

## Construction of EASSy submarine cable completed ahead of schedule

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The construction of WIOCC's East African Submarine Cable System (EASSy) is complete, marking the achievement of yet another major milestone towards the launch of what will be the largest cable system serving sub-Saharan Africa and connecting it to the world.

Finalising an extremely successful construction programme, the joining of the two segments making up WIOCC's EASSy cable – the so-called 'final splice' – took place a few days ahead of schedule at 0040hrs (UTC + 3) this morning. The installation phase of the project, which started in Maputo, Mozambique in December 2009, was completed on board the cable laying vessel *Ile de Batz* in the Indian Ocean just off the east African coast.

Chris Wood, CEO of WIOCC – the largest shareholder in EASSy - said: "Now that this critical stage of the project has been completed successfully and ahead of time, we will start system testing almost immediately. Once this is finalised, we are looking forward to connecting our first customers to the network from July 2010. At WIOCC, we are also working with our shareholders to deliver high-speed, fibre-optic connectivity not just to the EASSy landing stations but deep into the interior of Africa. This will enable us to satisfy the growing customer demand for end-to-end service and provide improved geographic reach."

"A key difference between EASSy and other sub-Saharan systems is that our system will deliver connectivity to Europe via a direct route through the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea", confirmed WIOCC's CTO Ryan Sher, chairman of EASSy's Technical Working Group. "EASSy will be the first east coast system to connect directly to Europe, minimising the time taken for traffic from Africa to reach the key internet peering points in Europe and North America, and vice-versa. With the vast majority of international traffic being IP and internet-based, and with most African traffic destined for Europe and the US where the most popular content and applications are located, our ability to deliver content faster gives us and our customers a competitive edge in the market. Other east coast systems use longer routes via the Middle East or India; our optimised routing means that we are able to offer the lowest latency service to our customers."

EASSy's affordable pricing and open access structure also promise to revolutionise many African markets, bringing flexible, cost-effective international connectivity to fixed line, mobile and data network operators and ISPs throughout east, central and southern Africa. According to James Wekesa, WIOCC's Chief Commercial Officer: "WIOCC-EASSy offers carriers in Africa affordable high-speed connectivity into other parts of the continent, and direct access to key internet exchange points in Europe and North America. For international carriers, it offers a reliable high-capacity route into parts of Africa that have previously been seen as difficult-to-reach locations. In both cases it does so with a degree of commercial flexibility that has until now been completely unattainable. At WIOCC, we are offering connectivity from as little as 2Mbps (Megabits per second) for one month, up to multiple Gbps (Gigabits per second) wavelengths for the lifetime of the system, and thereby levelling the playing field for small, medium and large organisations."

WIOCC-EASSy offers African service providers a competitive edge, international carriers unmatched coverage, and businesses and consumers in the region an improved online experience, at lower cost and delivering high-quality access to global information and international markets.

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