

Customer Success Story

CELTEL

Kenya



Celtel, Kenya, embraces all-IP and enlarges its network capacity

To accommodate projected subscriber growth, Celtel, Kenya, upgraded its core network and pre-paid systems, all within a strict four-month time frame.

With 2 million subscribers using its GSM network, Celtel has 40 percent of the Kenyan market where 98 percent of subscribers use pre-paid services. To enable subscriber capacity to grow further, while ensuring OPEX remained low, the operator needed a technology upgrade

for its core network and pre-paid systems. Dramatic improvements in network efficiency were realized to enable the operator to profitably address its projected subscriber growth.

Celtel International, the parent operator of Celtel Kenya, had previously worked in partnership with Ericsson to implement a number of network swap-outs in countries across the African continent – notably Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Niger. The two companies began a strategic partnership in 2004 to develop a common service layer and core network across all Celtel subsidiaries to create 'One Network' in Africa. Due to this successful on-going relationship, Celtel in Kenya chose Ericsson for this swap-out project.

Ericsson's Mobile Softswitch (MSS) and Packet Backbone Network (PBN) were installed to enable capacity growth and to provide efficient migration to an all-IP network, allowing dual access for GSM and WCDMA. The feature-rich charging system, CS 3.0, was part of the upgrade package.

The original Celtel network was built up over a five-year period. In comparison, the entire network swap-out was completed by Ericsson in just four months. The swap-out process was completed during one night, without any negative effect on network quality or significant down-time. To ensure that the strict deadline was met, Ericsson brought strong project management skills to the operation, as well as its global experience of system integration.

Lars Stuber, Key Account Manager, Ericsson, describes the scope of the success: "The actual replacement of the network was completed in just four months. That is highly impressive when you consider that the network had 2 million subscribers in three switching locations and that the change-over procedure is comparable with simultaneous heart and brain surgery."

This is the largest and most complex swap-out project Ericsson has undertaken in Sub-Saharan Africa. This complex project has assisted Celtel's network capacity to increase to 3.2 million end-users. The network upgrade has ensured that Celtel is fully prepared for the transition to 3G, with technology trials due to take place at the end of 2006. Using Ericsson's technology, as well as marketing and sales capabilities, has enabled Celtel to enhance its offering and grow market share.

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Paul Meredith, Chief Technical Officer, Celtel

Paul Meredith, Chief Technical Officer, Celtel, outlines his thoughts on the future of the network: "The swap-out has been a great success. The new challenge for Celtel is to build on this and deliver improved services to subscribers. The Ericsson team played the leading role in making the swap happen."



*Paul Meredith,
Chief Technical Officer,
Celtel*

Highlights

Customer

Celtel, Kenya.

Customer Objective

Upgrade network infrastructure, increase network capacity and migrate network to all-IP.

Ericsson Solution

- Mobile Softswitch
- Packet Backbone Network (PBN)
- Latest pre-paid platform technology

Customer Benefits

- Fast time-to-market
- Smooth, trouble-free switch-over
- All-IP network
- Efficient capacity growth.

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