

ITU International Mobile Roaming Consultation Meeting



ECOWAS Initiatives on Mobile Roaming in the West African Region

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ECOWAS AT GLANCE

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS):

- **Date of Creation** : 28 May 1975
- **Location** : West Africa
- **Membership** : 15 Member States (MS)
(8 Francophones, 5 Anglophones, 2 Lusophones)
- **Population** : 300 M
- **Area** : 6,1 millions Km²
- **Average mobile tele density (2014)**: 90.28 per 100 inhabitants
- **Average internet user penetration (2015)**: 29.6%.



French: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo

English: The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone

Portuguese: Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau





ECOWAS ICT Objectives

- ICT is key in the development of West Africa and in the regional integration process
- Key legal instruments are articles 32 & 33 of the revised treaty
- The core objective of the ECOWAS in ICT is the **establishment of a single ICT Market in West Africa**
- In order to achieve that, we work with 2 main pillars
 - Harmonization of ICT policies
 - Development of broadband infrastructure





Roaming in ECOWAS Region

- Telecommunication/ICT services and particularly mobiles services play a crucial role in facilitating trade between countries and are essential to the successful implementation of the economic integration programme
- ECOWAS HOSG appealed to Mobile operators to sign roaming agreements in order to facilitate communication in the region and set up the ECOWAS Technical Group on Roaming (ETGR) in 2005
- Three conditions for high-quality roaming at affordable prices have been identified by the ETGR:
 - harmonised Community regulation;
 - total cross-border connectivity between all the ECOWAS countries;
 - a preferential Community tariff to encourage and boost the use of roaming.





ECOWAS Broadband Infrastructure Achievements



- Each Country has direct broadband connectivity with at least two (2) neighboring countries
- All landlocked countries (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger) have at least 2 routes for access to submarine cables
- Six (6) submarine cables are connecting ECOWAS to the world wide network with 25 Landing points
- Eleven(11) over twelve (12) costal Member States are connected to submarine cables with at least one (1) landing station (Cape Verde, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria).
- Guinea Bissau is in the process of constructing a landing point on ACE cable





Ongoing Activities on Roaming

- Objective: reduce the cost of roaming and potentially termination rates.
- The engagement is split into two activities:
 - A. Study on harmonization of cross-border communications costs supported by World Bank
 - B. Elaboration and adoption of a Regulation on Roaming in the ECOWAS space, in collaboration with WATRA and PPDU of ECOWAS





STUDY ON HARMONISATION OF CROSS-BORDER COMMUNICATIONS COSTS



- Aim of the study
 - To develop a mobile industry strategy to reduce roaming and termination rates
- Scope of activities
 - Analysis of subscription and traffic trends in West Africa
 - Analysis and decomposition of cost/pricing structure of roaming tariffs
 - Cost/benefit analysis of a proposal to reduce int'l roaming rates
 - Identify market developments and solutions which will contribute to a reduction in roaming rates
- Analyse the economic impact of reduced roaming charges in member states and the region as a whole
- Review best practice approaches to roaming
- Review ITU recommendation on roaming
- Evaluate options for regulatory intervention at national levels;
- Workshop to present and validate study finding and chart way forward
- Consultative meeting with Mobile Operators after the inception report (ECOWAS-WATRA-WB-MO)





ELABORATION OF REGULATION ON ROAMING IN THE ECOWAS SPACE



- Objectives of the consultancy are to:
 - harmonise the costing and pricing of roaming services within the ECOWAS Region;
 - address the high cost of roaming services within the ECOWAS Region;
 - provide the minimum safeguards for consumers of roaming services to empower them to make informed decisions.
- Reducing Roaming will :
 - facilitate regional m-services
 - improve regional traffic and business for Operators





Outlook

- ECOWAS to fast track to set up Regional Regulation on mobile Roaming and is expecting a lot from the outcomes of:
 - ATU initiatives on “Mobile Roaming in Africa”
 - ITU International Mobile Roaming (IMR) Consultation Meeting
 - EU initiatives
- Needs Technical/Financial support for the implementation of the Regional Regulation in the Member States
- Fully Operationalize the Regional Data Base **SIGTEL** to provide updated information on mobile roaming to stakeholders
- Abolish roaming charges in medium term in ECOWAS region





THANK YOU !

