

Winch Energy and iWayAfrica Partner to launch The Winch Hub® to Accelerate Energy and Internet Access into Rural Areas of Uganda

Winch Energy is a global off-grid renewable energy operator and technology integrator, providing turnkey remote power and communication solutions for rural communities

iWayAfrica is a leading African ISP, offering pan-regional connectivity solutions over satellite, fibre and wireless access networks

Under a pilot program, Winch Energy and iWayAfrica will deploy a remote solar kiosk, The Winch Hub (WH®), with integrated VSAT equipment to provide high-quality and affordable broadband connectivity. This will be made available to five communities in Bunjako Island, a fishing village on the shores of Lake Victoria, Uganda, which has a population of 20,000 people.

The WH® is a bespoke containerised off-grid solution designed and manufactured by Winch, to provide energy and communication services to residential, public and business customers located in rural environments.

This pilot is the proof of concept for a larger project of more than 250 hubs and remote power units to be installed in rural villages providing **electricity, wi-fi, water pumping and cold storage** services to households, schools, health centres and businesses across the country. This effort will be key in helping to accelerate the Ugandan government's broadband strategy, particularly its goal of achieving minimum broadband speeds of 3Mbps and coverage of 100 percent of Uganda's rural areas by 2020.

"Around 80% of Uganda is unserved by reliable means of electricity, with around 65% of the population remaining without access to the internet. Demand for these services amongst rural populations is significant and it is up to government and private sector stakeholders to ensure this demand is met, in a rapid and affordable manner. The objective of this pilot is to demonstrate the commercial and economic sustainability of the 'multi-service in a box' approach, which will help us execute our broader plan of rapidly scaling our technology deployment, alongside key public stakeholders. We are in discussions with local companies to manufacture and assemble our technology on Ugandan soil which will help boost local economy, open up export opportunities, transfer key skills to local personnel and shorten the delivery time to customers", says Tom Wrigley, Director, Winch Energy Group and Winch Energy Uganda.

"Operating as JOLAspot, the Ku-Band Wi-Fi access service will be available via several access points in the village with voucher purchases from the WH®, that will also offer mobile phone charging and printing facilities," explains Michèle Scanlon, Managing Director, iWayAfrica (VSAT Wholesale Services Division).

"iWayAfrica is excited to be part of this community initiative in partnership with Winch Energy bringing WiFi and reliable internet connectivity to the village for the first time. Operating in Uganda since 1992, iWayAfrica has established a solid reputation of leveraging its core expertise in VSAT service delivery to pioneer Rural Communication Development to 100% coverage all over the country during its 26 years of existence in the Ugandan Market" says Godfrey Sserwamukoko, Managing Director, iWayAfrica Uganda.