

ABSTRACT: TELKOM'S BWA EXPERIENCES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MARKETPLACE

These are exciting times. The recent announcement of the President of South Africa on the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiatives for South Africa (ASGISA) will boost the South African economy in ways not yet seen before. South Africa is currently in its longest economic growth period, and naturally, business is robust. More and more people are becoming economically active and their reliance on voice, data and mobility is emerging.

Telkom, and indeed most of the telecommunications operators in Africa, is undergoing a period of increased capitalization as we move from a classical PSTN to a managed broadband IP centric services focused operator. Telkom believes that the wireless network shall be one of the dominant forms of access to communications and telecommunications services.

South Africa itself is a developing market with predominance for voice centric services. Urban areas are being served with voice services, whilst in peri-urban and rural areas, voice remains a persistent challenge.

Access to frequency spectrum remains constantly challenging. Regulators and governments need to address the time it takes to develop policies and guidelines, grant access to licenses and spectrum as well as enable a market that is more service focused. Over-regulation does not assist in bridging the digital divide.

It is the intention of this paper to share the holistic and present broadband wireless access developments in South Africa, but also to focus on technical mechanisms that to assist in alleviating and conquering the African digital divide and the rural challenges being faced. Telkom's experiences in WLAN, WiMAX, CDMA 2000, Satellite and FMC will be shared together and suggestions made with a focus on moving towards a NGN that has a role in delivering broadband wireless access for rural and remote areas.