



Main One Cable Company is a Nigeria-based communications services company that provides open access, wholesale, international broadband capacity to four countries in West Africa. The company built and operates the first privately-owned submarine cable along the West African coastline, covering a distance of 7,000 kilometers, with initial landing stations in Nigeria, Ghana, and Portugal. Offering state-of-the-art IP-NGN¹ infrastructure; circuits for video, voice, and data transmission; and colocation and managed services, Main One increases regional access to the internet and high-quality communications services.

"We believe that access to broadband should be available in all parts of the country such that it starts to impact our lives in a more meaningful way. When broadband access is readily available, we will rely on that connectivity to obtain services—in education, government, commerce, and entertainment—and improve productivity in our daily lives."

Funke Opeke, CEO

MAIN ONE CABLE COMPANY // DELIVERING CONNECTIVITY ACROSS WEST AFRICA

Unreliability, poor quality, and high costs define Sub-Saharan Africa's internet market. A lack of network infrastructure and international bandwidth capacity has resulted in a low internet penetration rate of 8 percent, well below the world average of 23 percent. With monthly subscription costs over \$300/month and an average bandwidth speed of only .06 Mbps, few Africans are able to realize the full benefits of the internet.

BUSINESS MODEL

Main One provides affordable, reliable broadband internet access to the people and businesses of Sub-Saharan Africa. An early mover in Nigeria's information and communications technology (ICT) sector, Main One secured a competitive advantage by scaling network economies and marketing momentum. The company invested a total of \$255 million in the deployment of its submarine fiber optic cable, which links West Africa to Europe. Of this investment, \$15 million was spent on infrastructure expansion to bring down the cost of bandwidth and increase accessibility to the internet.

KEY IMPACTS

- **Main One's upgrade of its submarine fiber optic cable system and expansion of its infrastructure are enhancing capacity distribution by providing service to Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, and Burkina Faso.**
- **By reducing wholesale broadband prices by 90 percent and partnering on a teleport to bring additional bandwidth to rural areas, Main One is helping to increase internet access for low-income users.**

PERFORMANCE AGAINST FRAMEWORK METRICS

ACHIEVING GROWTH

Since commencing commercial operations in 2010, Main One has delivered a number of product and service innovations that have dramatically increased the availability and quality of broadband internet in West Africa. The company increased its customer base by offering high quality, reliable broadband access and by expanding into new, untapped markets. The Main One cable system delivers fast and affordable international connectivity at 1.92 Tbps, 10 times the speed previously available in the market at inception. This volume of bandwidth is sufficient to drive large increases in quality broadband services across Nigeria in the coming years. Since becoming operational in 2010, the system has maintained an unparalleled 100 percent uptime, providing communities with extraordinary gains in efficiency and productivity.

ACHIEVING OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH THE VALUE CHAIN

Main One encourages local content development via skills transfer of critical networking technologies and has spurred job creation by locating the network operation centers for the entire system in Nigeria and Ghana. At the macro level, broadband and internet accessibility are playing a growing role in improving human capital by enabling individuals

to acquire skills and increase their marketability as workers, expanding access to opportunities in new markets, and improving access to and effective use of basic services (e.g., health care and education).

Despite considerable gains made by Main One to improve international connectivity, high bandwidth costs persist due to limited distribution and last-mile infrastructure constraints. End-users are unable to access the broadband speeds and reduced pricing enabled by Main One because domestic infrastructure owners are not connecting them effectively. In response, Main One has started to build infrastructure to connect coastal landing stations with both interior areas and neighboring countries. This infrastructure will also be offered on an open access basis to further level the competitive landscape and drive broadband penetration. With an extra \$15 million of investment, Main One has begun to extend its infrastructure towards Togo with an interconnection through Ghana and is already servicing Benin from Nigeria. Furthermore, the company plans to connect terrestrial fiber from Nigeria and Ghana to Burkina Faso and Niger. These investments will increase capacity exponentially in the Sahel region and deliver true broadband to countless communities. Finally, in order to further extend access to last-mile internet users in West Africa, Main One has developed strategic partnerships with independent operators.

DOING BUSINESS RESPONSIBLY

Globally, market domination by large players in high technology-related businesses stifles innovation and punishes consumers with high prices while rewarding players with high profit margins. Despite the competitive behavior of many of its counterparts, Main One continues to operate an open access cable with competitive pricing made available on its network. This encourages market entry from smaller, local companies and reduces the incidence of dominant market entities. Main One has also implemented a Partner Advantage program which targets resellers of bandwidth services to further ensure that benefits are passed on to end-users. In the public arena, the company is a strong advocate for better regulation, which rewards investment in open infrastructure, spurs innovation, and increases local content development.

ENHANCING THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT BUSINESS GROWTH

Main One fervently believes that governments have a major role to play in promoting broadband penetration by using their assets and power to drive policy change. As such, the company has urged the Nigerian Communications Commission to promote regulatory and policy interventions that ensure sustainable access to nationwide broadband services. Main One has also been at the forefront of the push for the development of a National Broadband Policy in Nigeria to drive expansion of broadband.

SUCCESS STORY

To increase product awareness and educate customers, Main One established a "Feel the Impact" promotional campaign. The company provided communities throughout Ghana and Nigeria with the opportunity to experience its 1.92 Tbps cable system for free. During the promotion, participants could use the available computers to download up to 20 GB of data at no cost. The promotional tour reached over 3,000 people, giving them the opportunity to learn more about Main One's products and services.

Main One Ghana Country Manager, Joseph Odoi, explained, "The Feel the Impact promotion reflects our commitment to ensure that Ghanaians tap into the benefits of the broadband internet revolution offered by Main One Cable. We are poised to champion a communications revolution in the sub-region, impacting businesses, governments, and individuals by providing higher bandwidth and exceptional speed at the most competitive price."²