



GSM Africa presentation to ITU -BDT; Yaoundé Cameroon

Evolution to 3GSM: A Foundation for Future Broadband Growth in Africa

Abstract

GSM technology is proven and its success is global and more so in Africa and other emerging markets. 3GSM (3G WCDMA) now has proven performance and is available with comprehensive evolutionary road map, with the release of HSDPA upgrade that provides superior data rates and optimum efficient use of Spectrum. The leading operators in Africa are on the path to 3 GSM, for example Vodacom and MTN SA, Vodacom Egypt, etc. The list is growing as the values and the benefits are being realised. The GSMA policy position supports the WCDMA as the technology of choice of the member operators, and GSM Africa lobby the Regulators in Africa for the support of its rollout in the continent. GSMA believes technology has the potential to maximise the benefits and GSMA adapts new radio access technologies to enhance GSM and 3GSM family standards, appropriate deployment rules and regulations required to avoid but potential interference with the existing other licensed services; and open standards is the solution.

Secure and predictable access to the spectrum is of high importance to all the operators. Therefore GSM AF lobbies the Governments, in parallel with the operators to invest in the long-term strategies for growth and sustainability of 3GSM services to achieve their full potential, using the 2500-2690 MHz "3G Extension Band" in addition to the 2G core bands. Harmonization of the bands within individual countries or regions will encourage networks and services across the continent. Among the three options provided by ITU, GSMA policy supports the option that minimizes the risk and the cost of associated with interference management, as this has greater benefits to regulators and the continent at large. The entry into the market of substitute products to the 3GSM services, in particular the WiMax technology having similar range and data rates cannot be ignored. Also the GSM AF operators have experienced problems with WLL undermine the regulations in many countries, using their business models a backdoor entry into the market. However in mobile environment, service availability, pricing, coverage in both rural and urban, roaming are the most important differentiating factors that can be generalized on global basis, but cost is more specific factors to Africa. The 3GSM technology has the competitive advantage in this respect, therefore is conclusively the appropriate technology for Africa.