



# DJIBOUTI TELECOM

A GATEWAY TO THE WORLD

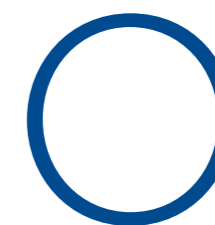


# A GATEWAY TO THE WORLD

*Technical Support Service Manager for International Business Development, Feisal Aden Darar discusses the progress Djibouti Telecom has made in becoming a telecommunications gateway to the rest of the world*

WRITTEN BY: **WILL DAYNES**  
RESEARCH BY: **JAMES BOYLE**





ver the course of the last 18 months,” explains Technical Support Service Manager for International Business Development, Feisal Aden

Darar, “we have been focusing on local and international trends to materialise our core goals. We have improved our Internet transit solutions by deploying Level 3 PoP, a world class Tier 1 and Saudi Telecommunication Company’s POP, with strong presence in the Middle East. In addition we have upgraded our existing Telecom Italia Sparkle node in terms of capacity and diversity.

“As a result of our gradual improvement we have 20 operators from 13 countries in East Africa that are currently transiting through the IP nodes in Djibouti with live traffic volumes of about 10 Gbps. In addition to all these PoPs we have developed Djibouti Telecom’s Pop that is sourced not only from all these IP transit providers but also from FT and Etisalat. With the combination of these advantages we can deliver premium service over diverse and redundant networks. Djibouti Telecom puts customer satisfaction first by anticipating its need and targeting beyond his expectation. Furthermore, since 2012 we also serve as a restoration path to East African operators during outages due to cables cut or maintenance.”

Founded in 1999, Djibouti Telecom’s primary target is to establish itself as a regional hub responsible for delivering a complete portfolio of voice, data/IP and capacity services over state-of-the-art network infrastructure that reaches out to eastern and southern Africa, the Middle East and Europe. This drive for





The General Manager at an international forum

international expansion comes on top of the fact that Djibouti Telecom remains the sole provider of telecommunications services in its home country.

Djibouti Telecom is recognised as being the international carrier with the strongest presence in eastern Africa. The company's customer base consists of telecommunications service providers and multinational organisations including international carriers, mobile and fixed telephony operators, internet service providers and major government and private sector clients.

At present the company has a total of five submarine cables running into the East of Africa and, as Feisal goes on to explain, plans are afoot for more infrastructure to be added in the very near future. "We are looking at introducing two additional cables, which we hope to have up and operational by the end of 2014. The presence of these new cables will further provide us with the ability to deliver to our customers the services that they require and to do so on a reliable basis, while also providing optimum availability."

The introduction of the newest cables will further cement Djibouti Telecom as having the highest number in East Africa. They also represent the company's continued progress towards becoming a gateway from East Africa to the rest of the world. "With the help of our geographical position and intercontinental submarine cable investments," Feisal says, "we have become the optimum gateway to Europe and Asia. We have a direct connectivity with almost 50 countries from Asia, Europe, Africa, New Zealand and Australia through our regional



Technical staff

and international infrastructures. Apart from the five international cables landing in Djibouti, two more are expected to be live by the last quarter of 2014, AAE1 and SMW-5. These upcoming cables will be equipped with latest technology and will further improve our diversity and redundancy."

Djibouti is an ideal location for satellite service given the low average rainfall. The Djibouti Telecom Teleport can be found within a five kilometre radius of the country's US

Army Base, the US Embassy and the Djibouti-Ambouli International airport. Located on Djibouti Telecom's fiber network the Djibouti fiber system also allows for connectivity to four submarine cable systems, EASSy, SEA-ME-WE 3, EIG and SEACOM.

Both Basic IP connectivity as well as international backhaul services are available from the teleport, while all critical systems are supported by redundant UPS power. The teleport also has redundant generators

**"WITH THE HELP OF OUR GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION AND SUBMARINE CABLE INVESTMENTS, WE HAVE BECOME THE OPTIMUM GATEWAY TO EUROPE AND ASIA"**

in the case of power outages. Additionally, an iDirect Chassis has been installed at the teleport and is capable of providing services on both existing antennas. The Teleport also offers both managed and hosting services, including space for hosting line cards.

While the company's own infrastructure has continued to grow and improve, the same cannot be said for several other countries in the East African region and this poses one of the biggest challenges to Djibouti Telecom.

Take Djibouti's neighbour Somalia for example. While it hugs a vast swath of coastline the country still lacks access to submarine cables, primarily due to the on-going political instability. To overcome this issue the company has commenced plans to provide terrestrial interconnectivity to the country, much like it does to landlocked neighbours such as Ethiopia. While terrestrial interconnectivity is much more susceptible to damage or incidents of sabotage, Djibouti Telecom has proven in Ethiopia that it is able to provide a stable service. Furthermore it hopes, in the near future, to roll out a similar offering to South Sudan.

Back in December 2012, Djibouti Telecom successfully launched a new 3.5G mobile service in Djibouti, thus augmenting its existing 2G GSM and 2.5G EDGE platforms.



Djibouti Telecom's Evatis sales agency

Going live on 27 December 2012, the new 3G+ network offers subscribers access to high speed mobile broadband, mobile as well as voice and SMS/MMS services. Djibouti Telecoms customers are also now able to access broadband on a range of devices including mobile phones, tablets and laptops.

From an international perspective the

company has also recently launched a new tier-three data centre in East Africa to provide direct access to its undersea cable systems. The Djibouti Data Centre (DDC) offers undersea cable head access and backhaul, interconnection, collocation and internet access and is located just metres from the company's new cable landing station.

The DDC offers international telecommunications carriers and content delivery network providers neutral collocation facilities, internet exchange and other connectivity services. "It is part of our long term vision for the DDC," Feisal continues, "to create a location from which we can provide all of the core services that our customers

require, thus making it a gateway to providing international services across Africa and into Asia and Europe. In doing so we also want to create a system that allows these customers to reduce their own costs while still ensuring the diversity and resiliency of what we provide."

Compared to its neighbours, Djibouti is a relatively small country with limited natural resources and a population of around one million people. As such national companies like Djibouti Telecom have grown up with a determination to help develop an economy that is funded almost exclusively by its port activities and telecommunications capabilities. This obligation, if you will, pushes companies like Djibouti Telecom

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to devise better services with the sole aim of attracting more customers to take advantage of the infrastructure that the country has to offer.

Demand for Djibouti Telecom’s services continues to increase rapidly and this demand is the core influence behind its push to expand and deploy the amount of resources that are required to cater for the needs of its customers.

“In Ethiopia for instance,” Feisal enthuses, “we expect to experience an exponential demand for the sort of services that we provide as the country grows and becomes more dependent on the services it derives from surrounding countries like Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti. It is a country that is very much looking to diversify its interconnectivity and to do so it will require the assistance of a provider who can provide the most reliable

“OUR INVESTMENT IN INTERNATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE HAS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN OUR SUCCESS TO DATE”



Entry of submarine cable



Backbone network being laid

and readily available service and that can drive the most capacity. Not only do we believe that we can provide this, but we are also looking to further develop our premium offerings for this very purpose.”

As the continent of Africa continues to develop and more and more nations begin to realise their social and economic potential it stands to reason that an industry as critical as telecommunications will only becoming more competitive in the years to come.

“Our investment in international infrastructure has played a major role in our success to date,” Feisal highlights. “Going forward our customers will have even more options when it comes to diversity and restoration from Djibouti and that enables us to be an ideal gateway for East African countries.”

With that in mind Feisal is aware of what Djibouti Telecom has to do during this time period. “What is going to be fundamental for us going forward is our ability to meet both new and growing trends in the market by providing premium quality services. What we know about our customers is that they are most concerned about quality, availability and cost, and the way we succeed where others do not is by remaining the best provider of these qualities in the marketplace.” **BE**

For more information about Djibouti Telecom visit:  
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[www.djiboutidatacenter.com](http://www.djiboutidatacenter.com)



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