

Tshwane wins global award for bridging digital divide

The City of Tshwane received international recognition by winning the World Wi-Fi Day Award for Most Innovative City or Government Program to bridge the Digital Divide, in Liverpool, England.



An award in this category recognises cities, governments and organisations that develop local and national plans to bridge the digital divide. Shortlisted projects must evidence the successful implementation of comprehensive Wi-Fi solutions which innovatively overcome the challenges and complexities associated with these large-scale deployments.

The Tshwane Free Wi-Fi has brought 1.8 million citizens in the capital city online in the biggest deployment of municipal free Wi-Fi on the African continent. The roll-out has been made possible through the city's collaborative partnership with Project Isizwe. Together Tshwane and the South African NGO have built relationships and developed innovative and feasible financial and technical solutions to make the roll-out possible.

The World Wi-Fi Day Awards were presented at the Wireless Global Congress currently being held in Liverpool. The awards celebrate the success stories across the world that are connecting the unconnected and contributing to global socio-economic development. The City of Tshwane, with Project Isizwe as the implementing partner, was shortlisted in this category alongside Intersection and Liquid Telecom, two internationally recognised providers in the deployment of Wi-Fi.

Internet is a human right

"Our free Wi-Fi project has radically undermined the adverse effects of unaffordable internet access by narrowing the hitherto glaring digital divide," said incumbent Tshwane Mayor, Kgosi Ramokgopa. "We will continue to be a shining example of what it means to employ the use of technology to lead the way towards a South Africa that is democratic, inclusive, united and prosperous – ours will be the global cyber capital," said Ramokgopa.

“An award in this category, showcases the need for relationship building and partnership with local government in the provision of free Wi-Fi for South African citizens. Just like electricity and water, internet is a human right which we are working closely with municipalities to enable,” said Project Isizwe CEO, Zahir Khan.

Project Isizwe was also shortlisted in the category: Best Wi-Fi Deployment to Connect the Unconnected in Rural Environment for the organisation’s Limpopo project. The prize in this category was awarded to Liquid Telecom for their free Wi-Fi project in Nakuru County, Kenya.

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