

Vodacom Group launches commercial 5G service in Lesotho

Vodacom Group announced that it has created Africa's first standards-based, commercial 5G service in Lesotho using 3.5GHz spectrum to initially deliver fixed-wireless access (FWA) broadband services to two enterprise customers in Lesotho.



Source: pixabay.com

The immediate benefit of 5G technology for Vodacom subscribers in Lesotho includes the quicker deployment of broadband services with fibre-like speeds. With early access to this new technology, entrepreneurs, industry shapers and government will in future be able to work with the network provider to develop and incubate innovative applications to power digital transformation in Lesotho.

Vodacom Group also announced that, in another first, it has deployed the same standards-based 5G technology in South Africa, with speeds in excess of 700mbps and latencies of less than 10 milliseconds¹. This will exceed 1Gbps as new software versions and devices become available.



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18 Jun 2018



Until such time as 3.5GHz spectrum becomes available to Vodacom South Africa, this network will not be available to its customers.

Shameel Joosub, chief executive officer at Vodacom Group, says, “Vodacom prides itself on being a market leader and we are extremely pleased to be first to deliver 5G services to customers in Africa. What we’ve accomplished in Lesotho is an example of what can be achieved in Africa, should the requisite spectrum also be made available.

Vodacom will be able to make 5G services available to its customers in South Africa once requisite spectrum is assigned. Global technological advancements are evolving at a rapid pace and South Africa can’t afford to be left behind, particularly when we look at some of the potential use cases for 5G to support critical sectors of our society such as healthcare and education.”



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Trevor Rajcoomar 12 Jul 2018



Vodacom Lesotho has been assigned spectrum in the 3.5GHz band, enabling the launch of a commercial 5G service. Vodacom South Africa has been granted a temporary spectrum license of 100MHz in the 3.5GHz band to showcase the same standards-based 5G network capabilities in South Africa.

Not dependent on the digital migration

The 3.5GHz spectrum band is considered optimal for 5G network deployments due to its suitability for throughput and capacity and it is not dependent on the digital migration in South Africa.

In addition, the 3.5GHz band has adequate indoor penetration characteristics and will lend itself in future to the facilitation of a broad range of consumer and business applications such as smart factories, augmented reality and autonomous vehicles.

Vodacom has deployed advanced 5G Active Antennae – also known as Massive MIMO (Multiple Input Multiple Output) - to provide improved spectral efficiency and coverage, enabling increased network capacity.

¹E2E latency – End-to-end latency refers to the time taken for information to be transmitted across a network from the source to the destination, including all intermediate elements such as the network.

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