NITA / Smart Infraco / TCTS

Building The Future Through Digital Technologies

Igniting Ghana's Digital Economy

IT pioneers NITA, TCTS and Smart Infraco have united to assist in realising Ghana's digitisation goals, and their impact is aiding Africa's transformative digital journey in the process.
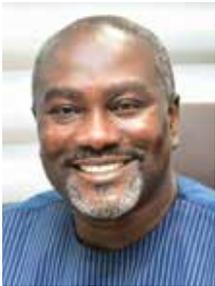
Ghana's robust digital economy is supported by a strong ICT framework to drive the country towards its vision of Ghana Beyond Aid. With a new focus on enhancing the fibre infrastructure backbone across Africa and igniting a digital economy that can empower societies, bridge the digital divide, support social development, achieve progressive government plans and contribute to economic growth, three pioneers of Information Technology have joined forces to enhance Ghana's promising ICT sector further. The National Information Technology Agency (NITA), Tata Communications Transformation Services (TCTS)

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Richard Okyere-Fosu,
Director General of NITA

"Ghana's ICT sector is growing, positively impacting and boosting the country's GDP rate."

Michael Kwablah,
Chief Technology Officer of Smart Infraco

"I believe Ghana is poised to overtake some of the most powerful emerging economies of the world and catapult the entire African continent to an advanced digital league."

Harkirit Singh,
AVP& Cluster Head- Smart Africa,
Tata Communications Transformation Services Limited (TCTS)

and Smart Infraco have united in a game-changing partnership to build Ghana's digital future.

The National Information Technology Agency (NITA) is a government agency that operates under the Ministry of Communications and Digitalisation. NITA is responsible for implementing Ghana's IT policies, as well as identifying, promoting and developing innovative technologies to facilitate Ghana's prospect of becoming a technology-driven nation. As the government endeavours to utilise Ghana's ICT sector to formalise the economy through digitisation, Richard Okyere-Fosu, Director General of NITA, says that digitisation is an enabler for the government and individuals alike. "One such project that we have undertaken involves assisting the government in its Ghana.gov portal (www.ghana.gov.gh)." Another example is the Smart WorkplaceTM innovation, which enabled public sector employees to work virtually during lockdown thereby reducing personal contacts and helping to curb the spread of the virus. Okyere-Fosu says, "As a result, there is now an e-cabinet, e-parliament and all of these e-solutions or e-initiatives aimed at streamlining processes so that interaction with citizens can be more open and transparent."

Setting up linkages between the public and private sector is key to foster a digital economy and Ghana continues to be at the forefront of these initiatives. NITA provides education and innovation that can help bring the public and private sectors together. Okyere-Fosu says, "At NITA, we work with the tech and fintech communities and provide standards for the public and private sectors. We are bringing out policies and frameworks to guide their operations and we intend to register in the short term IT professionals and companies." Okyere-Fosu says the seal of approval from the regulator gives people a sense of confidence when they work on government or private sector projects.

According to the IMF, Ghana is the third fastest growing economy in the world, yet there is still a need for private investment in order to support the country's development and implement sustainable development and a digital ecosystem. Some of the services NITA offers include data centre colocation services, infrastructure services, facility and support services, hybrid cloud services and security services.

Smart Infraco, a subsidiary of Ascend Digital Solutions Limited, is the technical partner of NITA. Their goal is to facilitate access to digital infrastructure for telecom and broadband service providers which will accelerate the widespread implementation of 3G and 4G services, leading the way to 5G. Michael Kwablah, Chief Technology Officer of Smart Infraco, says, "Our mission is to up skill and prime local talent to serve the critical requirements of Africa's burgeoning knowledge and information economy. We are also building technology and services driven platforms that leverage Africa's diverse and abundant human resources and collaborating with local governments to prepare them for digital transformation." Smart Infraco's journey began with the question of how to accelerate Africa's digital transformation on the cusp of Ghana's 4th Industrial Revolution. Kwablah explains. "Ascend Digital Solutions is an organisation that enables Africa's transformation into an ICT economy and empowers its citizens through increased financial inclusion and socioeconomic revitalisation; Smart Infraco came into being due to the collaboration between Ascend and TCTS."

One of Smart Infraco's main initiatives is to fill the digital gap in rural communities. Kwablah says, "Our partnership is aimed at increasing the number of telephony sites in our rural areas and assisting public institutions to have unrestricted access to voice and data services. This will facilitate high-quality, high-speed and wide-coverage connectivity, enabling express information-sharing in public institutions and rural areas." Such improvements will make Ghana an enabler of success, allowing private players to extend their networks and services. Kwablah continues, "Our international-standard services will also attract global investors' attention to the possibilities of investing in Ghana. We also work with local partners to increase our service portfolio to offer more innovative services that will expand our customer base and reshape the course of digital transformation in Africa."

Ghana's stride to digital inclusion is based on its ability to connect more people to high-speed broadband internet that is affordable, abundant and accessible. Current projects include the modernisation and upgrade of the Eastern Corridor fibre infrastructure from Accra to Bawku via the Tamale branch in the north of Ghana. At over 1,010 kilometres, the fibre backbone will serve all the eastern region and part of the North of Ghana. Kwablah says, "Ghana's ICT sector is growing, positively impacting and boosting the country's GDP rate. Smart Infraco's promise of value includes affordable, abundant and accessible internet connectivity and a full spectrum of reliable digital infrastructure services that deliver excellent competitive advantage."

Tata Communications Transformation Services (TCTS) is committed to improve the ICT ecosystem in Africa through innovative ways of building affordable and sustainable communication networks. Harkirit Singh, AVP & Cluster Head- Smart Africa of Tata Communications Transformation Services (TCTS), says, "We imbibe the philosophy of leadership with trust, and consider customer partnerships at the heart of all our engagements. We offer the unique multi-domain, multi-vendor, neutral player and the trusted partner options while delivering transformation projects."

Establishing connections between the public and private sector is key to accomplishing Ghana's digitalisation goals. Singh says, "TCTS has built a strong ecosystem of partners leveraging its global expertise as well as collaborating with local partners that are similarly committed to the building, deployment and operation of interconnectivity networks. In joining with local partners, TCTS commits to knowledge transfer to significantly help grow local expertise."

Moving forward, TCTS aims to be a leader in global 5G operations, end-to-end IoT orchestration and smart city management, analytics and AI-driven intelligent operations. Singh says, "The pace of ICT development, technology adoption and mobility will be the most powerful enabler for rapid socio-economic change and inclusive growth to propel every country as the fastest growing economy, steadily progressing on the way to prosperity."

Inter-Africa connectivity will play a pivotal role in building an integrated digital economy for the African continent. TCTS has unveiled 'The Interconnectivity Report' that reviewed Africa's digital infrastructure requirements and proposed building a next-generation, future-ready infrastructure that facilitates connectivity, e-governance and performance within Africa.

Through NITA's e-government initiatives, Smart Infraco's internet access penetration and TCTS' contributions to enabling digital infrastructure, Ghana is leading the way to prosperity, appearing as a world leader in digital technologies and platforms. Singh says, "I believe Ghana is poised to overtake some of the most powerful emerging economies of the world and catapult the entire African continent to an advanced digital league."

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