

## Orange to invest in Africa Internet Group

PARIS: French telecoms operator Orange underlined its strategic focus on Africa with a 75 million euros (\$80m) investment on Tuesday in the continent's largest e-commerce platform Africa Internet Group.



"With this strategic investment, Orange now has the capacity to play a leading role in the fast-growing e-commerce market in Africa," Orange chairman Stephane Richard said.

Richard indicated the move would "create value for all parties" while bolstering its ability to market products and services developed by Orange Middle East & Africa over the internet.

Orange's investment comes as part of its strategic Essentiels2020 plan to develop digital services in Africa and the Middle East.

Africa Internet Group (AIG) was created in 2012 as an "African Amazon" with the launch of Nigerian online shipping site Jumia. The group has 10 e-commerce sites in all, operating in 23 African states.

Axa, Goldman Sachs, MTN Group and Rocket Internet as well as Orange are all capital stakeholders in AIG.

As part of its African ambitions Orange earlier this year announced a strategic partnership with Google in an effort to attract more customers as mobile internet use spirals.

Orange also in January purchased subsidiaries in Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone from Indian rival Airtel to strengthen its position in what for the French group has become a key region.

By the end of 2015, Orange had 110.2 million mobile phone clients spread across 19 countries in Africa and the Middle East.

*Source: AFP*