

Overview of Broadband Connectivity in Liberia

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“Access to Broadband Connectivity in
Liberia in the post-Ebola context: A
Roundtable with Public and Private Sector
Stakeholders”

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Presentation Outline

- Essence of Broadband Connectivity
- Pre-ACE Broadband Connectivity Era in Liberia
- Broadband Connectivity in the ACE Era
- Some Policy Interventions to Facilitate Broadband Connectivity
- The Demand Side for Broadband Connectivity
- Conclusion

Essence of Broadband Connectivity

- To facilitate access to high speed internet
- To enhance efficiency in service delivery
- To improve productivity across business
- To facilitate innovation

There has been two eras of Broadband
Connectivity in Liberia

The Pre-ACE Broadband Connectivity Era

- Connectivity was done via satellite
- Connectivity via satellite was cost prohibitive
- Broadband penetration was less than one percent
- Broadband infrastructures were expensive and inadequate
- Many potential users could not access broadband service
- Only Foreign Missions, Business Executives and INGOs could access broadband connectivity

Broadband Connectivity in the ACE Era

- Cost of broadband connectivity has radically reduced
- Average internet connection speed has tremendously improved
- Mobile broadband penetration has risen from a fraction of one to about 30 percent
- Mobile broadband penetration is concentrated in densely populated cities
- Cities with mobile broadband penetration constitute less than 10 percent of Liberia's 38,000 square miles
- Access to video and data have increased
- Competitive market is driving mobile broadband penetration
- Cable broadband connectivity are limited to institutions
- In areas where market dynamics provide access to broadband, Fiber to Home is virtually non-existent

Policy Interventions to Facilitate Broadband Connection

No	Description	Objectives	Progress Made
1	National Telecom and ICT Policy of 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Facilitates competition . Promotes broadband connectivity . Promotes PPP for IT infrastructure . Promotes a predictable, transparent and independent regulatory regime, etc. 	On course but infrastructure less than satisfactory
2.	Monrovia Fiber Ring Connectivity (2008...)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in infrastructure Improve connectivity Reduce cost 	Funding challenge
3	Policy Framework to Connect Liberia to ACE (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated submarine cable as a preferred option to global connectivity Encouraged PPP as a strategy 	Connected
4	National Universal Access Program Strategy (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses access gap Promotes infrastructure sharing 	Regulatory framework being finalized
5	Policy Directive on Tower Safety and Co-location (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguards Liberia's airspace by ensuring beacon on protruding tower Ensures infrastructure sharing 	LTA to ensure compliance
6	Establishing National Internet Exchange Point - AU funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will address critical infrastructure gap Will reduce cost and enhance efficiency Will keep local content local 	Paperwork finalized; operators to deploy routers;

The Demand Side of Broadband Connectivity

No	Sector	Service	Goal/Objective
1	Government	E-government	To improve service delivery To enhance efficiency across gov't To promote accountability To reduce barrier dealing with G2C, G2B and G2G
2.	Education	E-education	Provide access to online resources Facilitate distance learning Support research Provide other opportunities
3	Medicine	E-medicine	Bridge access gap between practitioners and their patients; Facilitate access to expert opinion in spite of location/distance
4	Commerce	E-commerce	Remove physical barrier in trade

Conclusion

- Access to broadband connectivity is a necessity
- Building national backbone will enhance its access
- Market failure has exacerbated access gap between residents of sparsely populated communities and their urban counterparts in populated cities
- GoL and its development partners need to intervene to address access gap by investing in sustainable broadband infrastructure
- Investment in broadband infrastructure will expand market space and accelerate universal access by addressing market failure taking advantage of post-Ebola intervention