **millions of South Africans** across homes, businesses and communities in cities, townships and rural areas.

Covering the **full spectrum of fibre-to-the-home** (FTTH), **fibre-to-the-business** (FTTB) and **fibre-to-the-tower** (FTTT) connectivity, MAZIV plays a critical role in shaping South Africa's digital future. Its purpose is to connect people and businesses, enable access to affordable, high-speed data and unlock opportunities through digital inclusion.

MAZIV empowers its businesses to **deliver impact** where it matters most. Working with partners across the telecoms sector, government and regulators, the group is **driving infrastructure development** that supports innovation, competitiveness and long-term national growth.

To find out more, visit *https://maziv.com/*

Telcables South Africa TelCables South Africa, powered by **Angola Cables**, is Africa's most interconnected internet provider. With a global reach spanning over **800+ data centres**, we enable businesses to expand seamlessly across continents — from Southern and East Africa to the Middle East and Asia.

Our **low-latency, secure connectivity solutions** are designed to scale with client needs, whether it's IP Transit, Cloud Services, or secure data storage. Backed by a dedicated team, we deliver flexible, budget-conscious solutions tailored to your needs.

WHY Telcables SA :
- Africa is no longer on the periphery of global connectivity — we are at the centre of a new digital frontier.
- With direct access to over 800 data centres, expanding from Africa is no longer a challenge — it's a cross-connect away.
- Our infrastructure is not just about cables and data — it's about enabling innovation, resilience, and growth.

Learn more at *https://telcables.co.za/*

Digital Parks Africa is a **100% South African-owned**, carrier-neutral data centre provider founded in 2017 with a bold vision: to revolutionise Africa's digital landscape by making **world-class** data centre solutions accessible to all businesses, regardless of size.

More than just a colocation service provider, we're the digital heartbeat of the continent – offering **secure, reliable** infrastructure hosting with **connectivity, power, cooling**, and a range of value-added solutions. Our flagship facility in Samrand, Gauteng, anchors a growing footprint across South Africa, with planned expansion into the rest of the continent.

Rooted in **local expertise** and strengthened by **global skills**, we understand Africa's unique challenges and opportunities. That's why we lead with high rack power densities, innovative cooling solutions, class-leading PUE below 1.5, and transparent cost models like our 'pass-through power' pricing. Customers benefit from enhanced scalability, lower latency, and robust disaster recovery across South Africa's economic hubs.

At Digital Parks Africa, we take a **partner approach** – tailoring our services to meet the unique needs of each customer. Backed by 24/7 support and a high-availability environment, we deliver maximum uptime, agility, and peace of mind.

Digital Parks Africa - always reliable, always agile, always on.

Learn more at *https://dpa.host/*

Established in 2010, **MetroFibre Networx** is a carrier-class Ethernet (CE 3.0) infrastructure company that provides **highly managed fibre optic broadband connectivity** in South Africa. Their customers, comprising Internet Service Providers (ISPs), resellers, residential and business properties, and consumers, can take advantage of a range of services tailored to meet their specific needs.

The MetroFibre services to businesses include:
Dedicated Internet Access, High Speed Broadband Network Connectivity, Voice Over IP, IP transit, Layer 2 services, Data centre connectivity, enabling cloud connectivity and all of which is delivered on the back of a single MetroFibre Networx fibre Installation. Residential consumer services include Internet connectivity, VoIP and MetroFone App, MetroMesh Wi-Fi extender, and Metro-I solution is available for Estates and complexes.

MetoFibre's ability to connect to a host of **world-class providers**, provide broadband services, as well deliver data and applications across the cloud – all on the same **fibre installation** – enables their customers to choose, match and integrate the right connectivity solution for their business – at a cost that they can afford.

Learn more at *https://metrofibre.co.za/about-us/*

The **Technology Service Providers Association of Kenya (TESPOK)** is a leading **membership-based organisation** representing the interests of technology service providers across Kenya. Its core mission is to offer a **unified platform for members** to articulate their needs, raise concerns, and share aspirations—while serving as a vital bridge between the industry and regulatory bodies such as the Communications Authority of Kenya.

To fulfil this role, TESPOK engages in a range of strategic activities, including **policy advocacy, industry training, and stakeholder representation**. Through ongoing collaboration with regulators and other key players, TESPOK ensures that technology service providers have a strong voice in shaping the future of Kenya's digital landscape. The organisation plays a pivotal role in fostering the growth, development, and sustainability of the country's technology sector.

To find out more, visit *https://www.tespok.co.ke/*

Global Network Resiliency Needs Data From Both Land & Sea

By Stephen Song, Senior Director, Infrastructure Mapping & Development, Internet Society

A spate of undersea cable disruptions in recent years has underscored the importance of the internet to all economies and highlighted the internet's dependence on this foundational infrastructure. These disruptions have triggered debates and action regarding the need for redundant landing points and diverse routing for undersea cables to improve network redundancy and resilience. However, one thing that is often missing from these conversations is the terrestrial fibre optic networks that complement undersea cables.

Terrestrial fibre networks don't just bring connectivity inland; they also play a critical role in redundant connectivity for undersea networks. In the massive *undersea cable disruption off the coast of Côte d'Ivoire in 2024*, terrestrial fibre networks played a critical role in the restoration of services while waiting for the undersea cables to be repaired. For African countries, this is especially true given the number of landlocked countries and the number of countries served by only a single undersea cable. Terrestrial cross-border networks provide critical redundancy to countries with limited international connections.

For undersea fibre optic cables, public information is widely available through resources from *Telegeography*, *Subtel Forum*, *Fiber Atlantic*, and others. The same cannot be said of terrestrial fibre networks, however. Some network operators publish detailed public maps of their networks, and others publish nothing at all. *Dark Fibre Africa*, based in South Africa, is a wonderful example of transparency, having made maps of their network infrastructure available for over 15 years. While many other operators also publish network maps, they vary widely in the level of accuracy, recency, and detail, making it particularly challenging to develop an overall picture of infrastructure investment and resiliency in any given region.

To address this critical information gap, the Internet Society is supporting the development and adoption of an open data standard for describing terrestrial fibre optic networks. The *Open Fibre Data Standard* (OFDS) establishes a common language for describing terrestrial fibre optic networks. It is also a vehicle for establishing norms among operators and regulators for information sharing regarding terrestrial fibre deployments. Funding for the initial development of OFDS was provided by the World Bank, and its development was guided by the ITU, the World Bank, Liquid Intelligent Technologies, CSquared, Digital Council Africa, the Mozilla Corporation, and the Internet Society.

OFDS makes it easy to exchange, analyse, and visualise fibre network data for different stakeholders, including governments, telecom providers, and researchers. By providing a consistent schema, OFDS enhances interoperability, transparency, and informed decision-making in broadband expansion and resilience efforts.

We believe that more coherent and transparent data regarding terrestrial fibre networks is essential to:
- developing effective national and regional investment strategies;
- mitigating damage to infrastructure due to a lack of awareness from other infrastructure initiatives; and,
- levelling the playing field in terms of information sharing and building trust.

To find out more, consult the website at *https://ofds.info* or join our mailing list at *https://elists.isoc.org/mailman/listinfo/ofds-discuss*

Beyond Standards.
Redefine Cable Certification.

The modular certifier platform for copper & fiber — from 100 kHz to 3 GHz

Modular. Powerful. Future-proof.

WireXpert MP is the next-generation certifier platform for copper and fiber cabling, combining flexibility, speed, and intuitive design.

NEW!

✓ Certify copper up to Cat 8 (3 GHz) and fiber Tier-1 (singlemode & multimode)

✓ Fast test times, real-time diagnostics, intuitive UI

✓ Ergonomic design with dual auto-test buttons, landscape/portrait display modes

✉ iclsales@icl.co.za   📱 078 803 9421   📞 011 521 2384 / 05

WE EXPORT

FOUNDING MEMBER

Fujikura   CORNING   Digital Council

AFL   COMWAY TECHNOLOGY   optimize! softing   RIPLEY MILLER SERIES

Yūshū EXCELLENCE   ICL SPECIALISED TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

How MAZIV & DFA are shaping Africa's Digital Economy

As the country enters a new phase of digital expansion, _MAZIV Group_ and _DFA_ are helping shape the next era of fibre connectivity, one defined by inclusion, innovation, and impact. Rather than focusing solely on transactions or infrastructure, the two companies are exploring how large-scale fibre investment can strengthen local economies, accelerate access, and power a digitally enabled South Africa.

This vision took centre stage at _Digital Council Africa's Conext 2025 Conference_, where policymakers, technology leaders, and investors gathered to map the future of digital infrastructure. The conference has become a key platform for collaboration between government and industry, aligning South Africa's connectivity ambitions with broader continental and global priorities for inclusive, high-speed digital growth.

At Conext 2025, the conversation shifted from broadband access as a service to broadband as a driver of social and economic progress, from enabling mobile network expansion to increasing fixed-line broadband penetration in urban, township, and rural communities. For MAZIV and DFA, the focus on high-speed, uncapped fixed broadband is where their impact resonates most, enabling AI adoption, supporting enterprise services, and advancing fully digital public services.

Delivering a connected & inclusive digital future

"We're combining MAZIV's vision with DFA's engineering excellence to build networks that not only connect communities but also empower entrepreneurs and put South Africa on the global digital map," says Dewald Booysen, Group Chief Operations Officer at MAZIV.

This commitment goes beyond building networks. It is also about aligning with national priorities and global frameworks to ensure fi drives tangible social and economic impact.

"By aligning our growth strategy with national priorities such as _SA Connect_ and global frameworks for inclusive digital development, we are showing that fibre expansion is about more than just megabits per second. It's about driving economic resilience, enabling entrepreneurship, and creating opportunities that empower communities across South Africa."

Investing in scalable, inclusive infrastructure

Through DFA, MAZIV is investing in infrastructure that is both scalable and inclusive. The group's open-access model allows multiple Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to operate on the same network, improving competition and affordability while reducing duplication. This ensures that investment in fibre benefits the entire digital ecosystem, from large operators to township-based resellers and start-ups.

MAZIV

DFA's network modernisation highlights the value of scale and innovation in action. Over the past two years, the company has invested close to a billion rand in upgrading its network through initiatives such as the Dry Underground Distribution Cabinet (DUDC) project, which has significantly improved service reliability and reduced delivery times. Recent technical milestones, including a successful 1.6 terabit-per-second trial with _Ciena_ and the rollout of _50G PON_ technology by MAZIV subsidiary _Vuma_ in partnership with Huawei, showcase how the group is preparing South Africa's digital backbone for the demands of cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and future enterprise services.

> _"Innovation is only one part of the equation. Our long-term investment programme is guided by a commitment to digital inclusion,"_ says Booysen.

Closing South Africa's digital divide

Despite progress, South Africa still faces a connectivity gap. As of mid-2025, more than _13 million_ South Africans remain offline, representing roughly 21% of the population. While overall internet penetration sits at around 79%, fixed-line broadband penetration, which enables uncapped high-speed internet, remains a critical area of growth. Expanding fibre-to-the-home FTTH connectivity is central to unlocking opportunities for communities, businesses and public services.

Through its FTTH focus, the group is extending reliable high-speed broadband to rural and township areas, connecting schools, clinics, and community centres. At the same time, DFA's broader network initiatives support both fixed and mobile broadband, ensuring a fully inclusive digital ecosystem.

The impact of connectivity on local economies is well established. A 2024 _study_ found that every 10% increase in fixed broadband penetration can raise GDP by 1.21% in middle-income countries like South Africa, while enabling small and medium-sized businesses to operate more efficiently and access new markets.

From Left to Right: **Shane Chorley**, CEO, Frogfoot; **Nimrod Smit**, Huawei; **Veemal Gungadin**, CEO, Mauritius Telecom; **Ian Paterson**, CEO, CSquared Group & **Dewald Booysen**, COO, MAZIV

MAZIV

"Our responsibility now is to connect growth with fairness. The infrastructure we are building must not only support tomorrow's technology but also include the people and businesses that need it most today. Every kilometre of fibre connected should move us closer to changing lives," Booysen explains.

Building Africa's digital backbone

As Africa's digital landscape evolves, forums like Conext 2025 emphasise the value of shared vision and collective action. MAZIV and DFA are showing how collaboration between investors, network builders, and policymakers drives measurable progress on national and continental goals. By accelerating fibre expansion and investing in future-ready, open networks, they are laying the foundation for an inclusive digital economy that connects people, strengthens businesses, and empowers communities.

About MAZIV

MAZIV, formed in 2022, is the parent company of fibre infrastructure operators Vumatel and Dark Fibre Africa (DFA). The group encompasses leading brands in enterprise and consumer connectivity, digitally-led safety and security, and telecom.unications construction and maintenance.MAZIV is a formidable player in fibre-to-the-home (FTTH), fibre-to-the-business (FTTB), and fibre-to-the-tower (FTTT) in South Africa.
Editorial contact: Tribeca Public Relations - *Maziv@tribecapr.co.za*

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

TiS
TOURISM INVESTMENT SUMMIT

Digital for Tourism:
Connecting Africa's Travel Future

From L to R: Deepesh Thomas, Uber; Sipho Mtombeni, Google; Gwen Ngwenya, Mastercard; Wilme Verwoerd-Witbooi, Airbnb; Juanita Clark, DCA

At the **Tourism Investment Summit 2025**, Digital Council Africa CEO **Juanita Clark** moderated a dynamic panel titled *"Digital for Tourism: The Impact of Digital Transformation on the Tourism Sector in Africa."*

Joined by leaders from **Airbnb, Google, Mastercard, and Uber**, the discussion explored how digital platforms are reshaping the travel experience — from discovery and booking to payments, mobility, and inclusion.

The conversation highlighted how technology is transforming tourism into a driver of inclusive growth. Topics ranged from **Gen Z travel trends and domestic tourism** to **digital payments, infrastructure, and accessibility**. Panelists agreed that while challenges like connectivity gaps and digital skills remain, collaboration between the public and private sectors is key to ensuring Africa's tourism sector thrives in the digital era.

As Juanita concluded: *"We're either going to ride the wave of digital transformation or be left behind. This is Africa's moment to shape its digital journey — together."*

🎥**Watch the full discussion here:** *Tourism Investment Summit 2025 – Digital for Tourism Panel*

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

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

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
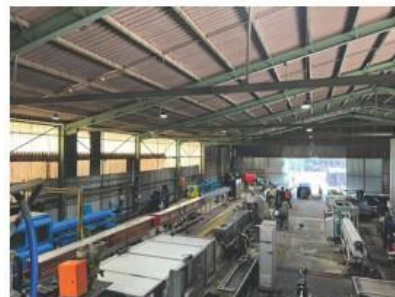
Our factories and warehousing:
m4a is headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa and is the manufacturing hub that supplies our domestic, African, US, UK, European, and Asian customer base.

Our manufacturing facility covers 38 000 sqm (409 000 sqf) with 7 000 sqm (75 000 sqf) underroof.

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.

axsCHAMBERS   FIBREDUCT   CNKTCLOSURES   FIBRECABLE   RAMAC   ISO 9001:2015 Certified   SABS APPROVED   SATAS

The evolution of cyber threats: Key insights from Microsoft's latest Cyber Signals report

By Kerissa Varma, Chief Security Advisor Africa, Microsoft

As cyber threats continue to evolve at an unprecedented pace, Microsoft's latest *cybersecurity intelligence* reveals a complex landscape where artificial intelligence (AI) is both empowering defenders and enabling sophisticated criminal enterprises. Drawing from Microsoft's synthesis of over 75 trillion daily security signals and recent threat intelligence, several critical trends are reshaping the global cybersecurity landscape—with particularly concerning implications for South Africa and the broader African continent.

The rise of AI-powered deception

The most significant development in our threat intelligence is the weaponisation of AI by cybercriminals. Between April 2024 and April 2025, Microsoft thwarted $4 billion in fraud attempts, many of which incorporated AI-generated content designed to deceive victims with unprecedented sophistication.

Deepfake detection algorithms are now essential for identifying AI-generated interviews where facial expressions and speech patterns may not align naturally. This technology is being deployed by criminals in recruitment scams, CEO fraud schemes, and romantic deception campaigns across Africa.

The implications for South Africa are particularly acute, because it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to distinguish real from fake, as deepfakes—AI-generated video and audio—are being used to impersonate trusted individuals and deceive victims into handing over money or credentials. This trend represents a fundamental shift in the threat landscape, moving beyond traditional phishing emails to sophisticated audio-visual deception that can fool even security-conscious individuals.

Attacks on critical applications: the increasing battleground for SA businesses

In South Africa, attackers are increasingly compromising critical business application vulnerabilities. These attacks exploit the very tools and software that organisations rely on – like web applications, APIs and cloud services, often bypassing conventional security controls.

For local financial institutions and critical infrastructure, this represents an area of risk that requires immediate attention.

These attacks target the very services that have become essential to South Africa's digital economy. Banking applications, e-commerce platforms, utility services and government digital services are increasingly at risk from attackers who mimic legitimate application usage to go unnoticed or gain advanced access to systems and data. The impact on businesses and economic stability when the systems that support our economy are impacted has far reaching consequences that are not easy to recover from.

Education sector under siege

A particularly concerning trend identified in our threat intelligence is the targeting of educational institutions. Education and research became the second-most targeted sector by nation-state threat actors in 2024. These institutions, offering intelligence on research and policy, are often used as testing grounds before pursuing their actual targets.

For South Africa, this poses risks not only to academic institutions but to the broader knowledge economy. Universities and research institutions that are developing critical technologies, policy frameworks, and educational resources are becoming stepping stones for more significant attacks on government and private sector targets.

South African cyber threat landscape: Local challenges

Based on extensive field research and threat monitoring across the African continent, several South Africa-specific threats have emerged that require immediate attention:

1. Romance & investment scams

South African consumers are increasingly targeted by sophisticated romance scams that now incorporate AI-generated profile images and even voice synthesis. These scams often begin on social media platforms and migrate to messaging applications where criminals establish long-term relationships before requesting financial assistance or investment opportunities.

2. WhatsApp Business impersonation

Criminals are creating fake WhatsApp Business accounts that impersonate legitimate South African retailers, banks, and service providers. These accounts use official logos and branding to trick consumers into sharing personal information or making payments for non-existent goods and services.

3. Cryptocurrency & investment fraud

The growing interest in cryptocurrency among South Africans has created opportunities for sophisticated investment scams. These operations often feature fake celebrity endorsements, fabricated news articles, and professional-looking websites that disappear once victims transfer funds.

4. SIM swap attacks

Despite regulatory efforts, SIM swap attacks remain prevalent in South Africa. Criminals use social engineering to convince mobile network operators to transfer victims' phone numbers to SIM cards under their control, enabling them to bypass two-factor authentication and access banking and social media accounts.

5. Ransomware targeting SMEs

Small and medium enterprises across South Africa are increasingly targeted by ransomware groups who recognise that these businesses often lack enterprise-grade security infrastructure but possess valuable data and the ability to pay ransoms to resume operations.

6. The IoT challenge

With more than 41 billion IoT devices across enterprise and consumer environments expected by 2025, devices such as cameras, smart speakers, or locks and commercial appliances can become entry points for attackers. South Africa's rapid adoption of smart city technologies and IoT devices in both residential and commercial settings create an expanded attack surface that requires careful security consideration.

Collective defence: A collaborative approach

The scale and sophistication of modern cyber threats require collaborative responses. As I noted in previous discussions about South Africa's cybersecurity landscape, addressing cybersecurity in a hyper-connected digital world requires collective commitment and action.

Microsoft's threat intelligence demonstrates that no single organisation, regardless of size or resources, can effectively defend against the full spectrum of modern threats alone. The integration of AI into both attack and defence strategies requires sharing threat intelligence, best practices, and collaborative response mechanisms.

Microsoft

Recommendations for South African organisations

Based on Microsoft's latest threat intelligence and the specific challenges facing South African organisations, we recommend:

1. **Implement AI-aware security training**: Educate employees about deepfake technology and AI-generated content, providing them with tools and techniques to verify the authenticity of communications.
2. **Strengthen application security**: Move beyond perimeter defence to focus on application-layer security, implementing robust authentication, input validation, and API security measures.
3. **Develop incident response capabilities**: Establish clear procedures for responding to AI-enhanced attacks, including deepfake incidents and sophisticated social engineering campaigns.
4. **Invest in threat intelligence**: Leverage shared threat intelligence platforms to stay informed about emerging threats specific to the South African context.
5. **Enhance identity verification**: Implement multifactor authentication (MFA) and consider biometric verification for high-value transactions and sensitive data access.

Recommendations for consumers

With many consumers falling prey to increasingly sophisticated cyber-threats, we encourage the following:

1. **Verify before you click:** avoid clicking on ads or links from unfamiliar sources. Fraudulent websites are increasingly mimicking legitimate ones with alarming accuracy.
2. **Be cautious with online purchases:** stick to trusted e-commerce platforms. AI-generated fake storefronts can look convincing, complete with fake reviews and customer service bots.
3. **Watch for deepfakes and voice scams:** if something doesn't feel right in a video call or voice message, trust your instincts. Deepfake technology is being used to impersonate real people.
4. **Use secure payment methods:** avoid direct bank transfers or crypto payments for online purchases, they often lack fraud protection.
5. **Enable multifactor authentication (MFA):** add an extra layer of security to your accounts to prevent unauthorised access, even if your password is compromised.

Looking forward

The cybersecurity landscape will continue to evolve as both criminals and defenders adopt increasingly sophisticated AI technologies. For South Africa, success in this environment will depend on combining global threat intelligence with local expertise and collaborative defence strategies.

The investments we make today in cybersecurity infrastructure, skills development, and collaborative frameworks will determine our resilience against tomorrow's threats. As the threat landscape evolves, so too must our approach to defending against it—with innovation, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to protecting South Africa's digital future.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

ICT Policy Colloquium: Reforming for Focus

On **17 October 2025**, Digital Council Africa CEO **Juanita Clark** joined leaders from government, industry, and academia at the **Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) ICT Policy Colloquium** — a national forum aimed at renewing South Africa's digital policy and regulatory landscape.

Under the theme *"Reforming for Focus: Building South Africa's Inclusive and Competitive Digital Future,"* the Colloquium set out to address one of the country's most pressing challenges: ensuring that digital policy keeps pace with technological change and development priorities.

Minister **Solly Malatsi** called for a bold and collaborative approach, noting that "we cannot govern tomorrow's digital economy with yesterday's rules." Discussions throughout the day centred on converting policy intent into action — from streamlining regulatory processes and improving coordination to unlocking local innovation and ensuring universal, affordable access to connectivity.

Juanita contributed to these vital conversations, highlighting the importance of aligning infrastructure investment, policy, and skills to enable inclusive digital growth.

This gathering marked the beginning of an ongoing, multi-stakeholder dialogue to shape the next chapter of South Africa's digital transformation journey — one that prioritises collaboration, coherence, and real-world impact.

Read more on the DCDT website

communications & digital technologies

Department:
Communications & Digital Technologies
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

LONDON SLOUGH · AMSTERDAM · FRANKFURT · LISBON · MARSEILLE · ZAFARANA · MUMBAI · HARAMOUS · MOGADISHU · KAMPALA · NAIROBI · KIGALI · MALINDI MOMBASA · DAR ES SALAAM · MAPUTO · MIDRAND · ISANDO · MTUNZINI · DURBAN · YZERFONTEIN MELKBOSSTRAND · EAST LONDON · CAPE TOWN · PORT ELIZABETH · Asia Pacific

1 SEACOM CABLE SYSTEM

TRANSMISSION POP

IP POP

MEET ME POINT (MMP)

This map is not to scale and used for illustrative purposes only.

Unveiling Seacom 2.0 - A New Digital Renaissance and Subsea Network to Power the Indian Ocean Basin's Digital & AI Future

SEACOM, Africa's trailblazer in digital infrastructure, today announced the launch of SEACOM 2.0, a groundbreaking subsea cable system poised to redefine connectivity across the Indian Ocean Basin, Middle East, Mediterranean, and Southern Europe. Unveiled at Submarine Networks World 2025 in Singapore, the project marks a bold leap toward securing Africa's role in the global digital economy while addressing the explosive demand for AI, cloud, and real-time data services.

SEACOM 2.0 builds on the company's pioneering legacy. In 2009, SEACOM's first privately owned subsea cable to connect countries around the Indian Ocean, slashed connectivity costs by 300% and sparked a wave of innovation in cloud services, fintech, and tech ecosystems. Now, as the region braces for unprecedented growth, home to 2.9 billion people across 33 nations, with youthful populations and a surging middle class, SEACOM 2.0 aims to future-proof infrastructure for decades to come.

INDUSRTY NEWS

SEACOM

By 2030, networks are expected to carry over 10 billion AI agents, and SEACOM 2.0 will serve as the **backbone for this AI-driven revolution**. Looking further ahead, the system is engineered to support a world population of 10 billion by 2050, with the Indian Ocean Basin projected to house half of humanity.

The new system is no ordinary cable. **SEACOM 2.0 introduces a 48-fibre-pair architecture**, a leap in design tailored for high-capacity, low-latency AI workloads. Cable landing stations will transform into AI communication nodes, seamlessly linking African nations' sovereign AI infrastructure to global data hubs.

But SEACOM 2.0 is more than capacity, it is a commitment to resilience. After recent cable disruptions exposed vulnerabilities, the project adopts diversified routes closer to African shores and open, carrier-neutral landing points to reduce risks and enhance security. This design ensures uninterrupted connectivity while reinforcing Africa's digital sovereignty and also a strategic decision that transforms coastal nations from passive endpoints into active custodians of global digital flow.

For nations along the route, SEACOM 2.0 is a catalyst for growth. It will:

- **Boost GDP:** Subsea infrastructure has already lifted African nations' GDP per capita by over 6%. SEACOM 2.0 aims to multiply this impact.
- **Fuel Smart Infrastructure:** From IoT-enabled ports to AI-driven city planning, the network will support real-time analytics and edge computing.
- **Empower SMEs:** By lowering barriers to enterprise-grade connectivity, SEACOM 2.0 opens doors for small businesses to access cloud tools, engage customers globally, and integrate into digital trade platforms.

The system will also act as a gateway for landlocked regions, such as the SADC and East African markets, reducing reliance on single routes and positioning countries as hubs for content and applications providers. Connectivity is no longer a luxury; it's the oxygen of the digital and AI age.

"*SEACOM 2.0 is more than a cable, it's the foundation of a shared AI-driven future,*" said Alpheus Mangale, Group CEO of SEACOM. "*This project isn't just about connecting people; it is about ensuring Africa and its neighbours control their digital destinies. By enabling open access and regional integration, we are creating a system that is resilient, sustainable, and inclusive.*"

Furthermore, this project represents more than engineering, it embodies a belief that technological progress should elevate all humanity, not merely serve the interests of the few.

As the world stands on the threshold of artificial general intelligence, SEACOM 2.0 ensures the Indian Ocean Basin will equally participate in shaping what comes next.

Success, Mangale added, hinges on strategic partnerships with governments, regulators, and industry stakeholders. Over the past year, SEACOM has engaged with leaders across existing and potential landing countries to align with their regulations, co-invest in infrastructure, and maximise local value.

For more information or interview requests, please contact:
Mandisa Ntloko-Petersen of SEACOM on *mandisa.petersen@seacom.com* or +27832000279
Willem Eksteen of Stone on *willem@stone.consulting* or +27832726304

About SEACOM
Launched in 2009, SEACOM pioneered open-access submarine connectivity in Africa. Its original cable system broke the continent's dependence on satellites, lowering costs, catalysing digital ecosystems, and enabling the arrival of hyperscaler cloud regions. Today, SEACOM remains a challenger brand and connectivity pioneer, focused on delivering the infrastructure and services that underpin Africa's role in the global digital economy.

SEACOM is a diversified ICT provider of scale, offering a wide range of voice, managed networks, security, cloud, and server hosting solutions and services to businesses, network carriers, service providers and enterprises. SEACOM Digital Infrastructure owns and operates one of Africa's largest networks of ICT infrastructure, including multiple subsea cables, a resilient continent-wide IP/MPLS network, and Fibre networks in and across the continent. With a network spanning South Africa, Europe, and Asia, SEACOM empowers African businesses to connect seamlessly and securely to global markets.

Businesses partner with SEACOM's Digital Services for cybersecurity solutions, including firewalls, threat detection, cloud-based solutions, and secure network infrastructure, to safeguard their digital assets. For more information about how SEACOM can enhance your enterprise's network and digital infrastructure, contact *info@seacom.com* to speak with one of our sales representatives.

Alpheus Mangale, SEACOM Group CEO

LIQUID INTELLIGENT TECHNOLOGIES

Digital citizenship & South Africa's future: Building a generation of empowered, tech-savvy youth

By Valencia Risaba, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at Liquid Intelligent Technologies SA

The youth of 2025 are growing up in a hyperconnected world. Yet many, particularly in South Africa, still lack access to the tools and knowledge that enable them to participate meaningfully in it.

Young people have the innate power to shape a nation's future. Still, in a country where *unemployment remains a challenge* for this sector of the population, achieving this impact calls for interventions aimed at equipping both young learners and school leavers with the skills and tools for digital and economic inclusion.

For this to happen, two questions need to be asked: First, how do we prepare our young people to thrive as responsible, skilled digital citizens? Then, are we equipping them to lead not only in South Africa but also on the global stage?

Digital citizenship is about more than just being online

While unequivocally a step in the right direction, becoming a digital citizen encompasses far more than owning a smartphone and having an internet connection. It is about having the skills and experience to engage safely online. It's also about using digital tools to address real-world problems, understanding how to safeguard personal data, and making a positive contribution to communities and the broader economy. In short, it's the ability to empower individuals to thrive in the digital age.

For a country like South Africa, where *recent statistics* indicate that more than 60% of the unemployed population is under the age of 24, building this capacity needs to be a priority. The potential result of not doing so? A generation of young people excluded not by their ability, but by their lack of opportunity. This impacts employment opportunities and economic growth, creates pressure on the government, and results in lost productivity. Accelerating digital inclusion has the potential to prevent this.

Supporting the next generation of digital citizens

The solution lies in the hands of the many stakeholders in South Africa's future, from both the private and public sectors. For Liquid Intelligent Technologies, this translates into using the tools and resources we already have at our disposal to empower young people.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

LIQUID
INTELLIGENT TECHNOLOGIES

On the one hand, this means equipping youth with future-facing technical skills, including coding, cloud computing, digital marketing, data analytics, cyber security, and AI literacy. On the other hand, cultivating the essential soft skills required to navigate the digital world, including critical thinking, collaboration, and ethical decision-making, as well as practical business and entrepreneurial skills.

In short, it's understanding that we have a responsibility to create opportunities for youth to participate in and shape the future.

Empowerment through innovation & skills development

At Liquid, we have seen firsthand how digital access transforms lives. In the North West Province, our digital lab at Sempapa Secondary School has brought structured digital learning to a previously under-connected community. The outcome? Access to digital and computer literacy skills and courses, as well as new career aspirations.

In the Eastern Cape, where unemployment levels are particularly high, Liquid has invested in a host of initiatives aimed at fostering innovation and empowering citizens with digital and entrepreneurial skills. These initiatives have provided hundreds of young people with hands-on training in cloud platforms, software tools, and career-readiness skills. We have also invested over R300 million into extending our network in the region, connecting more than 900 government buildings, and creating over 600 permanent and temporary jobs.

Similarly, entrepreneurship-focused digital empowerment initiatives in Phokeng, also in the North West province, have shown that when youth are provided with digital tools and business support, they can launch entrepreneurial ventures, address community challenges, and become employers themselves.

These are not isolated efforts. They are part of a longer-term, sustained effort to bring the digital economy closer to young people, especially those in rural and underserved communities. They also demonstrate what's possible when stakeholders take dedicated action. At Liquid South Africa, we are always open to partnering and supporting all enterprises in their business ventures as we build a more integrated and progressive society and economy.

Looking ahead: A collective responsibility

Preparing Africa's future workforce needs to be a collaborative effort by educators, civil society, policymakers, industry leaders, and communities. As we finish commemorating the 2025 Youth Month, we're reminded that when we invest in the digital empowerment of youth, we're not just preparing workers; we're also empowering them to succeed.

By providing the digital skills and opportunities to thrive, we're preparing leaders, innovators, and ordinary citizens for a better, more inclusive digital future.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Juanita Clark speaks at the
Nedbank CIB ICT Sector Conference 2025

On 28 August, Digital Council Africa CEO **Juanita Clark** joined industry leaders, government representatives, and digital innovators at the **Nedbank Corporate and Investment Banking (CIB) ICT Sector Conference** in Sandton.

The event brought together key voices shaping South Africa's digital economy for discussions on accelerating connectivity, enabling affordable access, and scaling digital platforms to drive inclusive growth.

Juanita contributed to the conversation with insights on the transformative role of fibre infrastructure in powering connectivity and expanding broadband reach—highlighting how collaboration between public and private sectors remains vital to South Africa's digital future.

Hosted under the theme of "*Building an Inclusive, Future-Ready Digital Economy*," the conference underscored a shared commitment to bridging the digital divide and advancing technology-driven development across the country.

CONEXT

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Independent Tower Working Group:
Advancing Collaboration & Policy Alignment

The Independent Tower Working Group remains a vital platform for uniting operators, infrastructure stakeholders, and policymakers to address regulatory challenges and a focus on strengthening sector stability.

Most recently, the group convened an in-person meeting during the Conext Conference, providing an invaluable opportunity to engage directly with industry bodies and regulatory authorities. Discussions focused on advancing alignment around key issues affecting rapid tower deployment, compliance, security concerns, and vandalism.

In addition, the Working Group recently submitted industry input to the City of Tshwane on the proposed amendment of its 2002 Telecommunications Mast Policy. We extend our sincere thanks to all members who contributed their insights and feedback to this important submission.

Through ongoing collaboration, advocacy, and knowledge-sharing, the Working Group continues to shape a more coordinated and enabling regulatory environment. Its efforts underscore the industry's commitment to driving operational efficiency, transparency, and sustainable growth across the tower ecosystem.

Members with an interest in independent tower infrastructure, regulatory engagement, or policy development are encouraged to get involved. Your insights and participation remain essential in shaping the sector's future.

For more information or to join the Working Group, please contact Reesha Iyer at *reesha@digitalcouncil.africa*

Competition and Investment in the Internet Value Chain: Why Africa Needs a New Approach

The internet is no longer a luxury — it is the backbone of Africa's economic growth, social development, and digital inclusion. Yet, for all its promise, the continent's internet value chain is at risk of being stifled by outdated competition frameworks and investment barriers that do not reflect today's digital realities.

This is the focus of the **Digital Council Africa's new White Paper:** *Competition and Investment in the Internet Value Chain in Africa*. The report provides fresh insights into the challenges facing African markets and offers practical policy recommendations to unlock investment, innovation, and affordability in the digital economy.

Understanding the Value Chain

The internet value chain is not a single entity but a **complex ecosystem of actors: infrastructure providers, data centres, cloud services, platforms, and content providers**. In Africa, each of these layers faces unique challenges — from limited investment in backbone infrastructure, to high costs of spectrum, to competition concerns around dominant global platforms.

The White Paper argues that **current regulatory frameworks**, often inherited from a pre-digital era, have not kept pace with the convergence of telecoms, platforms, and services. **This leaves African markets vulnerable to both under-investment and anti-competitive practices**.

Why It Matters

At stake is nothing less than Africa's digital future.

Without reform:

- **Investment could stall** — leaving broadband rollouts incomplete and rural communities disconnected.
- **Costs could rise** — making data unaffordable for millions of Africans.
- **Local innovation could be crowded out** — with global players dominating key markets.

Conversely, the right policy approach could:

- **Encourage sustainable investment** in networks and data infrastructure.
- **Lower costs** for consumers and businesses.
- **Stimulate innovation** by creating fairer competition between local and global players.

Key Recommendations

The White Paper highlights several strategic shifts:

1. **Modernising competition policy** to reflect the realities of digital platforms, cloud services, and cross-border connectivity.
2. **Enabling infrastructure investment** through fair spectrum pricing, open access frameworks, and streamlined licensing.
3. **Supporting regional collaboration**, recognising that digital markets transcend national borders.
4. **Balancing global and local dynamics**, ensuring Africa benefits from global platforms while creating space for home-grown innovation.

A Call to Action

The Digital Council Africa is committed to working with policymakers, regulators, and industry to create a digital environment that fosters competition, attracts investment, and ensures affordable, reliable connectivity for all Africans.

We invite all stakeholders — from government leaders to private investors and civil society — to read the full White Paper and join us in shaping a digital future that works for Africa.

Read the full White Paper here

Data centre neutrality is SEACOM's infrastructure advantage

By Prenesh Padayachee, Group Chief Digital Infrastructure Officer, SEACOM

In today's hyperscale economy, connectivity is no longer enough. Enterprises and global cloud providers are demanding infrastructure that is not only high-performance and scalable but vendor-neutral, interoperable, and built on trust. They want the freedom to connect wherever they want, however they want, and with whomever they wish, without being locked into closed ecosystems or bundled platforms.

For digital infrastructure providers, this presents a strategic dilemma: how do you scale up and integrate vertically without compromising client control? How do you build a high-capacity, resilient network while staying data centre-neutral in a market increasingly shaped by alliances and exclusivity?

Connecting, not controlling

At SEACOM, we believe the answer lies in infrastructure without lock-in—a model that enables performance and choice in equal measure. By connecting key data centres across East and Southern Africa, offering true OnNet scalability, and avoiding bundling that limits flexibility, we are positioning ourselves not as gatekeepers but as enablers of digital growth. In a landscape dominated by "co-opetition" and cloud convergence, neutrality is no longer a differentiator. It is a prerequisite for relevance.

Our approach to the data centre economy is deliberate: be present in the proper facilities, connect the right locations, and leave the control in the hands of the customer. That is why we have focused on interconnecting Africa's most critical data centre hubs—with high-capacity. These low-latency OnNet routes support scalable, DC-to-DC traffic.

It is made possible through our three-tier infrastructure model, which involves owning fibre in some regions, leasing dark fibre in others, and utilising spectrum where necessary. Regardless of how it is delivered, the result is consistent – connectivity that gives clients control over their routing, breakout, and interconnect strategies. We are not trying to control the data centre environment or tie clients to a SEACOM-exclusive stack. We are here to ensure that wherever a customer wants to land, replicate, or exchange traffic, they can – on a resilient and neutral network.

Why neutrality matters more than ever

Data centre neutrality is about more than avoiding vendor bias—it is about enabling client trust. In a world of multi-cloud, hybrid workloads, and increasingly distributed architectures, organisations cannot afford to be boxed in by providers who bundle infrastructure and services behind the scenes.

It is particularly relevant for hyperscalers expanding into Africa. These players expect to interconnect on their terms, using partners who enable scale without influencing their decisions. Our neutrality across facilities, cloud ecosystems, and carrier relationships is central to how we build infrastructure—and to how we preserve the freedom our clients require.

We do not restrict breakout options. We do not favour any single cloud provider. We do not design routes that serve our preferences at the expense of client needs. That neutrality, by design, is what enables agility.

SEACOM has continuously operated at the intersection of infrastructure and services. But we are clear about the lines we won't cross. Yes, we provide transport. Yes, we offer digital services. But one is never conditional on the other. That distinction is critical in a vertically integrated world.

Our clients want the ability to engage with us at Layer 1 or Layer 3—or somewhere in between—without being locked into additional services they did not ask for. That means modularity must be engineered into both the network and the commercial model. It is also why we continue to support a non-exclusive services layer. You can take our fibre and bring your IP overlay. You can buy transport only. You can integrate us into a larger hybrid strategy. We are not competing to trap the customer—we are competing to enable them.

100% tradability: Beyond uptime

One of the performance benchmarks we use internally is what we call "100% tradability." It is not enough for a circuit to be technically online. It must be commercially viable, deliver predictable performance under real-world conditions, and support the client's application stack reliably.

This principle extends across our owned, leased, and spectrum-based infrastructure. Whether we are lighting dark fibre between Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, delivering redundant paths in Mozambique, or enabling breakout in Johannesburg, every part of the network is built to be not just alive, but usable at scale. It is a more demanding standard than simple uptime, and one that reflects the expectations of today's hyperscale, cloud-native clients.

Africa's digital economy is too complex—and too important—to be shaped by monopolies. SEACOM recognises that actual growth will come not from controlling the ecosystem but from contributing to it. That's why we actively interconnect with other carriers, enable peering in neutral facilities, and support cross-provider handoffs wherever they add value.

This model of "co-opetition"—competing in some areas while collaborating in others—keeps the market open, scalable, and fair. It also keeps us relevant in an environment where trust, transparency, and neutrality matter as much as speed and latency. Our infrastructure is designed to complement—not corner—the ecosystem.

Designed for trust

Trust in infrastructure is not just earned through performance metrics. It is earned through how you show up in the ecosystem. At SEACOM, we have made strategic choices to remain neutral, interoperable, and client-first—even as we expand our digital services portfolio and increase our ownership footprint.

We have built our OnNet network to support scale without entanglement. We have connected the data centres that matter without claiming exclusivity. And we have ensured that customers can use our transport without inheriting our service stack. In a market shaped by choice, that clarity matters. It allows customers to move faster, design freely, and expand confidently, knowing that the infrastructure underneath them is not only fast but also fair.

An African imperative: Holistic tech solutions to keep Africa current and competitive

By Ziaad Suleman, CEO of Cassava Technologies, South Africa and Botswana

As a developing continent with enormous growth potential, Africa stands at a crossroads. On the one hand, its young, tech-savvy population is eager to capitalise on the opportunities presented by advanced connectivity, digital infrastructure, and AI-enabled solutions. On the other hand, many people still lack access to these resources or opportunities. Key to Africa remaining current and competitive is coordinated investment in holistic technology solutions (hardware, software, and services) that benefit all sectors of society.

Digital transformation starts with digital inclusion

Digital transformation isn't a future aspiration anymore; it's an immediate imperative. Whether it's providing infrastructure that ensures connectivity or access to digital skills and systems, closing Africa's digital divide is a priority that requires immediate attention, before it becomes an impossible task. With *internet penetration* still relatively low, there is considerable room for improvement.

Ultimately, it comes down to the fact that digital transformation is about people. When individuals and communities are digitally enabled, they can participate meaningfully in the economy, access education and healthcare, and contribute to society at large. Most often, exclusion isn't due to a lack of potential, but rather due to a lack of affordability and access to the resources, infrastructure, learning opportunities, and technologies that enable participation.

Why the urgency?

This growing digital divide has to be managed before it widens any further. Why? Because the wider the gap, the more difficult it is to find solutions. The result is portions of the population that are left behind in an increasingly digital era. This impacts employment opportunities and economic growth, creates pressure on governments, and results in lost productivity. Accelerating digital inclusion has the potential to prevent this.

Looking beyond connectivity

Significant investments have been made in connectivity across Africa, from undersea cables to fibre networks and mobile broadband. The true value lies in what comes next – affordable access, suitable devices to leverage this connectivity, secure platforms to transact on, and the skills and experience to get the best results from them.

A 5G network doesn't mean much to someone with an analogue phone, and an e-services portal is of little use if users don't have data, struggle with digital literacy, or don't understand or trust the system. In short, technology is only as impactful as the ecosystem that surrounds it.

That's why there is an urgent need for holistic solutions designed to meet the needs of Africa's rapidly growing digital population. Delivering infrastructure without services, or services without support, is no longer sufficient. We need systems that are secure, scalable, inclusive, and designed for African realities. That's where the continent's technology providers and other stakeholders have a vital role to play.

Building a foundation of digital skills

Africa's youth hold the key to the continent's economic future, but first, they must be equipped with the capabilities to thrive in a digital world. This ranges from basic digital literacy to advanced competencies in software development, cloud computing, cyber security, and AI capabilities. Equally, digital transformation must be inclusive, with equal access to training, tools, and opportunities.

Building a digitally skilled population is also about sovereignty. Africa can't afford to outsource its digital development. Local innovation, supported by local skills, is critical to ensure sustainability and relevance. When we have the skills and the infrastructure to support them, the sky's the limit.

AI will be a game-changer for the continent

Artificial intelligence (AI) represents one of the most transformative opportunities for Africa. But this potential will only be realised if Africa invests in AI infrastructure, such as GPU-powered data centres, alongside a strong ethical and policy framework. We need to develop AI that understands our languages, contexts, and needs. This means supporting African-led research and ensuring AI systems and solutions reflect African realities.

These aren't visions of a distant future, but realities that are already taking root. Understanding the urgency – and the immense potential – Cassava's AI factory, powered by NVIDIA supercomputers, provides a platform for the continent's AI innovators to solve unique African challenges and take advantage of unique African opportunities.

We have a shared responsibility to make this happen

To deliver on the promise of digital transformation, we need urgent and aligned action across the board. Investment is required not only in infrastructure but at all stages of the digital transformation journey. From digital literacy from an early age to regulatory frameworks, public-private partnerships, cloud, cyber security, and compute solutions that enable business growth and economic participation, as well as facilities and skills to prepare people for an AI-enabled future – the list is endless.

What we also need is focus and urgency. Because while every delay deepens the divide, every step forward brings Africa closer to a future that is not only connected, but competitive.

INDUSRTY NEWS

Governance Update

On 8 October 2025, the court-appointed Receiver filed an *Application for Termination of Receivership* with the Supreme Court of Mauritius, marking a key step toward restoring AFRINIC's normal operations. The court's decision is pending, but the Receiver, Mr Gowtamsingh Dabee, has agreed to continue supporting the organisation during this transition.

A newly elected Board of Directors is now in place, with committees established for Finance, Audit, Remuneration, and Legal affairs—signalling a renewed focus on stability, transparency, and governance. AFRINIC has also appointed Forvis Mazars to complete overdue financial audits (2022–2024) and plans to convene a Special General Members' Meeting to finalise outstanding financial statements.

Legal investigations into fraudulent voting documents from the June 2025 election remain ongoing, while the Board prepares to relaunch its Policy Development Process—reaffirming AFRINIC's role as Africa's regional internet registry and strengthening community participation.

Read the full communiqué:
https://afrinic.net/communique-from-the-afrinic-board-of-directors-and-the-receiver

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

From Infrastructure to Intelligence:
DCA Joins the Conversation on AI-Ready Ecosystems

On 7 October, Digital Council Africa CEO Juanita Clark joined industry leaders in Johannesburg for the Equinix Engage event, which focused on *"Building AI-Ready Infrastructure with Real-World Insights from Industry Leaders."*

As part of the partner ecosystem panel, Juanita contributed to a robust conversation alongside representatives from major technology players and infrastructure providers. The discussion explored how organisations are shifting from legacy infrastructures to AI-ready platforms, embracing strategies around hybrid multicloud, interconnection, and accelerating digital transformation in South Africa.

Events like Equinix Engage underscore the importance of infrastructure, connectivity and ecosystem-thinking in delivering value from emerging technologies. Juanita's participation reaffirmed our mission at DCA: to link infrastructure investment with inclusive, practical digital outcomes.

CONEXT

FROM THE CEO's DESK

Building on Momentum, Focusing on Impact

Dear Colleagues,

This edition of Conext reflects the incredible pace and purpose that have defined 2025. From our Conext Conference and working-group milestones to new partnerships and member initiatives, the year has been one of connection, collaboration, and action.

The discussions we've been part of have reaffirmed that digital transformation is no longer a theoretical agenda; it is an operational priority. The questions have shifted from why we invest in infrastructure to how we ensure that investment reaches people — creating jobs, driving inclusion, and unlocking economic resilience.

Our members continue to lead with purpose: deploying open networks, strengthening cybersecurity, and advancing innovation through AI and cloud. The new White Paper on Competition and Investment in the Internet Value Chain underscores our shared responsibility to shape policy frameworks that reflect Africa's digital realities.

As the Council celebrates fifteen years of creating connection, I am reminded that our work has always been about more than cables, towers, or data centres — it's about outcomes. When a small business gets online, a school connects to the cloud, or a community accesses new services, that's where impact becomes real.

To every member, partner, and friend of the DCA — thank you for your continued support and commitment. The digital economy is growing, and with your involvement, it is becoming more inclusive, more sustainable, and more human.

Let's keep the momentum. Let's keep creating connection.

With appreciation,

Juanita

CEO, Digital Council Africa

Digital Council | **I5** YEARS CREATING CONNECTIONS

CONTACT US

Juanita Clark
CEO
juanita@digitalcouncil.africa

Reesha Iyer
Member Services
reesha@digitalcouncil.africa

Sipho Makhalema
Events Manager
sipho@digitalcouncil.africa

Nadene Reignier
Stakeholder Communications
nadene@digitalcouncil.africa

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*.

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.