

Mobile communication towers inaugurated in rural Ghana

K-NET Limited, a network solutions provider operating throughout Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa, brings first-time mobile voice and data connectivity to rural communities.



Haruna Iddrisu, the minister of communications in Ghana, on Wednesday, 21 November 2012, inaugurated 10 mobile communication towers in rural areas in Ghana, built by K-NET Ltd and providing service on the Tigo network.

Speaking at one of the sites in Botoku in the Volta Region, Iddrisu commended both K-NET and Tigo for their initiative, together with the Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communication (GIFEC) who funded the project. He also said that he expected that the advent of these facilities in the rural areas will attract investors and open up more business opportunities and enhance teaching and learning in schools.

What the towers can do

Each communication tower can serve an area of up to 300km², potentially covering several townships. Currently 143 000km² (60%) of the land area and 5 million of the population (20%) of Ghana have no mobile coverage.

The 10 rural communication towers implemented to date by K-NET have experienced substantial levels of traffic and very strong growth of more than 25% since the last one was completed at the end of July 2012. Some of the towers are now carrying more than 250 000 minutes of voice traffic each month, and more than 15,000 SMS messages.

Strategic partnerships

K-NET Limited, a network solutions provider operating throughout Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa, together with strategic partners Altobridge, Ameresco Solar, iDirect and Tigo, is bringing first-time mobile voice and data connectivity to rural communities in Ghana and beyond.

K-NET and its partners have developed a highly innovative solution which is optimised for rural applications and reduces the total costs of ownership by up to 65% compared to a conventional solution, meaning that rural communities with relatively low population densities of less than 1 500 people may now be served profitably by the mobile network operators.

The K-NET led partnership to develop the low-cost solution includes the provision of a 2G or 3G Base Station Subsystem by Altobridge, the provision of a Solar Power Solution by Ameresco Solar, the provision of satellite communication equipment by iDirect, together with the mobile network operator Tigo.

Providing communication links

In addition to the turnkey system integration, K-NET uses its state-of-the-art Teleport at McCarthy Hill in Accra to provide the communication links between each remote site and the central switching network of the mobile operator, Tigo.

K-NET provides the network management and the operations and maintenance services for the network. The advanced BSS equipment from Altobridge optimises capacity for the rural environment and reduces power consumption to less than one twentieth (5%) of a conventional implementation. This enables a highly-efficient solar-based power system from Ameresco Solar to be used, which offers substantially lower running costs than a conventional power system with diesel generator backup.

Speaking at the inauguration in Botoku, Michael Darcy, CEO of K-NET said, "K-NET is proud to be working with GIFEC, Tigo and its other partners to bring mobile services to rural communities such as Botoku, to enrich the quality of life for individuals and to enable small businesses to operate more efficiently."

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