

Alcatel-Lucent to start construction of ACE undersea cable system's next phase to improve broadband connectivity and digital services in Africa

5,000km Africa Coast to Europe system extension to South Africa from Sao Tomé-et-Principe will further improve cost-effective broadband supporting applications for education, healthcare and other e-services

Alcatel-Lucent Submarine Networks, the undersea cables subsidiary of Alcatel-Lucent, is to roll out Phase II of the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) submarine cable system, a 5,000km extension from the Gulf of Guinea island of Sao Tomé-et-Principe to South Africa, that will further strengthen the role ACE is playing in critical infrastructure development in the continent.

Phase II of ACE will support the cost-effective delivery of broadband services and digital applications for education, healthcare and other e-services, reaching an additional 200 million people through this extension. It is notable that 13 of the 16 countries connected by the ACE are in Africa, and of those 13, seven were connected to the global Internet backbone for the first time by the cable system coming on-stream in December 2012. Phase II will link Namibia, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo-Brazzaville and South Africa, including an extension to Cameroon.

This connectivity is being made possible by Alcatel-Lucent's 100 gigabit-per-second (Gbit/s) submarine technology, and on completion of the Phase II extension, the ACE system will deliver an overall design capacity of 12.8 Tbit/s, significantly speeding up delivery of broadband services and content.

Commenting on the project, Yves Ruggeri, Chairman of the ACE Management Committee said: "The extension of the ACE system to South Africa is a significant milestone that confirms our commitment to address the connectivity challenges facing Africa. ASN's know-how and technological innovations, which we have recently tested on our existing network, will support us in further developing direct connectivity within Africa and to the overall objective of ACE to reduce communication costs and drive social and economic growth in the continent."

Philippe Dumont, President of Alcatel-Lucent Submarine Networks said: "We are pleased to continue our collaboration with the ACE consortium, which dates back since the beginning of the project and demonstrates the consortium's trust in our ability to accompany them in their strategic implementations from end to end. This further development of the ACE system underlines the demand for bandwidth, to broaden opportunities in terms of connectivity, data and information sharing."