The Always-On Africa is a matter of if, not when

With global cloud traffic expected to quadruple from current levels to 8.6 zettabytes (one zettabyte is equal to a billion terabytes), by the end of 2019, there is significant potential for Africa to capitalise on the move to Always-On. Gregg Petersen, regional director for MEA and the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation at Veeam Software, believes the African continent is well-poised to embrace changing business requirements for high availability.

"While infrastructure is one of the traditional bugbears in Africa, many countries have turned to wireless as a viable alternative to copper connections. This has enabled business to transform into Always-On operations by providing employees and other stakeholders with increased access to data using a myriad of devices."

A greenfield opportunity

Petersen says there has been a big play in Africa around alliance integration with the likes of HP, NetApp, and EMC doing more in their partner programmes.

"For many multinationals, Africa presents a greenfield opportunity. Service providers can come in and implement new technologies without being concerned about legacy solutions. They can therefore immediately virtualise their clients with the associated cost and efficiency benefits happening sooner rather than later."

For such an African expansion strategy to be successful, Petersen believes, a service provider needs to have a local

presence in the countries. People do not want to do things remotely.

"Emerging markets in Africa require a different strategy. Multi-nationals cannot simply bundle them together with countries in Europe with different operating environments and hope to be successful. It is about bridging the availability gap with a new breed of solution and a new way of doing business."

Always-One benefits

Petersen says the benefits of Always-On are becoming ever-more apparent.

"Always-On brings rapid growth. With the focus moving away from traditional mindsets, the transition to the modern data centre brings with it a breath of fresh air when it comes to data availability."

By being able to adopt new availability solutions almost immediately, approaches in those countries are lending themselves to be more conducive to Always-On. And with many vendors focusing on solutions that are easy to use, customers have the peace of mind that they can focus on meeting their business deliverables.

"We are entering an incredibly exciting time for the African continent. Significant opportunities are becoming available to solutions providers willing to cater for local nuances and therefore the shift to virtualisation is a case of when it will happen, rather than if," concludes Petersen.