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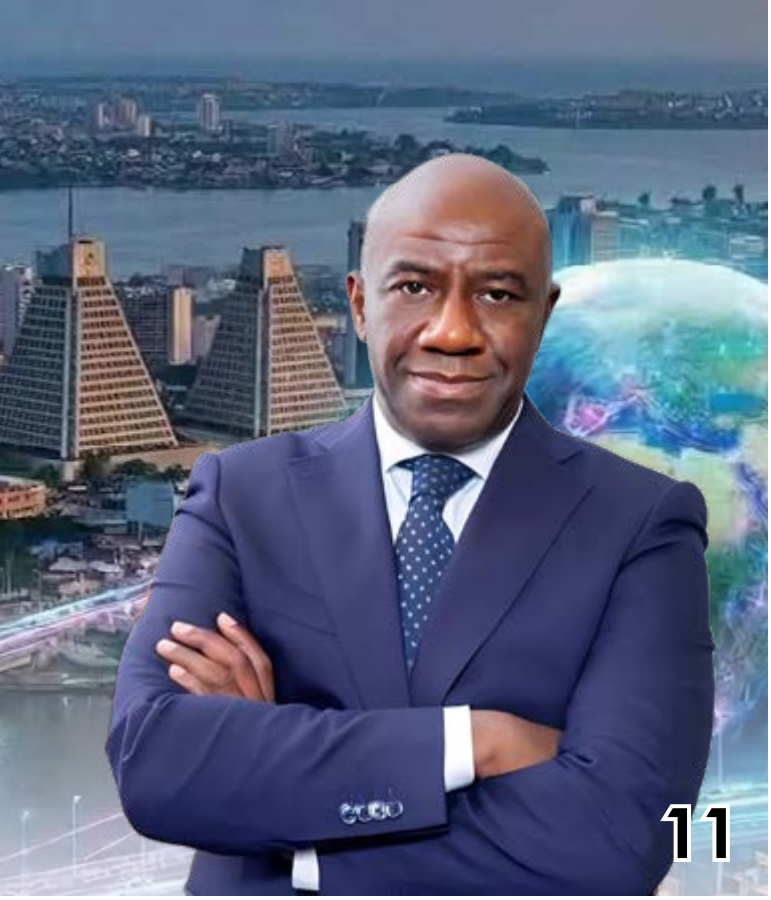
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Editor's Note



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the November 2026 edition of Teletimes International.

This edition comes at an important moment for the global ICT community, with the International Telecommunication Union's Plenipotentiary Conference (ITU PP-26) taking place in Doha, Qatar. Against this backdrop, our cover story, "Digital Innovation, Global Promise," highlights the digital ambitions and international contributions of three nations: Côte d'Ivoire, Kazakhstan and the United Arab Emirates.

Our special report on Côte d'Ivoire explores the country's candidature for the ITU Council, its progress in expanding telecommunications infrastructure and digital services, and its longstanding engagement in international telecommunications cooperation. We also examine Kazakhstan's digital transformation journey, its growing capabilities in artificial intelligence and digital government, and its candidatures for the ITU Council and Radio Regulations Board. Completing our cover focus, we look at the UAE's achievements in digital infrastructure, regulatory innovation and international standardisation, reflecting its continuing role in shaping the global digital ecosystem.

Beyond our special reports, this edition features an exclusive interview with Elina Morozova, Executive Director of Intersputnik, discussing space sustainability, responsible satellite operations and the importance of international cooperation in protecting the orbital environment for future generations.

We also turn our attention to MWC Doha 2026 and Africa Tech Festival 2026, two important industry gatherings bringing together policymakers, technology leaders and innovators to explore the next phase of digital development. Alongside these features, our regular coverage brings readers the latest developments across the telecommunications, satellite and technology sectors.

As Teletimes International continues its 21st year of publication, we remain committed to providing a platform for informed perspectives, industry developments and constructive dialogue across the global ICT and satellite communications communities.

Thank you for your continued readership and support.

Khalid Athar
Chief Editor

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The IQ Era

MWC Doha 2026

Accelerating the MENA's Intelligent Economy

As the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region moves rapidly to build digital, knowledge-based economies, MWC Doha 2026 emerges as the premier platform uniting the global mobile ecosystem with regional policy and enterprise leadership. Taking place from November 8 to 10, 2026, at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center (DECC) in West Bay, Doha, Qatar, the second edition of MWC Doha is organized by the GSMA in close strategic partnership with Qatar's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT).

Building on the momentum of its inaugural event, MWC Doha 2026 brings together thousands of enterprise decision-makers, mobile network operators, cloud giants, hardware innovators, and policy delegates from over 110 countries. Co-located alongside the opening proceedings of the International Telecommunication Union's Plenipotentiary Conference (ITU PP-26), the event bridges technology deployment with regulatory frameworks, positioning Qatar as a leading digital hub within a regional mobile industry projected to contribute over $470 billion to the MENA economy by 2030.

Core Pillars and Strategic Themes

The content architecture for MWC Doha



2026 revolves around three core strategic themes designed to map directly onto national digital transformation visions across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and broader MENA regions:

• **AI in Action:** Focusing on practical, enterprise-grade deployment of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and autonomous systems. This theme explores how intelligence can be embedded directly into telecom networks (Network AI), customer touchpoints, edge computing nodes, and public-sector operations.

• **Connected Infrastructure:** Highlighting next-generation network architecture, including standalone 5G (5G-SA), 5G-Advanced, Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTN), satellite integration, programmable networks through GSMA Open Gateway APIs, and energy-efficient data infrastructure.

• **Intelligent Economies:** Examining the socio-economic impact of digital innovation on national economic strategies, such as Qatar's National Digital Agenda 2030. Key focus areas include smart cities, fintech expansion, digital trade corridors, and sustainable digital industrialization.

Integrated Programs and Special Feature Showcases

The event features a multi-layered structure combining high-level governance dialogues, technical demonstrations, and targeted executive sessions.

1. GSMA Ministerial Programme & Policy Discussions

Through its alignment with the ITU PP-26 and public-sector stakeholders, MWC Doha 2026 hosts dedicated ministerial and regulatory roundtables. Policy discussions focus on spectrum allocation for 5G-Advanced and satellite networks, cross-border data sovereignty, cybersecurity frameworks for critical infrastructure, and investment incentives for green digital infrastructure.

2. GSMA Mobile for Development (M4D) Sessions

Dedicated specialized tracks explore how mobile connectivity drives sustainable development and social impact. Key sessions include:

• ***Digital Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (dMRV):*** Investigating how mobile infrastructure and IoT sensor networks can collect verifiable carbon offset data and close environmental data gaps.

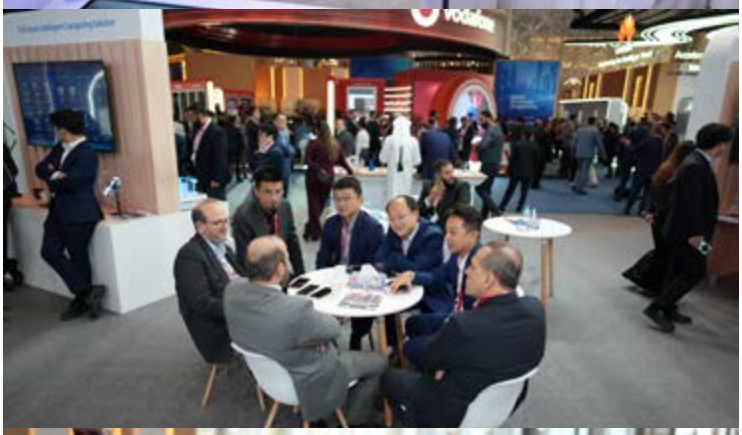
• ***Inclusive Emerging Tech:*** Assessing digital inclusion frameworks using the GSMA scale-versus-impact methodology to expand digital services to underserved populations.

3. Interactive Technology Demos & Open Gateway Demos

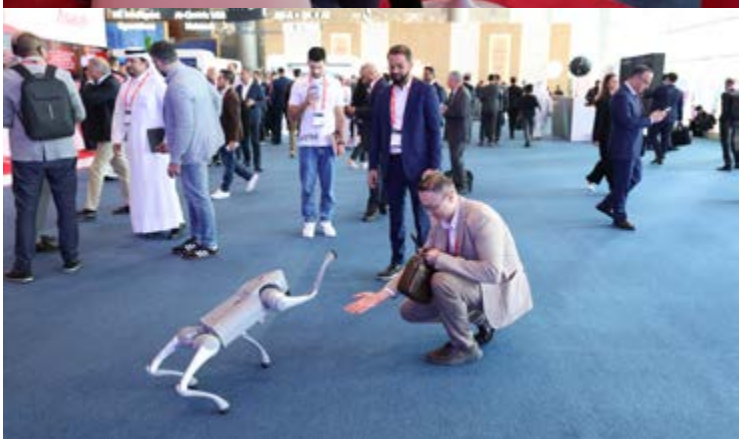
The main exhibition floor showcases live technical demonstrations featuring cutting-edge deployment cases:

• ***Biometric & Identity Recognition:*** Advanced AI-driven identity verification systems designed for smart airports, contactless border management, and secure digital services.









• ***Quality on Demand (QoD) Remote Operations:*** Demonstrating mission-critical application handling, such as 5G network-sliced drone operations and airport perimeter security powered by GSMA Open Gateway APIs.

• ***Spatial Computing & HoloMedicine:*** Immersive mixed-reality platforms using 3D holographic technology to transform medical education and remote clinical collaboration.

• ***Spectrum & Contextual AI Agents:*** Next-generation AI models demonstrating natural-language spectrum intelligence (RFGPT) and contextual mobile assistant interfaces (PhoneGPT).

Startup and Enterprise Acceleration Space

Recognizing the key role of local startups in driving digital diversification, MWC Doha 2026 offers dedicated networking platforms, founder showcase areas, and investor matchmaking hubs. Early-stage venture capital firms, corporate incubation units, and private equity investors gather to back regional tech talent across fintech, smart mobility, logistics, and cloud platforms.

Through structured 1:1 B2B matchmaking, participating startups gain direct access to regional telecom operators and enterprise procurement teams looking to integrate third-party APIs and specialized SaaS products.

Institutional Support, Sponsors, and Industry Participants

MWC Doha 2026 brings together top-tier regional telecom operators, infrastructure vendors, and international enterprise exhibitors:

• ***Host Partners & Institutional Leaders:*** Supported by Qatar's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), featuring participation from regional operators such as Ooredoo, e&, STC, and Vodafone Qatar.

• ***Global Enterprise & Tech Exhibitors:*** Featuring major technology vendors, cloud providers, and research institutions including Huawei Technologies, Microsoft Qatar, Trend Micro, LotusFlare, Vox Solutions, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, Khalifa University, and the Barça Innovation Hub.

For ICT industry stakeholders, executives, and policy watchers, MWC Doha 2026 provides a critical midpoint assessment of the MENA region's technology trajectory. By integrating regulatory policy, network evolution, and enterprise AI under a single roof in Doha, the event provides a clear blueprint for how emerging digital economies are building resilient, high-speed connectivity infrastructure for the decade ahead. T



Côte d'Ivoire's ITU Council Candidacy

National Digital Progress and International Experience

With a growing telecommunications sector, longstanding participation across the ITU's three sectors and an established record of regional cooperation, Côte d'Ivoire is seeking a seat on the ITU Council for 2027–2030.

The International Telecommunication Union's Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26), scheduled for 9–27 November 2026 in Doha, Qatar, will bring Member States together to determine the Union's leadership and priorities for the coming years. Among its responsibilities will be the election of 48 countries to the ITU Council, including 13 seats allocated to Region D, Africa.

Côte d'Ivoire is contesting one of these seats, drawing on its telecommunications development, previous Council membership and continuing participation in the Union's technical and development activities. Its candidature comes at a time when countries are working to extend affordable connectivity while responding to growing demands for secure networks, digital services, artificial intelligence and international technical cooperation.

These issues are closely connected. Expanding telecommunications networks creates opportunities for economic participation and service delivery, while the increasing dependence on those networks raises new requirements for investment, reliability, cybersecurity and institutional capacity. Côte d'Ivoire's experience provides a useful basis for examining how these responsibilities can be addressed nationally and through international cooperation.

Telecommunications Development and Economic Participation

Côte d'Ivoire's telecommunications sector has become an important contributor to national economic activity, supporting mobile communications, internet access, digital financial services and an expanding range of business applications. According to 2025 figures included in the country's updated candidature documentation, mobile penetration reached approximately 185%, while mobile money accounts across four operators totaled 49 million. Combined mobile and fixed internet subscriptions reached approximately 39 million.

These figures demonstrate substantial adoption of telecommunications services, although subscriptions do not represent the number of unique individuals connected. Multiple SIM cards and service accounts, together with differences in service usage, remain important when examining the extent of effective digital inclusion.

The sector's economic contribution is also significant. According to 2025 data, telecommunications contributed approximately 8% of national GDP in 2025 and accounted for more than 340,000 direct and indirect jobs.

The growth of mobile financial services illustrates how telecommunications infrastructure supports economic activity beyond traditional voice and data communications. As more services depend on mobile networks, operators face increasing demand for reliable capacity and service availability, while policymakers must consider investment conditions, affordability and the needs of communities that remain underserved.

For Côte d'Ivoire, these considerations form part of the broader challenge of sustaining telecommunications growth while extending its benefits across the country. Progress in service adoption provides an important foundation, but the distribution and practical use of connectivity remain equally relevant.

Expanding Coverage and Addressing the Remaining Connectivity Gap

Mobile network expansion has brought telecommunications services within reach of much of Côte d'Ivoire's population. Coverage figures for 2025, attributed to ARTCI in the updated candidature



documentation, indicate that 2G networks reached 97.85% of the population, 3G networks reached 97.70%, and 4G networks covered 96.74%.

Geographic coverage remains lower, with reported rates of 89.88% for 2G, 89.39% for 3G and 86.76% for 4G. This difference illustrates a persistent challenge for telecommunications markets, as connecting population centres is generally more commercially viable than extending infrastructure across remote and less densely inhabited territories.

Deployment beyond established population centres often involves higher construction and operating costs, greater dependence on backhaul infrastructure and electricity, and lower potential revenue per site. Addressing these difficulties may require a combination of commercial investment, public programmes and appropriate regulatory arrangements.

Côte d'Ivoire Reported 96.74% 4G Population Coverage In 2025, Compared With 86.76% Geographic Coverage. The Difference Illustrates The Continuing Challenge Of Extending Connectivity Beyond Population Centres.

Côte d'Ivoire's National Rural Connectivity Programme (PNCR), encompassing more than 8,500 rural communities according to its candidature material, is intended to improve access in areas that have not benefited equally from network expansion. The programme is relevant to international discussions about universal connectivity because it reflects the practical difficulties of reaching underserved communities.

Network availability, however, is only part of the wider challenge. Affordable devices, suitable tariffs, digital skills and useful services influence whether individuals and businesses can benefit from available infrastructure. These factors also affect the design of universal service policies and telecommunications development programmes.

Infrastructure Capacity and the Development of Digital Services

Alongside mobile network expansion, Côte d'Ivoire has strengthened the

Côte d'Ivoire Reports More Than 34,000 Kilometres Of Fibre Infrastructure And Six Submarine Cable Systems. Its Digital Development Plans Also Address Data Infrastructure, Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence And Skills.

infrastructure supporting domestic and international communications. Its updated candidature documentation reports approximately 34,752 kilometres of fibre-optic infrastructure across state-owned and private-operator networks.

The country is also connected through six submarine cable systems, with combined capacity reported at approximately 4.8 Tbps. These assets provide a basis for higher-capacity communications, although their economic and operational value depends on how effectively international connectivity is distributed through domestic networks.

Submarine cables provide access to international communications systems, while national fibre infrastructure, mobile networks and interconnection arrangements determine how that capacity reaches enterprises, government institutions and individual users. Reliability, affordability and the ability to maintain services during disruptions are therefore important considerations alongside installed capacity.

Côte d'Ivoire is pursuing additional initiatives intended to support a wider range of digital services. These include a national Tier III data centre under construction at the Information Technology and Biotechnology Village (VITIB), the "City of Innovation and Culture" under construction, and an artificial intelligence laboratory under construction under the PARAE programme in Bingerville.

These projects remain at different stages of implementation, but they reflect the country's intention to develop capabilities beyond basic telecommunications infrastructure. As businesses and public institutions increase their use of digital applications, the demand for reliable networks, secure data systems and appropriate computing resources is likely to become more important.

The policy framework reflects these requirements. Côte d'Ivoire has identified a National Artificial Intelligence Strategy and a National Data Governance Strategy for 2025–2030, together with a Digital Transformation Strategy extending to 2035. For 2026–2028, seven strategic pillars cover inclusive connectivity, digital public administration, innovation, cybersecurity and digital trust, inclusive artificial intelligence, postal-sector modernization and digital skills.

Côte d'Ivoire Has Served Two Previous Terms On The ITU Council And Has Undertaken Responsibilities Across ITU-D, ITU-T And ITU-R, Including The TDAG Chairmanship In The Current Development Cycle.

Together, these priorities indicate the direction of the country's development agenda. Their implementation will depend on sustained investment, institutional coordination and the ability to translate national strategies into services and capabilities that businesses and citizens can use.

A Longstanding Institutional Presence Within the ITU

Côte d'Ivoire's candidature is also supported by its history of participation in the International Telecommunication Union. An ITU Member State since 1960, the country previously served on the Council during the 1999–2002 and 2019–2022 terms, gaining experience of the Union's governing processes and the responsibilities exercised between Plenipotentiary Conferences.

Beyond Council membership, its representatives have undertaken responsibilities across the Union's three principal Sectors: Telecommunication Development (ITU-D), Telecommunication Standardization (ITU-T) and Radiocommunication (ITU-R). This participation is relevant because the Union's work requires an understanding of technical coordination, international standards and the development needs of countries at different stages of telecommunications advancement.

Within ITU-D, Regina Fleur Assoumou Bessou, Technical Adviser to the Director General of ARTCI, chaired Study Group 1 from 2017 until 2025. She was subsequently elected Chair of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) at the World Telecommunication Development Conference in November 2025.

TDAG advises the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau on the Sector's priorities, strategies, operations and implementation activities. Its responsibilities involve the relationship between development objectives,



institutional planning and the programmes through which the Union supports its Member States.

In the standardization field, Côte d'Ivoire has participated in the work of the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG) and ITU-T Study Group 3, which examines economic and policy issues relating to international telecommunications and ICTs. For the 2025–2028 study period, Lanciné Fofana of Côte d'Ivoire is listed by the ITU as a Vice-Chair of Study Group 3.

The country's candidature documentation also identifies vice-chairmanship responsibilities associated with ITU-R Study Groups 4 and 5, concerned respectively with satellite and terrestrial radiocommunication services. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire has participated in expert-group activities associated with the ITU Council.

The significance of these responsibilities becomes clearer when considered together. Extending connectivity into underserved areas, for example, may involve spectrum planning, terrestrial and satellite technologies, technical standards, sustainable investment and development cooperation. Each element falls within a different but related part of the international telecommunications environment.

For an ITU Council member, familiarity with these relationships can inform discussions concerning institutional priorities, coordination and implementation. Côte d'Ivoire's participation across the three Sectors therefore forms an important part of the documented experience accompanying its candidature.

Regional Cooperation and International Telecommunications Engagement

Côte d'Ivoire's institutional involvement also extends to financial contributions

and the hosting of regional technical and policy activities. Its updated candidature documentation identifies a contribution of two contributory units to the ITU budget, reflecting its financial participation in the Union's work.

The country has hosted meetings addressing telecommunications development, standardization, radiocommunications and regional coordination. In September 2026, Abidjan hosted the fourth and final African Preparatory Meeting for PP-26, contributing to the process through which African administrations examined common priorities ahead of the Plenipotentiary Conference.

Abidjan's Hosting Of African Preparations For PP-26, Together With Broadband-Mapping, Radiocommunications And Universal Service Activities, Reflects Côte d'Ivoire's Role In Regional Telecommunications Cooperation.

During the same month, Côte d'Ivoire hosted Africa Space Expo 2026 and the second Radiocommunications Forum, alongside a geographic information systems and data-management workshop associated with the Africa Broadband Maps initiative. Earlier activities included the third and final African Preparatory Meeting for WTDC-25, the 22nd seminar of the Francophone Telecommunications Regulation Network (FRATEL), regional workshops on universal service funding, and meetings involving African regional groups of ITU-T study groups.

These activities address issues with practical implications for telecommunications development. Broadband mapping helps administrations examine infrastructure availability and identify gaps, while universal service discussions consider ways to improve access in underserved areas. Radiocommunications meetings provide opportunities for technical and regulatory exchange, and regional preparatory processes allow governments to coordinate positions before international negotiations.

The importance of hosting these activities lies in facilitating cooperation among administrations and technical institutions facing related challenges. Although the organization of meetings does not by itself establish their outcomes, Côte d'Ivoire's participation demonstrates continuing engagement with the processes through which regional telecommunications priorities are discussed and developed.

Digital Skills, Inclusion and Emerging Technologies

Côte d'Ivoire's development agenda recognizes that infrastructure investment must be accompanied by the skills and institutional capabilities needed to use digital technologies effectively. Its national priorities therefore include digital education, innovation, improved access to technological opportunities and stronger participation by women and young people.

The RIFEN Tour, involving awareness programmes, specialized training, mentoring and coaching for African women and girls, provides one example of this approach. The initiative addresses an aspect of digital inclusion that cannot be measured through network coverage alone, namely the capacity of individuals to acquire skills and participate in technological and economic activities.

As governments and industries introduce more advanced services, these considerations become increasingly relevant. Artificial intelligence, digital government applications and secure online services require not only infrastructure but also trained personnel, appropriate data arrangements and institutions capable of managing new technologies.

Côte d'Ivoire's national strategies address these requirements as part of its longer-term development programme. Their results will depend on implementation, investment and the extent to which the proposed capabilities become accessible and useful across different sectors of the economy.

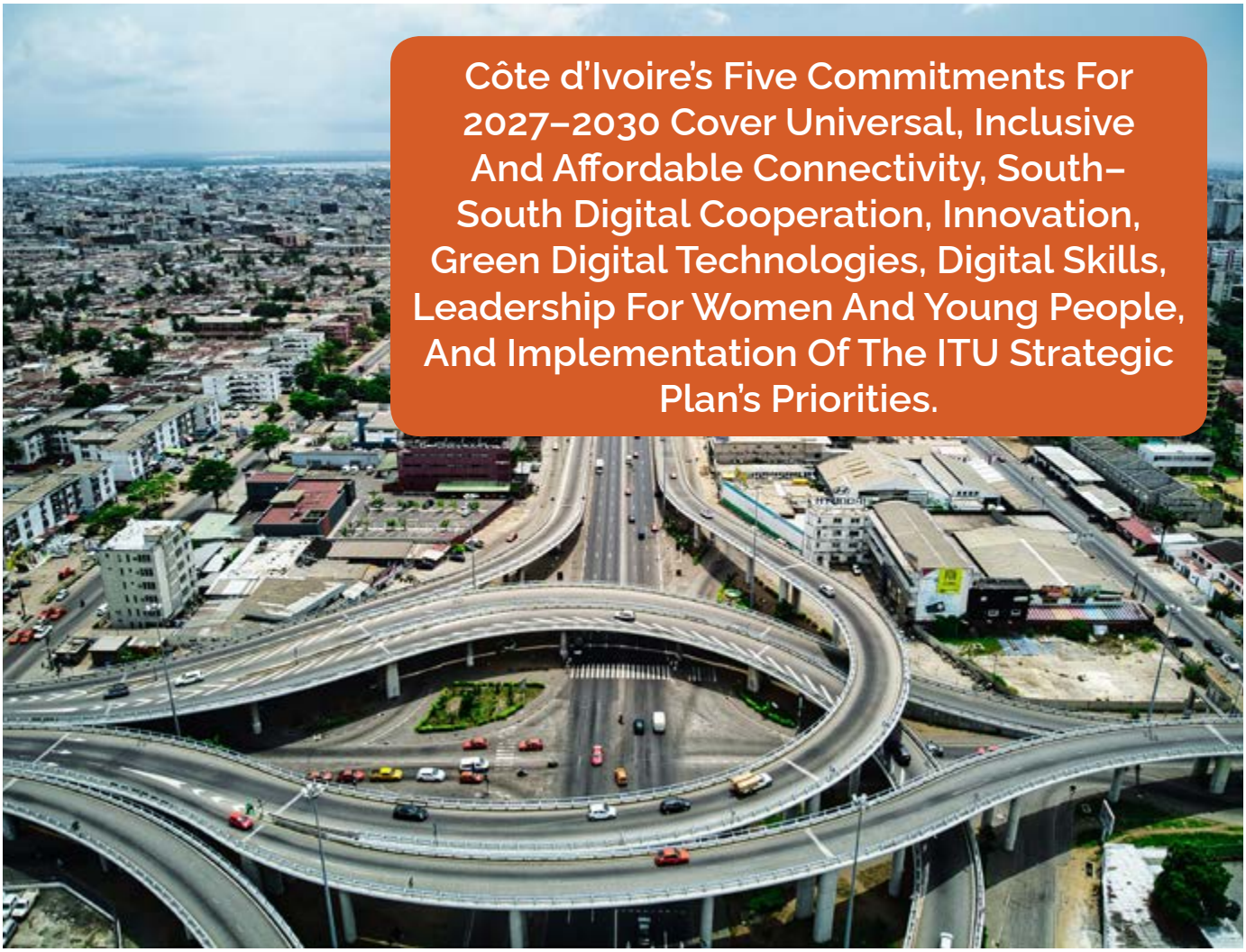
This domestic emphasis on skills and inclusion is also reflected in the country's international priorities. Its Council candidature specifically identifies innovation, green digital technologies, digital skills development, and leadership for women and young people among the areas in which it intends to contribute.

Commitments for the 2027–2030 ITU Council Term

Côte d'Ivoire has identified five principal commitments in support of its candidature: active contribution to the implementation of the priorities of the ITU Strategic Plan 2027–2030, promotion of universal, inclusive and affordable connectivity, strengthening of South–South digital cooperation, support for innovation, green digital technologies and digital skills development, and promotion of leadership for women and young people in the digital sector.

These commitments relate to the responsibilities of the Council, which serves as the Union's governing body between Plenipotentiary Conferences. Its work includes oversight of institutional activities, examination of strategic and financial matters, and coordination of implementation in accordance with decisions taken by Member States.

The country's national and institutional experience provides relevant reference points for several of these commitments.



Côte d'Ivoire's Five Commitments For 2027–2030 Cover Universal, Inclusive And Affordable Connectivity, South–South Digital Cooperation, Innovation, Green Digital Technologies, Digital Skills, Leadership For Women And Young People, And Implementation Of The ITU Strategic Plan's Priorities.

Its rural connectivity programme addresses the difficulties of extending access to underserved communities, while its participation in ITU-D and TDAG relates to telecommunications development priorities and implementation. Its activities in standardization and radiocommunications also concern technical coordination, while its regional engagement reflects experience in multilateral consultation.

These connections provide a factual basis for understanding the areas in which Côte d'Ivoire intends to participate during the next Council term. The effectiveness of those commitments, if the country is elected, will depend on its continued engagement in Council proceedings and the wider activities of the Union.

Looking Toward Doha

The forthcoming ITU Council term will coincide with a period in which telecommunications development must address both established connectivity requirements and the demands associated with newer technologies. Broadband access, satellite communications, cybersecurity, digital services and artificial intelligence will continue to require cooperation among national administrations, operators and international institutions, particularly where technical and economic conditions differ substantially between markets.

Côte d'Ivoire's candidature draws together two areas of experience relevant to these challenges. Domestically, the country has expanded telecommunications infrastructure and service adoption while identifying further priorities in connectivity, digital skills and technological development. Internationally, it has participated in Council proceedings, advisory groups, technical activities and regional cooperation processes.

As Member States prepare to elect the Council for 2027–2030, Côte d'Ivoire is presenting this record alongside commitments to contribute to the Union's strategic objectives and international development activities. Its candidature consequently offers a basis for examining how national telecommunications experience and established institutional participation can inform the work of the ITU during its next Council term. T

ARABSAT and Es'hailSat sign strategic partnership to enhance satellite broadcasting and communications services



The Arab Satellite Communications Organization (ARABSAT) and Es'hailSat have signed a strategic partnership agreement during the Arab Radio and Television Festival (ASBU Festival) in Hammamet, Tunisia. The agreement aims to strengthen cooperation between both companies and expand joint initiatives in broadcasting and satellite communications.

This landmark agreement aims to reinforce the 26° East orbital location as the regional satellite broadcasting hub of choice by increasing the number of channels and enhancing content diversity. This will enrich the viewing experience and support the growth of the satellite media sector across the Middle East and North Africa region.

The agreement also expands cooperation for both space pioneers in satellite communications, VSAT services, and connectivity solutions. Both parties will explore advanced technologies to improve service quality, efficiency, and reliability, offering customers more integrated solutions.

ARABSAT and Es'hailSat will also expand cooperation on the Unified Arab Bouquet to strengthen the global reach of Arab content and use international satellite coverage to deliver Arab channels to wider audiences beyond the MENA region.

Dr. Badr N. Alsuwaidan, CEO of ARABSAT, said: This agreement aims to strengthen strategic partnerships and integration with Es'hailSat, contributing to the development of the broadcasting and satellite communications ecosystem in the region. Through this cooperation, we look forward to reinforcing the 26° East orbital location and expanding areas of cooperation in broadcasting, communications, and satellite connectivity solutions, while supporting the global reach of Arab content and enabling it to reach wider audiences worldwide. This partnership also provides a foundation for developing joint initiatives and solutions that leverage the expertise and capabilities of both parties and keep pace with the rapid developments in the space sector, enhancing the quality of services provided to our customers and supporting our vision for a more integrated, innovative, and sustainable future.

Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari, President and CEO of Es'hailSat, said: This agreement represents an important step toward cross-sector collaboration between ARABSAT and Es'hailSat and leveraging the capabilities and expertise of both parties in satellite, connectivity and broadcast services. Through this cooperation, we look forward to enriching the 26° East orbital location, expanding the scope of broadcasting, communications, and satellite connectivity solutions, and providing more advanced and flexible services to our customers. We also aspire to support the global reach of Arab content and open new horizons for cooperation that will strengthen the region's position in the space and communications sector.

ARABSAT and Es'hailSat affirm that this agreement establishes a framework for long-term cooperation and supports the development of joint projects and initiatives that address customer needs and adapt to rapid changes in the space, media, and telecommunications sectors. T

Interview: Gulraiz Khalid



Securing the Future of Space

Intersputnik on Sustainability, Responsible Satellite Operations and Global Cooperation

An exclusive interview with Elina Morozova, Executive Director, Intersputnik exploring the challenges of orbital sustainability, space debris mitigation and the importance of international collaboration in safeguarding space for future generations.

Gulraiz Khalid: As satellite deployments accelerate, what do you see as the most urgent sustainability challenges facing the space industry today?

Elina Morozova: Satellite deployment is expanding connectivity and other space-based services, while placing greater pressure on the orbital environment and shared space resources. The environmental implications also extend to Earth, with the atmospheric effects of launches and spacecraft re-entries receiving growing scientific attention. The challenge is to accommodate this growth while addressing its environmental effects and ensuring the rational, efficient, economical and equitable use of radio-frequency spectrum and associated satellite orbits. Decisions concerning the scale, design and operation of satellite systems today will shape opportunities for other operators and future generations.

Another priority is improving space traffic coordination. As orbital activity becomes more intensive, timely and reliable information sharing between operators is increasingly important. Recent developments, including the establishment of the Expert Group on Space Situational Awareness within the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and the launch of the UN Satellite Operator Contact Hub, demonstrate growing international attention to the practical arrangements needed for safer space operations. Satellite operators and industry associations are also developing operational practices and information-sharing arrangements that help translate international cooperation into practical results. Such cooperation should accommodate different national regulatory approaches and legitimate sensitivities concerning the scope and conditions of information sharing.

GK: How is Intersputnik working with its member countries and industry partners to encourage responsible use of orbital and spectrum resources?

EM: As an intergovernmental organization, Intersputnik provides a platform for cooperation among member countries with different national priorities, capabilities and regulatory frameworks. Through its participation in both COPUOS and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Intersputnik can share information on relevant developments across these communities. Capacity-building and knowledge exchange are particularly important and remain in demand, including through seminars and training programmes organized together with international and industry partners.

In its satellite communications activities, Intersputnik works with partners on joint projects, pooling satellite capacity from different operators and combining it with available orbit and frequency resources to make more efficient use of both. Contractual arrangements provide another practical mechanism: Intersputnik's agreements with satellite operators establish obligations concerning space safety, including the safe co-location and operation of satellites using its orbit and frequency resources.

Intersputnik also participates in international sustainability initiatives. The Organization has contributed its experience to the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs' stakeholder study on the implementation of the COPUOS Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and was among the early signatories of the Space Industry Debris Statement. These activities complement its operational work and cooperation with member countries.

> "Decisions concerning the scale, design and operation of satellite systems today will shape opportunities for other operators and future generations."

GK: Space debris is becoming an increasingly important concern. What role should satellite operators and international organizations play in improving debris mitigation and end-of-life practices?

EM: Satellite operators have a direct role in preventing the creation of space debris. Protecting the shared orbital environment is also in their own interest, given the value of the assets they operate. Their substantial efforts to improve space safety deserve recognition. Significant progress has been made through improved satellite design, collision avoidance, passivation and end-of-life disposal practices, helping to prevent avoidable debris generation. Mitigation measures should be considered throughout the entire lifecycle of a satellite system, with particular attention to the reliability of planned disposal operations.

International organizations can support these efforts by facilitating cooperation, developing common guidance and sharing technical experience. Through COPUOS and other international fora, States have agreed on a substantial range of guidelines concerning debris mitigation and long-term sustainability, complemented by technical guidance from the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee. Many of these measures have already been incorporated into national regulations as binding requirements for operators. Further development of international guidance and more consistent national implementation can help reduce regulatory fragmentation and create a more predictable legal environment for the industry.



Looking ahead, in-orbit servicing and active debris removal offer additional opportunities to improve space sustainability. Servicing can extend the useful life of satellites, while debris removal can address objects already left in orbit. Both require safe proximity operations, reliable communications and appropriate regulatory arrangements. The ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) is studying spectrum needs for these operations, while COPUOS is discussing related legal questions, including authorization and liability.

GK: Looking ahead, what forms of international cooperation will be essential to ensure that space remains accessible and sustainable for future generations?

EM: An important form of international cooperation is the exchange of established and emerging best practices, which can help promote more consistent approaches across countries while respecting different national circumstances. The ITU-R is developing a Handbook on best practices for the sustainable use of frequencies and associated non-geostationary-satellite orbits to bring together international guidance, national experience and industry practices. It is intended to serve as a practical resource for countries, satellite operators and other stakeholders seeking to strengthen the sustainability of space operations. Contributions from across all regions would be particularly valuable.

Importantly, both countries with their own satellite systems and those without them can contribute practical experience and help advance space sustainability. National regulators can influence operator practices through conditions for providing satellite services in their markets. Some national frameworks already incorporate sustainability-related requirements into licensing and market-access procedures. The ITU's recently published Non-geostationary satellite orbit licensing framework toolkit provides useful guidance on the regulatory choices available to countries.

> "Mitigation measures should be considered throughout the entire lifecycle of a satellite system."

Effective international cooperation requires complementary efforts at several levels. International agreements and recommendations provide a common foundation, while national regulation and industry practices translate them into practical measures. Industry standards and operational practices can sometimes develop faster than international norms, helping to address emerging challenges and informing the further development of international guidance. Contractual mechanisms can also reinforce these efforts by making sustainability requirements part of commercial relationships. States, international organizations and industry all have a role to play. T

stc group's nine-month operating profit rises 4.1% to SAR 11.3 billion

stc group has announced its interim financial results for the period ended 30 September 2026, delivering growth in revenue and operating profit during the first nine months of the year. The performance was supported by the strength of its core business and accelerating growth across its subsidiaries, while third-quarter net profit exceeded average analyst expectations.

• The group's nine-month revenue increased by 3.7% year on year to SAR 60,096 million.

• Nine-month gross profit increased by 5.2% year on year to SAR 29,362 million.

• Nine-month operating profit rose by 4.1% year on year to SAR 11,282 million.

• Earnings before interest, taxes, zakat, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) increased by 3.5% to SAR 19,150 million during the nine-month period.

• Nine-month net profit amounted to SAR 10,918 million, representing growth of 2.6% after excluding non-recurring items in both the current and corresponding prior-year periods.

• Subsidiaries' revenue grew by 9.0% during the nine-month period, with third-quarter growth accelerating to 18.5% year on year.

• The group announced a dividend of SAR 0.55 per share for the third quarter of 2026, in line with the dividend policy approved by the General Assembly, bringing total dividends to shareholders for the first nine months to SAR 8.2 billion.

Commenting on the results, Eng. Olayan Mohammed Alwetaid, stc group CEO, highlighted the group's strong results during the first nine months of 2026 as it continued to execute its strategy to strengthen its core telecommunications and digital businesses and expand into promising growth areas, reaffirming its commitment to creating shareholder value.

Eng. Olayan Mohammed Alwetaid said: "stc's financial performance was underpinned by strong revenue growth of 3.7% year on year during the nine-month period, driven by growth in its telecommunications business in Saudi Arabia and accelerating growth across its subsidiaries. Commercial unit revenue increased by 2.0%, Carriers and Wholesale unit revenue rose by 5.1%, and subsidiaries' revenue grew by 9.0%."

The improvement in the group's performance reflects the diversification of its investments and income streams, alongside greater integration across its telecommunications and digital businesses, supporting sustainable growth. Accelerating growth



***Eng. Olayan Mohammed Alwetaid**, stc group CEO*

across its subsidiaries also strengthens their role in expanding the group's business and capturing opportunities in promising markets and sectors.

Operationally, stc group continued to grow its customer base and expand its infrastructure. Mobile and fixed-line subscriptions in Saudi Arabia increased by 4.8% and 4.0% year on year, reaching 30.6 million and 6.2 million, respectively. The number of homes connected to its fibre network rose by 7.0% to 3.95 million, while the number of 5G towers increased by 31.5% to 12,38K

During LEAP 2026, the group strengthened its collaboration with leading local and international companies through agreements and partnerships to expand 5G networks, develop network capabilities, enhance data centre connectivity, and expand cloud computing and digital services. These initiatives support the diversification of its business and strengthen its ability to serve multiple sectors.

As part of its efforts to apply its digital infrastructure capabilities to support vital sectors, the group launched a new net-zero-carbon solution for 5G Advanced network sites, helping improve network efficiency and capacity while reducing energy consumption. It also supported the Ministry of Defence's Health Services in performing the first remote robotic surgery between two of its healthcare facilities in Riyadh and Dhahran.

stc group continues to develop its businesses and operational and investment capabilities, strengthening its competitiveness and contributing to Saudi Arabia's digital future, while supporting the development of the regional markets in which it operates and creating sustainable shareholder value. T



Kazakhstan at ITU PP-26

Digital Development and International Cooperation for the Global Future

As ITU Member States prepare for the Doha Plenipotentiary Conference, Kazakhstan's telecommunications investments, experience in digital public services and participation in international cooperation provide context for its candidatures to the ITU Council and Radio Regulations Board.

Kazakhstan is approaching the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 in Doha with two distinct candidatures and a developing record of international digital cooperation. The country is seeking election to the ITU Council for 2027–2030, while an incumbent Radio Regulations Board (RRB) member from Kazakhstan is seeking re-election to the Board for the same term. The Council seat concerns representation of a Member State in the Union's governance; the RRB position is held by an individual serving independently in a technical capacity.

Kazakhstan's engagement is informed by the practical demands of digital development in a large, landlocked country with dispersed communities. Extending rural access, maintaining reliable international communications and creating economic opportunities from telecommunications investment are continuing national priorities. These issues also concern many ITU Member States, giving Kazakhstan's development experience relevance beyond its borders.

In a recent interview, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development Zhaslan Madiyev described economic growth and improvements in people's lives as the main measures of successful digitalization. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has designated 2026 the Year of Digitalization



Kassym-Jomart K. Tokayev, *President of the Republic of Kazakhstan*



Zhaslan Madiyev*, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development, Republic of Kazakhstan*

and Artificial Intelligence, while the government is pursuing new technology industries, greater domestic technical capacity and stronger participation in export markets.

Digital government experience shared internationally

Kazakhstan ranked 24th among 193 countries in the United Nations E-Government Development Index 2024. According to Madiyev, more than 90% of government services are available online, and the number offered digitally has grown from 657 in 2021 to more than 1,300. The government is also deploying eGov GPT to help citizens locate and use public services. These developments offer a substantial domestic record, but their international relevance is demonstrated more directly through the sharing of technical experience.

Kazakhstan's National Information Technologies JSC provides technical support to the ITU regional initiative on digital government cooperation for Central Asia and the Caucasus, implemented during 2025–2026 with financial support from the Eurasian Development Bank. The initiative encourages participating administrations to exchange experience and examine technical components that can be adapted to their own digital public infrastructure.

In September 2026, the ITU reported that specifications for an Analytics Building Block informed by Kazakhstan's Smart Data Ukimet experience had entered its global GovStack repository. The published material includes technical specifications, a reference implementation, a household-welfare-related use case and documentation of the Kazakhstan experience. Consultations with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have examined possible applications in their own environments.

This contribution is meaningful because interoperable government systems require more than software procurement. Administrations must address data protection, legal authority, technical compatibility and the ability of institutions to operate services consistently. Reusable specifications can reduce duplicated effort while leaving national authorities responsible for determining how, and whether, an approach fits their circumstances. Kazakhstan's experience has thereby become part of an international resource available for technical examination and adaptation.

Connectivity and the challenge of inclusion

Telecommunications infrastructure remains central to Kazakhstan's national agenda. Madiyev reports that sector investment exceeded KZT 1 trillion over the past three years, while average mobile internet speeds increased by 75% and internet traffic rose by 67%. The government is extending fiber-optic networks, improving mobile coverage and using satellite connections for especially remote communities.

Under the Accessible Internet national project, Kazakhstan aims to make fiber-optic internet available in up to 90% of villages by the end of 2027. Its plans also include extending 4G to villages with at least 250 residents and deploying 5G in more than 20 cities, with targets extending through 2029. These are stated program objectives rather than completed coverage outcomes.

The cost of serving widely separated settlements remains a challenge, as the Minister acknowledges. For the ITU's development work, the pertinent lesson concerns the combination of infrastructure financing, service availability and public demand. Digital services and suitable skills



are needed if network expansion is to yield useful economic and social outcomes. Kazakhstan's AI-Sana education initiative, under which more than one million people reportedly completed basic AI training in 2025, addresses part of this human-capacity requirement.

An additional route between Asia and Europe

On 15 October 2026, the Presidents of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan inaugurated a 380-kilometre fiber-optic cable across the Caspian Sea between Aktau and Sumgayit. Developed by Kazakhtelecom and AzerTelecom through their joint venture CaspiLink, the line has a stated design capacity of more than 400 Tbps. It adds a communications route between Central Asia and the Caucasus, with potential onward connections to European networks.

For landlocked countries, access to international communications depends on cross-border infrastructure and coordination among operators. Route diversity can create alternative paths for traffic and additional commercial options, although the resilience of a corridor depends on its terrestrial connections, operational arrangements and integration with other networks. The Trans-Caspian line is thus significant for the international connectivity options it creates, not simply for its headline capacity.

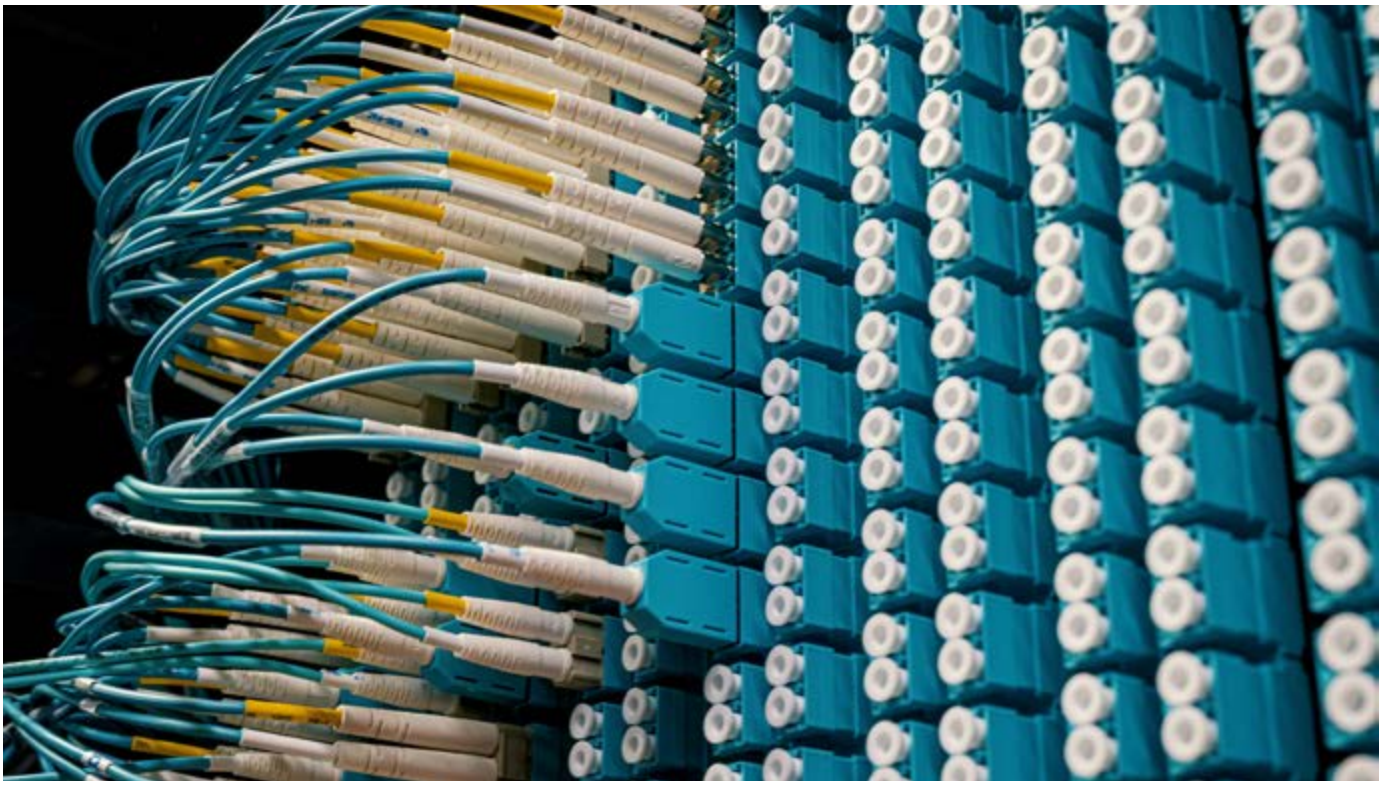
Madiyev expects data transit through Kazakhstan to grow substantially in coming years. The extent of that increase will depend on customers, interconnection agreements and reliable end-to-end service. The cable also complements economic activity along the broader Middle Corridor linking Central Asia, the Caucasus, Türkiye and Europe.

From telecommunications investment to technology exports

Kazakhstan is seeking economic returns from connectivity through software, digital services and computing. According to figures presented by Madiyev, IT services exports rose from US$33.5 million in 2020 to US$1.142 billion in 2025. Export earnings were more than 2.6 times spending on imported IT services. Astana Hub, which he says includes more than 2,500 companies and has supported over 32,000 jobs, has contributed through entrepreneurship programs and international business engagement.

The country is also investing in computing capability. Madiyev reports that more than 90% of the national Alem.Cloud cluster's capacity has been allocated to over 50 organizations, including research institutions, universities and businesses. The proposed Data Center Valley in Ekibastuz targets at least 1 GW of capacity as an initial objective, with a larger long-term ambition. Actual economic value will depend on power, equipment availability, construction, customer demand and operating costs.

New legislation on AI, cybersecurity and digital governance is another part of Kazakhstan's program. The Minister describes provisions concerning personal data, human rights and disclosure of synthetic content. Implementation will matter as public services, commercial applications and computing facilities process larger volumes of sensitive information. These questions connect



domestic policy choices to international discussions about trustworthy digital systems, though national regulatory approaches remain distinct.

Two candidatures, different ITU responsibilities

Kazakhstan participated as an observer at the ITU Council session in Geneva from 28 April to 8 May 2026, through a delegation led by Vice Minister Doszhan Mussaliyev. Its engagement addressed digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence and international cooperation, while bilateral discussions also covered preparations for the forthcoming elections.

The ITU Council comprises 48 elected Member States and governs the Union between Plenipotentiary Conferences. It oversees the implementation of conference decisions and addresses strategic, financial, administrative and operational questions. Kazakhstan is a candidate in Region C, Eastern Europe and Northern Asia, for which five Council seats are allocated. Its domestic experience and international technical activities provide context for the country's participation in discussions of shared ITU priorities, but do not by themselves determine the positions it would take as a Council member.

The Radio Regulations Board has a separate, technical mandate. Its 12 members serve independently in their personal capacities rather than as national representatives. The Board deals with the application of the Radio Regulations, including procedural matters concerning frequency assignments and unresolved interference. These functions are important to international terrestrial and satellite radiocommunications and the orderly use of spectrum and associated orbital resources.

Looking toward Doha

At PP-26, to be held in Doha from 9 to 27 November 2026, ITU Member States will elect the Union's leadership, Council and Radio Regulations Board and consider its strategic and financial plans for 2028–2031. The decisions take place amid persistent connectivity gaps, demands for investment, expanding satellite activity, cybersecurity concerns and the increasing importance of AI and computing infrastructure.

Kazakhstan enters this process with identifiable experience in extending networks across difficult geography, exporting digital services, cooperating on a transnational communications route and contributing a domestic digital-government approach to an ITU-supported technical repository. It also faces ongoing questions concerning rural access, cybersecurity and the commercial sustainability of ambitious infrastructure plans. These practical accomplishments and unresolved tasks provide a grounded basis for international exchange.

The significance of the forthcoming ITU cycle will be measured in how Member States advance the Union's responsibilities through decisions, technical work and sustained cooperation. Kazakhstan's two candidatures place the country within that institutional process: one concerns participation by a Member State in the Council's collective governance, and the other the independent regulatory responsibilities of an experienced RRB member. T

Building Secure, Connected and Future-Ready Telecom Markets

Mediafon Datapro's Vision for Digital Transformation

Bronius Skudutis, CEO of Mediafon Datapro, in exclusive interview with Teletimes on Telecom Innovation, Digital Infrastructure, Security and Global Market Opportunities



Gulraiz Khalid: How has Mediafon Datapro's strategy evolved in recent years, and what are your key priorities for international expansion?

Bronius Skudutis: Mediafon Datapro has evolved from a provider of specialized telecom solutions into a partner helping countries solve problems that affect entire telecom markets. Number portability was our starting point, but today our work extends to Central Equipment Identity Registers (CEIR), Device Identification Registers (DIR), National SIM Registries (NSR), numbering management, digital identity and other critical national telecom systems.

Working across 17 countries has taught us that technology is only part of the solution. What matters is understanding the problem, adapting to local realities and, most importantly, delivering results.

This experience also shapes where we expand next. We are strengthening our presence in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. Our priority is not simply to enter new markets, but to build long-term partnerships, particularly with governments and operators seeking to modernize their critical systems while maintaining operational continuity.

GK: What role do number portability and centralized numbering systems play in accelerating digital transformation in telecom markets?

BS: Number portability is much more than a technical service. It allows customers to switch operators without losing their number, giving them greater freedom of choice while encouraging competition on service quality and price.

But portability is only one part of the picture. Numbering resources are a national asset, and without proper oversight, large blocks of numbers may remain unused, while insufficient controls can also create opportunities for misuse. Centralized numbering management helps regulators ensure responsible allocation, prevent abuse and generate fair revenue from these resources.

Our NUMLEX platform supports both number portability and national numbering management. By

bringing these functions into a single system, NUMLEX makes number portability easier for operators and gives regulators better control over national numbering resources.

GK: How is Mediafon Datapro helping operators and governments address telecom fraud, cybersecurity and digital identity challenges?

BS: As telecommunications become more deeply integrated into financial services, government platforms and everyday digital transactions, trust and security are increasingly important.

Our CEIR and device registration systems help countries tackle the illegal handset market, while national SIM registries and biometric identification solutions strengthen subscriber verification and help prevent identity fraud.

We also help operators protect their networks and revenues. Across Mediafon Group, our solutions address SMS fraud, interconnect bypass and other forms of unauthorized traffic.

We believe effective fraud prevention requires a combination of reliable data, appropriate regulatory frameworks and technology that can adapt to evolving threats.

GK: With operations across multiple regions, where do you see the greatest opportunities for telecom infrastructure development and innovation?

BS: We see opportunities across both emerging and mature telecommunications markets, although their priorities can be quite different.

In developing markets, the focus is often on establishing reliable national systems, improving regulatory oversight and supporting fair competition. In more mature markets, the emphasis may shift towards modernization, automation, cybersecurity and revenue protection.

Our experience across Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America has shown us that many challenges are shared, even when local market conditions differ. Number portability, device registration, tackling the illegal handset market, fraud prevention and protection against unauthorized traffic are relevant across regions.

For us, the key is combining international experience with local knowledge. Technology must be adapted to the regulatory and operational realities of each market to deliver sustainable results.

GK: How do you see AI, automation and next-generation connectivity reshaping the telecom industry, and what is your long-term vision for Mediafon Datapro?

BS: Artificial intelligence and automation offer significant opportunities to improve efficiency, identify anomalies and strengthen fraud prevention. However, AI also gives cybercriminals new capabilities, making attacks more sophisticated and harder to detect. This makes reliable data, secure infrastructure and effective regulatory governance even more important.

As networks become more interconnected and digital services expand, national systems need an architecture that can handle growing complexity and evolving security threats.

Our long-term focus is on developing scalable, flexible and secure solutions that help operators and regulators respond to these changes. We believe that the future of telecommunications will depend not only on faster connectivity, but also on the trusted digital infrastructure that supports it.

GK: How does Mediafon Datapro view highly connected markets such as Oman, with its advanced satellite, submarine cable and mobile infrastructure? What opportunities and challenges do such markets present for your business?

BS: Oman demonstrates how investment in connectivity can create opportunities beyond telecommunications itself. Its development as a regional connectivity hub provides a foundation for further growth in digital services, data centers, cloud infrastructure and international business. The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) is a strong example of a regulator that goes beyond setting rules, actively encouraging investment and driving concrete initiatives that support Oman's long-term digital ambitions.

As networks become more interconnected and international traffic grows, operators and regulators face increasingly complex challenges relating to fraud prevention, revenue assurance, interoperability and the management of critical telecommunications systems. These are areas where our broader group has relevant expertise.

For Mediafon Datapro, the opportunity is to bring our experience from 17 countries across Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, and work with Oman's regulators, operators and industry partners to understand how our solutions can complement existing infrastructure. We want to build on what Oman has already achieved, not replace what already works. The goal is to help ensure that its national telecom systems remain secure, reliable and capable of meeting future requirements. T

> "Technology is only part of the solution. What matters is understanding the problem, adapting to local realities and, most importantly, delivering results."

Zain and Ooredoo launch regional tower platform with first closing in Qatar and Kuwait



Zain Group and Ooredoo have announced the first closing of their regional tower transaction, bringing together the initial tower portfolios within a regional tower platform jointly owned by Zain Group and Ooredoo Group, each holding a 50% stake.

The first closing combines the tower assets of Zain Kuwait (ITK) and Ooredoo Qatar (Al Abraj) within the platform. Together, these portfolios comprise approximately 4,000 towers.

The transaction is expected to create significant value through greater scale, capital efficiencies and a dedicated operating model focused on passive telecommunications infrastructure. As it expands, the tower platform will support the delivery of infrastructure-as-a-service, creating opportunities for operators to access infrastructure in a more capital-efficient manner while supporting the continued development of the region's digital infrastructure.

Additional tower portfolios are expected to be integrated progressively into the platform, subject to applicable closing conditions and required regulatory and other approvals.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman & Group CEO, said: "This first closing of the tower platform marks a defining step in the evolution of digital infrastructure for both Zain and Ooredoo. It reflects our shared strategy of creating focused, scalable and sustainable platforms that unlock greater value from our assets while supporting the reduction of the region's carbon footprint."

"We believe this tower platform will play an increasingly important role in strengthening our respective digital foundations and enabling the next wave of connectivity, innovation and economic growth for the communities we proudly serve. We thank the regulatory authorities in Kuwait for their visionary support in the approval process."

Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, Group Chief Executive Officer of Ooredoo Group, said: "Completing this first closing marks an important milestone in building a regional tower platform designed to create significant value, with a clear path to expansion through additional market contributions."

"With this milestone, we are now executing across every digital infrastructure segment identified in our strategy as we continue building a leading regional portfolio."

"We thank the State of Qatar's Communications Regulatory Authority and the Ministry of Municipality for their support and for contributing to a conducive regulatory environment throughout the approval process."

Ooredoo and Zain will retain their respective active telecommunications infrastructure, including the technology, software and intellectual property required to operate and manage their telecommunications networks. T

Etisalat UAE and DataRobot deepen strategic partnership to advance sovereign agentic AI



Etisalat UAE and DataRobot have announced the extension of their strategic partnership through a new multi-year agreement focused on building, operating, and governing an agentic AI workforce across Etisalat UAE's business units.



The agreement builds on Etisalat UAE's wider ambition to scale AI within a secure environment, while strengthening the governance and enterprise capabilities needed as AI moves from generating insights towards taking action. Under the expanded partnership, Etisalat UAE will leverage the DataRobot Agent Workforce Platform capabilities as part of its broader sovereign AI ecosystem to develop, deploy, and govern selected agentic AI workloads. The environment brings predictive, generative and agentic AI capabilities together under a common governance framework. By keeping sensitive data and AI workloads within its self-managed infrastructure, Etisalat UAE retains control over where its AI runs, the data it can access, and how it is governed, supporting its approach to AI sovereignty on-premises as agentic capabilities expand across the organisation.

Antonietta Mastroianni, Chief Information Officer, Etisalat UAE, said: "Etisalat UAE's partnership with DataRobot has strengthened the governance of our growing Machine Learning portfolio while significantly increasing our agility, enabling our teams to develop and deliver models faster and empowering data scientists and business users through our Citizen Data Scientist Program. We are now building on this foundation to embrace agentic AI, accelerating innovation while maintaining the trust and governance required at enterprise scale."

Haissam Hassan, META GM at DataRobot, said: "Etisalat UAE is showing what enterprise AI looks like when innovation, sovereignty and governance are designed together. They have already built the foundation and are now applying that same discipline to AI agents. The opportunity is no longer simply to build agents, but to put them safely into real business processes at scale.

Morad Al Shark, Director/AI Engineering & Factory, Etisalat UAE, said: "Our secure ML platform has created a strong foundation for enterprise machine learning. As we move into agentic AI, we are extending the governance, security and operational disciplines we have established into a broader AI ecosystem designed to build and scale agents safely." T



The UAE: Shaping the Future of Global Digital Development

Building on more than five decades of engagement with the International Telecommunication Union, the United Arab Emirates continues to advance digital innovation, regulatory excellence and international cooperation

As digital technologies transform economies and societies, advanced telecommunications infrastructure, artificial intelligence and internationally harmonised standards are becoming essential foundations of sustainable development. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has positioned itself at the forefront of this transformation, combining ambitious national digital strategies with active participation in global telecommunications governance.

The UAE's engagement with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) dates back to 1972. Since joining the ITU Council in 2006, the country has contributed to international discussions on connectivity, spectrum management, digital development and technical standardisation, reflecting its commitment to a connected and inclusive digital future.

Building a Digitally Advanced Nation

Digital transformation has been central to the UAE's vision of developing a diversified, knowledge-based economy. Sustained investment in fibre-optic infrastructure, high-speed connectivity and 5G networks has established a foundation for emerging applications in smart cities, intelligent transportation, industrial automation and the Internet of Things (IoT).

Alongside telecommunications infrastructure, the UAE has made significant advances in digital government. Initiatives such as UAE Pass, the national digital identity platform, have simplified access to public and private services through secure authentication, electronic signatures and integrated digital transactions.

Artificial intelligence is another cornerstone of the country's digital ambitions. The UAE has pursued AI adoption across government services and economic sectors while investing in digital skills, innovation and the development of an enabling technological ecosystem.

Highlighting the importance of AI in shaping the country's future, H.E. Omar Sultan Al Olama, UAE Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, stated: "For us, deploying AI is not merely about boosting productivity or savings. If it affects human life and livelihood, then it is a red line."
(Emirates News Agency, WAM)

His remarks underline the importance of responsible technological development, an increasingly significant consideration as governments worldwide seek to harness AI while ensuring public trust and accountability.

Regulatory Leadership and Digital Innovation

The UAE's digital progress has been supported by an evolving regulatory framework designed to encourage investment, promote innovation and ensure secure, reliable telecommunications services.

The Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA)



H.E. Omar Sultan Al Olama
UAE Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence



H.E. Eng. Majed Sultan Al Mesmar
Director General of TDRA

plays a central role in this ecosystem, overseeing telecommunications regulation, spectrum management, licensing, technical standards and consumer protection.

As technologies such as 5G, satellite communications, cloud computing and AI reshape the sector, the UAE continues to adapt its regulatory approaches to emerging opportunities and challenges.

Emphasising the importance of collaboration, H.E. Eng. Majed Sultan Al Mesmar, Director General of TDRA, stated: "Digital technologies are constantly evolving, and in order to keep pace with them, we must have a high degree of innovation and cooperation at all levels."
(TDRA Official Media)

This approach has helped the UAE develop a regulatory environment that supports technological advancement while contributing practical experience to international discussions on digital governance and regulatory best practices.

Advancing International Standards Through the ITU

Beyond its national achievements, the UAE has contributed to international telecommunications standardisation through its participation in the ITU's technical and development activities.

International standards are fundamental to ensuring interoperability between networks, devices and digital services. They support global connectivity, reduce technological fragmentation and enable the wider adoption of emerging technologies.

The UAE's involvement in ITU-T Study Group 20, focusing on the Internet of Things and Smart Cities, is particularly significant. Through its leadership and technical participation, the country has contributed to discussions on connected infrastructure, smart urban environments and interoperable digital systems.

The UAE also participates in activities across the ITU's three sectors: Radiocommunication (ITU-R), Telecommunication Standardization (ITU-T) and Telecommunication Development (ITU-D).

Its experience in advanced connectivity, digital government and emerging technologies provides a practical foundation for contributing to international standards and policy discussions.

Shaping the Next Generation of Connectivity

The future of global telecommunications will increasingly be defined by artificial intelligence, 6G, non-terrestrial networks, satellite connectivity and intelligent digital infrastructure. These technologies offer considerable opportunities but also require international coordination on security, interoperability, sustainability and equitable access.

The UAE's continued engagement with the ITU provides an important platform for addressing these priorities. Its contributions can support the development of internationally recognised standards, knowledge sharing, digital capacity building and the expansion of meaningful connectivity, particularly in developing economies.

As digital transformation accelerates, the importance of cooperation between governments, regulators, industry and international organisations will only grow.

For the UAE, digital development represents both a national priority and an opportunity to contribute to global progress. By combining technological ambition, regulatory experience and longstanding international engagement, the country continues to play an active role in shaping a more connected, innovative and inclusive digital future. T

ST Engineering iDirect and MBSat partner to build next-generation sovereign connectivity services across Oman and Middle East



ST Engineering iDirect has announced a strategic partnership with Mohammed Al Barwani Satellite Company (MBSat), part of Mohammed Al Barwani Group, to provide the ground system technology foundation for MBSat's next-generation satellite gateway and network operations across Oman and the wider Middle East region. Intuition will provide a flexible, software-defined foundation to support sovereign connectivity services, enabling efficient service deployment, dynamic resource management and scalable network operations.

Intuition will deliver a turnkey ground segment solution that accelerates deployment, simplifies operations and gives MBSat the flexibility to scale services as demand grows. The software-defined platform enables dynamic resource management, service automation and seamless integration with existing and future operational systems. The solution also includes Ka-band gateway infrastructure, service provisioning and management capabilities, open API integration frameworks, training and full-lifecycle support. Together, these capabilities will help MBSat launch and operate services efficiently while adapting to evolving market requirements.

The network will leverage capacity from MB Sat-1, a sovereign MicroGEO satellite, with planned service launch in 2027, to support flexible, scalable connectivity services across the region.

The partnership reflects growing investment in sovereign communications infrastructure across the Middle East as operators seek greater control over service delivery, network expansion and long-term technology evolution.

"This partnership represents an important milestone in our efforts to build an advanced satellite communications platform in Oman and the region," said Ammar Al Rawahi, General Manager, MBSat. "Through our collaboration with ST Engineering iDirect, we are establishing the technical infrastructure required to launch services efficiently, respond to evolving customer needs and expand into new markets, supporting the sustainable long-term growth of our business."

"We are providing MBSat with a flexible, software-defined ground platform that integrates with its existing operational environment," said Sridhar Kuppanna, Chief Executive Officer, ST Engineering iDirect. "This enables more efficient service deployment and operations today, with the flexibility to scale, introduce new capabilities and evolve as requirements change." T



Es'hailSat at Milipol Qatar 2026

Es'hailSat's government & military satellite services strengthen Qatar's homeland security

Es'hailSat exhibited at the 16th edition of Milipol Qatar, the Global Exhibition & Conference for Homeland Security and Safety, one of the leading events on the international defense and security industry calendar. The event served as an ideal meeting of minds in the field of global security and a key enabler of business for the military and security sectors.

As the national satellite operator for the State of Qatar, and key contributor to the country's sovereignty in space, Es'hailSat provides a diverse array of Government & Military (Gov/Mil) services, which was the primary focus at the upcoming event. In conjunction with its offerings, Es'hailSat presented a comprehensive selection of technology and equipment on-site.

Es'hailSat's existing advanced satellites, recently announced infrastructure initiatives



Ali Ahmed Al-Kuwari,
President and CEO, Es'hailSat

in combination with Tier-4 Teleport facility in Doha provide uninterrupted, mission-critical communications, backed by redundant fiber connectivity and advanced infrastructure. Es'hailsat tailored solutions bring resilience to national security, operational excellence, and reliable connectivity in even the harshest & most demanding environments.

"Es'hailsat participation in Milipol 2026 reinforces Es'hailSat's commitment to providing the State of Qatar and our regional partners with access to secure, independent, and resilient satellite infrastructure", said Ali Ahmed Al-Kuwari, President and CEO, Es'hailSat. "As the security and military sectors face increasingly complex challenges, the need for robust & reliable connectivity for strategic military operations has never been greater. We are proud to showcase how our growing fleet, with recently announced Es'hail-3 satellite, and Tier-4 teleport capabilities are not just supporting national sovereignty but driving the future of secure communications across Europe, Middle East, and Africa." T

Connecting Policy, Infrastructure, and Innovation

Africa Tech Festival 2026

Anchoring Africa's Digital Transformation

As Africa stands at the threshold of a profound digital renaissance, the Africa Tech Festival 2026 emerges once again as the continent's definitive technological convergence. Scheduled to take place from November 17 to 19, 2026, at the iconic Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), this flagship event unites a powerful, multi-sector ecosystem of over 13,500 delegates.

Bringing together telecom operators, cloud hyperscalers, disruptive startups, global investors, and high-ranking government officials, the festival serves as a primary engine for cross-border collaboration, infrastructural investment, and socio-economic transformation. For industry stakeholders, policymakers, and media organizations like Teletimes International, Africa Tech Festival remains the premier calendar fixture for capturing where policy, enterprise strategy, and technological innovation intersect across emerging African markets.

The Core Pillars of the 2026 Ecosystem

The festival's comprehensive content architecture is built upon Six Strategic



Pillars, designed to address the most critical forces shaping Africa's digital growth. Each pillar anchors specialized summits, keynote discussions, and interactive workshops across the multi-day event:

• **Telecoms & Connectivity:** Focused on bridging remaining connectivity gaps, expanding rural broadband access, and accelerating the transition toward next-generation mobile networks and open RAN architectures.

• **Data Centres:** Examining the rapid expansion of hyperscale and edge data centre infrastructure required to support localized data sovereignty, reduced latency, and surging digital consumption.

• **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Exploring how generative AI, machine learning, and automation can drive economic growth, optimize enterprise operations, and solve localized developmental challenges.

• **Cybersecurity:** Addressing the escalating need for robust digital resilience, threat intelligence sharing, and protective frameworks for critical national infrastructure.

• **Startups & Innovation:** Highlighting the entrepreneurial powerhouses driving disruptive solutions across fintech, healthtech, agritech, and logistics.

• **Digital Transformation:** Showcasing how cloud computing, software-as-a-service (SaaS), and modern enterprise architectures are revolutionizing traditional African industries.

Comprehensive Program Breakdown & Event Highlights

The 2026 agenda is structured to cater to diverse professional requirements, balancing macro-level strategic dialogues with granular, technical masterclasses.

1. Leadership Forums and Executive Summits: The program features specialized high-level gatherings such as the Leadership Council and Leaders In Africa Forums. These invite-only and executive sessions convene C-suite leaders and regulatory authorities to debate overarching macroeconomic trends, cross-border digital policies, and regional integration under frameworks like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).



2. Specialized Tracks and Technical Masterclasses: Designed for engineers, IT professionals, and technical decision-makers, the masterclass series dives deep into implementation strategies for AI deployment, cloud migration, fiber optic scaling, and next-gen telecom monetization.

3. Next Gen Talent Programme: Recognizing that sustainable digital growth depends on human capital development, the Next Gen Talent initiative focuses on closing digital skills gaps, promoting women in technology, and connecting emerging STEM graduates with leading multinational employers and tech incubators.

The Startup Experience & Investment Hub

Innovation is the beating heart of Africa Tech Festival, prominently showcased through the Startup Experience. This dedicated zone gives early-stage tech ventures a prominent platform to exhibit their products, validate business models, and connect directly with targeted enterprise buyers.

A cornerstone of this experience is the structured 1:1 meeting service and investor match-making sessions, which bridge the funding gap between promising African founders and venture capital firms, angel investors, and corporate venture arms. By facilitating these critical connections, the festival actively accelerates the commercialization and regional scaling of home-grown African technological solutions.

The VIP Experience & Exclusive Networking

For executive attendees, the festival offers an elevated VIP Experience designed to maximize ROI and high-level networking opportunities. Key features include:

• **Dedicated VIP Lounges:** Exclusive spaces designed for private executive briefings, confidential deal-making, and quiet networking.

• **Advanced 1:1 Meeting Platforms:** Pre-scheduled matchmaking software enabling



delegates to curate their meeting agendas weeks in advance.

• **Top Attendee Lists & Delegations:** Curated access to key decision-makers representing major telecom operators, financial institutions, and government bodies.

Sustainability and Green Tech Integration

As digital infrastructure expands rapidly across the continent, environmental stewardship has become a paramount concern. Africa Tech Festival 2026 integrates sustainability into both its operational footprint and its content tracks.

Specialized sessions explore energy-efficient data centre designs, the integration of renewable energy sources into telecom tower operations, and circular economy practices within consumer electronics. The event highlights how technological innovation can successfully run parallel with green transition goals, ensuring that Africa's digital future remains environmentally resilient.

Celebrating Excellence: The Afest Awards

The annual Afest Awards) represent the pinnacle of industry recognition, celebrating organizations, projects, and individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary leadership and impact.

• **Award Categories:** The awards span multiple categories recognizing achievements in digital inclusion, startup innovation, sustainability, telecom transformation, and cybersecurity leadership.

•**Industry Prestige:** Winning an Afest Award serves as a globally recognized benchmark of excellence, validating a company's





contribution to accelerating Africa's digital economy and inspiring future innovators across the continent.

Distinguished Speaker Faculty and Policy Leadership

The 2026 speaker lineup features an influential assembly of public sector leaders, regulatory heads, and global tech titans. Confirmed keynote speakers and participants include:

- ***Hon. Solly Malatsi, Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, Republic of South Africa***
- ***Hon. Samuel Nartey George, Minister of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, Republic of Ghana***



- ***Phuthi Mahanyele-Dabengwa, Group Executive Director, Naspers and Prosus***
- ***Hardy Pemhiwa, President & Group CEO, Cassava Technologies***
- ***Yasser Shaker, Executive Vice President & CEO, Orange Middle East and Africa***
- ***Executives and technical leaders from global enterprises including Microsoft, Amazon, OpenAI, Zipline, Vodacom, MTN Group, Airtel Africa, and Equinix.***

As exhibition spaces fill rapidly and international delegations finalize their preparations, Africa Tech Festival 2026 promises to surpass previous editions in scale, impact, and strategic depth. For readers of Teletimes International, the event represents more than just a conference—it is a vital barometer of the continent's digital health.

By fostering robust public-private partnerships, showcasing cutting-edge infrastructure, and championing homegrown entrepreneurial talent, Africa Tech Festival continues to chart the definitive roadmap for Africa's digital destiny. T



G42 signs agreements to explore AI infrastructure and applications in Greece

G42 has signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) agreements with Greek government and private-sector partners covering AI infrastructure, government services, life sciences and smart cities. The agreements were signed during an official visit to Athens led by the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Trade, which included the UAE-Greece Business Forum.

The agreements extend G42's Intelligence Grid proposition into Greece. The Intelligence Grid embodies G42's vision to make intelligence as easily accessible and reliable as electricity, bringing together the full AI value chain, from data centers and advanced compute to cloud infrastructure and industry-specific applications, to enable governments, businesses and societies to harness AI at scale.

"Our ambition is to help countries build the infrastructure, capabilities and applications needed to unlock AI for the benefit of their society," said H.E. Mansoor Al Mansoori, CEO of G42 International. "Building on the long-standing strategic partnership between the UAE and Greece, these agreements mark an important milestone in expanding G42's Intelligence Grid across Europe, bringing together advanced compute infrastructure and proven AI platforms for government and industry. By working alongside trusted local partners and in alignment with European standards, we aim to deliver lasting value to Greece's economy and people."

AI infrastructure

Under agreements with Copelouzos Group, Khazna Data Centers and Core42 will explore the development of an AI factory in Greece, combining advanced data center infrastructure with AI cloud and compute capabilities. Khazna would lead the development of the physical infrastructure, while Core42 would provide cloud and AI compute capabilities to support organizations across sectors including banking, telecommunications, shipping and government.

"Our partnership with G42 brings state-of-the-art, world-class AI infrastructure to Greece and strengthens the country's position as a strategic digital and energy hub in Southeast Europe," said Christos Copelouzos, CEO of Copelouzos Group. "By combining our experience in large-scale infrastructure and energy with the expertise of Khazna and Core42, we aim to build an AI factory that will support the digital transformation of the Greek economy, attract new investment and create highly skilled jobs."

Smart cities

Presight will collaborate with Greece's Ministry of Digital Governance to explore the deployment of AI-powered urban analytics and real-time intelligence capabilities to enhance public safety across urban mobility and municipal operations. The collaboration will initially focus on demonstrating the potential of Agentic AI to transform municipal waste management and water-network monitoring through intelligent analytics, leveraging synthetic and open data.

Building on Presight's extensive international experience in deploying AI-powered analytics and intelligence platforms, the initiative aims to establish a foundation for broader adoption of advanced AI capabilities to improve operational efficiency, strengthen public safety and enable smarter, more responsive urban management.





Minister of Digital Governance & Artificial Intelligence Dimitris Papastergiou said: "Artificial Intelligence can play an important role in making our cities smarter, more efficient and safer. Through our collaboration with Presight, we will explore new applications across smart-city initiatives, as well as technological solutions that can enhance safety on public transport networks. Our focus is on putting technology to practical use, addressing the needs of our cities and improving citizens' everyday lives."

"Cities generate enormous volumes of data every day, but their real value comes from turning that information into intelligence that improves how cities function and how people live," said Thomas Pramotedham, CEO of Presight. "Building on our experience delivering AI at national scale, we aim to support the Ministry of Digital Governance in developing smarter and more responsive urban environments, with practical applications that can make a measurable difference to citizens and public services."

Government and education

Inception42 will work with Greece's Ministry of Digital Governance & Artificial Intelligence to explore the application of Agentic AI across government and education. Areas of focus include deploying AI-powered tools to support cabinet meetings and monitor progress against government priorities, training government officials to work with AI agents, and developing AI tutors and learning platforms to enhance educational outcomes.

"AI delivers lasting value in government when it is built into how institutions work and the people using it are equipped to lead with it," said Ashish Koshy, CEO of Inception42. "Our work with Greece's Ministry of Digital Governance will strengthen how the Greek Government tracks progress on its priorities, will help officials work alongside AI agents, and expand access to AI-powered learning in Greek education. We will deliver each program in line with European standards for Responsible AI."

Life sciences

M42 has signed an MoU with Athens LifeTech Park (ALTP) for a broad-based partnership spanning life sciences research, genomics sequencing infrastructure, population genomics, clinical development and connecting institutional biobanks. This will open the way for joint translational research, preclinical studies and bioanalytical work alongside integrated genomics, multi-omics and biomarker research in priority areas including oncology, rare genetic diseases and neuroscience. The MoU also establishes a two-way bridge between the two ecosystems: a bilateral program giving UAE life sciences start-ups a base at the ALTP Incubator for European market entry, and Greek and European ventures access to the UAE through M42's network.

"The next era of global health will be led by ecosystems with a shared purpose that cross borders," said Dimitris Moulavasilis, Group CEO of M42. "This partnership connects Abu Dhabi's clinical, genomic and technology infrastructure with Greece's scientific capabilities, life sciences ecosystem and European reach to turn insight into research and discoveries into treatments. It also works in both directions: UAE ventures gaining a route into Europe, and European researchers and innovators gaining opportunities for collaboration and market access through the UAE's healthcare and life sciences ecosystem."

"Good science travels well when it has the right partners on both ends," said Eleni Pentafragka, CEO of Athens LifeTech Park. "We look forward to working with M42 to translate this MoU into joint research and real opportunities for start-ups in both Greece and the UAE." T

Antik Telecom, A1 and Eutelsat extend long-term partnership at 16° East

Eutelsat has announced the renewal of its long-standing partnership with Antik Sat, the direct-to-home (DTH) television platform operated by Antik Telecom, and A1, one of Central and Eastern Europe's leading communications provider.

The new multi-transponder agreement reinforces the companies' commitment to delivering high-quality television services to households across Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Under the renewed partnership, Eutelsat will continue to provide satellite capacity at its flagship 16° East orbital position, the leading satellite neighbourhood for Central and Eastern Europe. A1 will deliver headend hosting, uplink and associated broadcast services, while Antik Sat will leverage the platform to serve its growing subscriber base with a comprehensive line-up of television content.

Home to hundreds of television channels, and reaching more than 80 million DTH, cable and IPTV homes across the region, Eutelsat's 16° East video neighbourhood remains a premier destination for broadcasters and pay-TV operators targeting Central and Eastern European markets. The renewal underscores the continued importance of satellite distribution as a reliable and scalable platform for premium television delivery.

Jakub Brzeczkowski, RVP Sales Video Europe at Eutelsat, said: "We are pleased to build on our long-standing relationship with Antik Telecom and A1 through this new agreement. Our leading 16° East neighbourhood provides the resilience, coverage and performance needed to support established and growing video platforms. We are proud to remain a trusted partner in Antik Telecom's long-term growth journey."

Ing. Vlastimil Lakatoš, Chief Product Officer, Antik Telecom, said: "This agreement secures the foundation of our Antik Sat television platform and ensures continuity for our customers across Slovakia. By combining Eutelsat's proven satellite infrastructure



with A1's technical expertise and service capabilities, we can continue to provide a compelling television offering and a high-quality viewing experience."

Elena Petrova, Head of Content, Broadcasting & Media Solutions, A1 International Business, added: "We are pleased to continue supporting Antik Sat through our headend, uplink and managed broadcast services. This renewal highlights the strength of the partnership between A1, Antik Telecom and Eutelsat and our shared commitment to delivering reliable, high-quality television services to viewers across the region." T

Azercosmos launches Platerra AI platform for satellite imagery analysis



Azercosmos has launched Platerra, an artificial intelligence-powered platform designed to automatically analyse satellite imagery and turn it into geospatial information that can support decision-making across a range of applications.

Platerra combines Earth observation data with artificial intelligence to automate key stages of satellite imagery analysis. By reducing the need for fully manual interpretation, the platform enables users to extract relevant information from imagery more quickly and efficiently.

The platform currently offers AI-powered capabilities for satellite image enhancement, forest area detection, measurement of water body surface areas, object detection, and the delineation of agricultural field boundaries. These tools help turn complex satellite imagery into practical information that can be used for monitoring, analysis and planning.

The launch comes amid growing international interest in geospatial artificial intelligence, or GeoAI, as organisations seek more efficient ways to process increasing volumes of Earth observation data. AI-based analysis can help make satellite-derived information more accessible and easier to apply in both operational and strategic decision-making.

For Azercosmos, Platerra marks another step in combining space-based data with artificial intelligence technologies. The platform is designed to expand the practical use of satellite imagery, improve access to processed geospatial information, and support faster, data-driven decision-making.

Azercosmos plans to continue developing Platerra by expanding its analytical capabilities and adding new applications in response to evolving user needs. The broader goal is to make satellite-derived information easier to interpret and use while strengthening the role of artificial intelligence across geospatial and satellite data services. T



Islamabad concludes landmark APT Symposium on digital transformation and universal service funds with strategic roadmap for regional digital inclusion

Federal IT Minister announces historic milestone as USF Pakistan crosses $1 billion in deployed subsidies; Regional telecom leaders call for next-generation universal service frameworks

The landmark Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) Symposium on Digital Transformation and the Universal Service Fund (USF) successfully concluded in Islamabad on October 15, marking a defining milestone for regional telecommunications policy and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Co-hosted by the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunication (MoITT) and Universal Service Fund Pakistan, in collaboration with the APT Secretariat, the three-day international forum brought together high-level policymakers, global regulators, telecom industry executives, and delegates from across the Asia-Pacific region.

The symposium established a forward-looking operational blueprint to modernize universal service mandates across member states—pivoting from traditional voice and basic coverage subsidies toward agile, outcome-oriented frameworks supporting gigabit fiberization, non-terrestrial satellite networks, smartphone device financing, and resilient digital ecosystems including localized rural Artificial Intelligence (AI) infrastructure.

Federal IT Minister Announces $1 Billion USF Milestone

Delivering the Chief Guest inaugural address, Honourable Federal Minister for IT & Telecommunication, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, emphasized Pakistan's commitment to building an inclusive, secure, and future-proof digital economy:

"True digital transformation requires bridging the usage gap just as aggressively as the coverage gap. In driving meaningful connectivity, we treat digital access as an indispensable engine of economic empowerment and social mobility. Under the APT Tokyo Statement 2025 guidelines, Pakistan is modernizing its policy landscape to empower rural communities with high-speed Fiber backhaul, smartphone affordability, and localized AI compute capabilities."

"I am proud to announce a landmark milestone today: USF Pakistan has officially crossed the threshold of over $1 Billion ($1.054 Billion) in deployed contracted subsidies, playing a vital, historic role in advancing digital transformation across the country."

Regional Leadership Calls for Next-Generation USF Models

In his address, Secretary-General of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), Masanori Kondo, highlighted:

"Digital transformation is changing our economies and societies—reshaping how governments deliver public services, how businesses operate, and how people learn, work, and communicate. As the Asia-Pacific advances rapidly into the age of 5G, satellite

constellations, and artificial intelligence, the risk of digital exclusion has shifted from a lack of physical coverage to a lack of quality, capability, and digital readiness. Universal Service Funds must evolve into agile, outcome-oriented frameworks. Regional cooperation and harmonized regulatory approaches are key to ensuring that no country, island, or remote community is left behind."

Highlighting the organizational performance and symposium objectives, USF Pakistan Chief Executive Officer, Chaudhary Mudassar Naveed, stated:

"For decades, USFs were measured by tower counts in remote regions. Today, meaningful connectivity demands high-speed fiberization, active infrastructure sharing, and demand-side inclusion. USF Pakistan is proud to lead discussions on co-creating Buy-Now-Pay-Later (BNPL) device-financing frameworks, low-cost Right-of-Way (ROW) policies, and resilient middle-mile networks that bridge both economic and geographic divides."

"Aligned with the Prime Minister's Digital Pakistan Vision and under the guidance of the Honourable Federal Minister, our mission focuses on extending connectivity where commercial viability falls short. To date, we have completed 158 out of 185 awarded projects, utilizing over PKR 169 Billion in subsidies and directly benefiting more than 38.4 million people."

Four Strategic Pillars & Three-Day Deliberations

Building on the Tokyo Statement 2025 and the APT Strategic Plan, the symposium repositions Universal Service Funds to drive socio-economic development across four main pillars:

1. Accelerating Gigabit Broadband: Expanding Fiber backhaul and last-mile connectivity to unserved and low-income areas.

2. Integrating Emerging Technologies: Leveraging AI, LEO satellites, 5G/6G, cloud, and IoT to bridge the digital divide.

3. Sustainable Funding & Governance: Advancing transparent BNPL device financing, streamlined ROW frameworks, and long-term fund sustainability.

4. Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: Aligning governments, regulators, USF administrators, operators, vendors, and local communities.

Over the course of ten distinct sessions spanning three days, experts and delegates addressed key technical, policy, and societal challenges:

• **Day 1 (13 October 2026) —** Next-Gen Policy & Infrastructure: Executive panels focused on future-proofing universal service, 5G readiness, open-access Fiber, and ROW rationalization.

• **Day 2 (14 October 2026) —** Terrain Extension, Affordability & Gender Inclusion: Technical sessions covered extreme terrain deployment models (including low-cost Fiber backhaul, satellite, and mobile broadband), solar-powered green infrastructure, device subsidy programs, and specialized digital literacy initiatives aimed at closing the gender digital divide.

• **Day 3 (15 October 2026) —** Rural AI Compute, Ecosystems & Strategic Recommendations: Discussions centered on rural AI compute readiness, subsea cable and middle-mile resilience, early warning systems, and empowering local ecosystems through culturally appropriate, language-specific digital platforms, concluding with the formal adoption of regional policy recommendations.

Distinguished Global & Regional Representation

The event brought together a distinguished lineup of senior officials, international delegates, and telecom leaders. Prominent attendees included Senator Palwasha Khan, Chairperson, Senate Standing Committee; Sabheen Ghoury, Parliamentary Secretary, MoITT; Rafique Ahmed Buriro, Additional Secretary, MoITT; and Maj. Gen. (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman, Chairman, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). The regulatory body and Ministry were further represented by PTA Members Muhammad Naveed and Khawar Siddique Khokhar, along with MoITT Members Asfandyar Khan (Member DET) and Muhammad Jahanzeb Rahim (Member Telecom).

International delegates included Moshiur Rahman (Bangladesh), Warren Suti (Papua New Guinea), Tshering Dema (Bhutan), Mohd Akmal Radzuan (Malaysia), and Cecily Jemaima Iakopo (Samoa). Industry leadership was strongly featured through key technology partners and telecom operators, including Naveed Khalid Butt (PTCL), Shan Ul Haq (PTML), Shahid Razzaq (CMPak/Zong), Ahmed Bilal Masud (Deputy CEO, Huawei), as well as representatives from Jazz and the GSMA.

On the final day, APT Secretary-General Masanori Kondo officially announced the conclusion of the symposium, expressing sincere gratitude to MoITT and USF Pakistan for organizing an exceptional event and extending warm Pakistani hospitality.

In his closing remarks and vote of thanks, USF CEO Chaudhary Mudassar Naveed expressed profound gratitude to Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja for her visionary leadership, the APT Secretariat under Masanori Kondo for partnering with Pakistan, and international delegates, session chairs, and panellists. He recognized the pivotal contributions of the PTA, leading telecom operators, and vendor partners. Special appreciation was also extended to the International Coordination and Telecom Wings of MoITT, the Joint Organizing Committees, the USF Pakistan team, and venue, media, and support staff for their execution.

As the symposium concluded, delegates reaffirmed their shared commitment to carry forward the spirit of regional partnership from Islamabad, ensuring future-ready digital transformation reaches every community and leaves no citizen behind across the Asia-Pacific. T

GLOBAL ICT, TELECOM & SATCOM EVENTS 2026-2027

04-05 November 2026
SECURE WORLD FOUNDATION
Brasília, Brazil

09-10 November 2026
CONNECTED WORLD
Riyadh, KSA

08-11 March 2027
SATSHOWWEEK
Washington D.C., USA

09-10 November 2026
Space & Satellites USA 2026
Washington D.C., USA

17-19 November 2026
SPACE TECH EXPO EUROPE
Bremen, Germany

15-18 March 2027
capacity MIDDLE EAST
Dubai, UAE

03-05 November 2026
APSCC
Denpasar, Indonesia

17-19 November 2026
AFRICA TECH FESTIVAL
Cape Town, South Africa

04-06 May 2027
CABSAT
Dubai, UAE

02-05 November 2026
GLOBAL MILSATCOM CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION
London, UK

08-11 December 2026
GITEX GLOBAL
Dubai, UAE

04-06 May 2027
SATEXPO
Dubai, UAE

04-05 November 2026
CYBERSAT
Virginia, USA

26-28 May 2027
ATX ENTERPRISE
Singapore

26-28 May 2027
ATX SG
Singapore

08-11 November 2026
MWC GSMA
Doha, Qatar

01-04 March 2027
MWC GSMA
Barcelona, Spain

10-13 September 2027
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Es'hailSat سهيل سات
Qatar Satellite Company الشركة القطرية للأقمار الصناعية
Space to deliver your vision

CONNECTING QATAR TO THE WORLD AND BEYOND

At Es'hailSat, we power Qatar's communication through cutting-edge satellite technology. From broadcasting and government services to business connectivity and beyond, we ensure secure, reliable, and high-performance satellite solutions across the region. We are enabling a future that is always connected and always advancing.



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