



What is CONNECT AFRICA?

Connect Africa is a social enterprise that leverages innovative technologies for socioeconomic development. We have successfully piloted a sustainable rural service delivery model in both South Africa and Zambia. Having completed a proof of concept, pilots and field trials, the social enterprise is in the process to roll out country-wide service delivery networks across Zambia and is tendering for projects in South Africa.

The Connect Africa business model is based on the delivery of multiple public and private sector services directly to the rural people of Africa. Our network of Rural Service Operators is what makes this possible – and what gives our model its entrepreneurial spirit and dynamism. Each of the local operators is based in their own underserved rural community and will use a variety of ICT to deliver a range of services. These services will include communications (voice, SMS and Internet), public sector (agriculture, education & health) and private sector (banking, insurance, advertising, market research) services.

We have adapted different elements of our business model to meet the needs of the different communities we serve and to ensure that service delivery is sustainable. For example, only the most remote of rural communities in South Africa are still without access to communications and there is not enough demand for communications services, on a daily basis, to cover the high cost of reaching these communities. Therefore, in order to ensure the sustainability of the Connect Africa Rural Service Network in South Africa, we utilised a fleet of mobile rural service centres that visited each of the deep rural communities on a fixed weekly schedule. Each mobile rural service centre used satellite and/or cellular technologies to deliver voice and internet communications services, and we were able to facilitate the delivery of local government services directly to the rural communities.

In contrast to the South African model, communications penetration is not as mature in Zambia, and there is enough demand in underserved communities to sustain the a Rural Service Operator's business at a fixed location in the community. Following our successful trials in Mumbwa District, in the Central Province of Zambia, we are now working to recruit and equip Connect Africa Rural Service Operators across the country with MTN community phones, Classmate PCs, MTN modems, printers and renewable energy power supplies.

The funding for the development of Connect Africa's business model, to date, has relied on donor funding. Donor funding was supplied by the Southern Africa Trust, the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation ACP-EU and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA). We continue to build on these relationships and are now seeking further partnership with NGOs, funding institutions and the Universal Service and Access Funds (USAFs) in our countries of operation.

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