

What does a cloud-connected Africa look like?

With a region as large and as vast as Africa, it is difficult to imagine a fully connected continent where every individual across all demographics, and every business across all sectors can harness the power of cloud computing. Yet as technology continues to drastically change how we conduct our lives and connect with the world around us, this notion of a cloud-connected Africa becomes far more plausible and realistic.



Marius Burger, Chief Information Officer at Seacom

In fact, many of us are already utilising cloud-enabled technologies on a daily basis. From cloud-based productivity apps to collaboration services like Microsoft Teams, the cloud is seamlessly integrating into our everyday lives. A future where a healthy cloud ecosystem is supported by integrated and innovative technologies is much closer than we think.

Enabling business continuity and growth

Given the current remote working environment, the value of cloud computing for local organisations can't be emphasised enough. Apart from its geo-agnostic nature, the cloud is the best fit for today's business landscape because of its scalability, flexibility and consumption-based charging model.

While being able to work from anywhere is key, this can be achieved through other, non-cloud-based technologies. However, the ability to rapidly implement and adapt in the cloud is what makes cloud-based solutions so valuable in our current business state. By driving efficiency and ensuring that employees are productive while working from home, cloud automation focuses workloads into the correct resource pools.

In turn, cloud services promote more streamlined operating systems and provide access to more markets and a wider range of service providers, helping companies reduce unnecessary costs and enable cost-effectiveness in the long run.

Connecting data centres to customers

As the demand for digital services continues to increase, the need for more processing power also grows, with more data centres setting up shop in our backyard. And, as more hyper-scalers position themselves in South Africa and throughout the continent, our technology industry is forced to find new solutions that will satisfy this hunger for the cloud. More sophisticated network architecture is required so that ISPs can find smarter ways to manage and orchestrate traffic between data centres and end-users.

Yet without reliable connectivity, no one can reach any cloud solutions, so there is also a responsibility on all ISPs to drive this penetration through Africa safely. Innovative products that are centred around cloud traffic are needed.

Thinking ahead

A fully connected Africa will, therefore, have intelligent networks, built on a foundation of stable and reliable facilities. In other words, the networking equivalent of a park-and-ride system with satellite navigation, ensuring traffic flow in peak hours and drivers finding the best routes to their destinations.

Reaching this desired connected state means a few critical things for our continent. Firstly, our connectivity will be on par with that of more developed countries. Secondly, it'll enable any business to utilise the cloud and tap into the benefits cloud computing unlocks, essentially allowing companies of all sizes in all sectors to do business easier. Thirdly, cloud capabilities will be able to be deployed closer to end-users, resulting in an increased uptake of cloud-based services for consumers.

Most importantly, however, a cloud-connected Africa could mean more job opportunities for parts of our population that previously couldn't access work. And for a continent with high levels of poverty and unemployment, this is a massive win.

If governments, businesses and entrepreneurs embrace the opportunities that the cloud provides, Africa could distinguish itself by using the cloud to drive growth and add value. As we look to the future and strive to build a more connected continent, partnering with a forward-thinking cloud provider that can assist your business in planning for tomorrow, while taking full advantage of the latest cutting-edge technology, is crucial.

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