



RÉPUBLIQUE TOGOLAISE

Ministère de l'Économie Numérique
et de la Transformation Digitale

Thursday, 14 January 2021

PRESS RELEASE

The Togolese Government passes innovative decree to accelerate deployment of high-speed fibre-optic network infrastructure nationwide

Lomé (Togo), 14 January 2021 – In a pioneering move to speed up the rollout of high-speed fibre-optic connectivity nationwide, the Togolese Government has passed the *decree n°2020-116/PR on the national deployment of fibre-optic network infrastructure*. This decree, which is the first of its kind in Africa, is aimed squarely at transforming the nation into a West African champion of high-speed fibre broadband coverage and a digital hub by the year 2025!

To achieve its goal, the new decree obligates all contractors (persons or organisations in charge of construction projects) to systematically deploy fibre-optic cabling during any new civil engineering work on large-scale infrastructural projects such as the extension of water and power distribution networks, roads, railways, harbours, and airports. These contractors are required by the decree to bear the costs of deploying said fibre-optic cabling on their sites. In addition, they must draw up accurate mappings of the cables deployed.

The fibre-optic infrastructure is deployed on behalf of the state-owned *Société d'Infrastructures Numériques* (Digital Infrastructure Company, or SIN) established by *decree n°2016-166/PR of 24 November 2016*. The SIN's mandate is to harmonise the management and leasing of fibre-optic infrastructure to telecoms operators in view of enabling open access and affordable services for the population.

The decree stipulates that fibre-optic deployments over pre-existing infrastructures (roads, electrical grid, etc.) will be funded by the SIN using state-mobilised resources.

Finally, the decree seeks to improve the quality of mobile connectivity by urging telecoms operators to connect all cell towers to the nearest fibre-optic network. This measure will boost the speed and reliability of mobile internet access, especially in rural areas across the country.

Cina Lawson, Minister of Digital Economy and Digital Transformation remarked, "*We are particularly pleased to see the adoption of this decree as it will facilitate our national digital development process. To achieve the government's roadmap, which places digitalisation at the heart of our country's growth, we must ensure the widespread availability of high-speed Internet access and the improvement of*

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mobile networks' quality of service. It is therefore urgent, now more than ever, to reduce deployment costs and to accelerate the extension of fibre-optic networks."

Zouréhatou Kassah-Traoré, Minister of Public Works said, "*The cost of deploying fibre-optics during road construction work is marginal. It is thus crucial to systemically include fibre-optic cable deployments during our road engineering works to effectively contribute to the development of the nation's digital infrastructure.*"

Bolidja Tiem, Minister of Water and Village Hydraulics said, "*Fibre-optics can be incorporated into new water distribution infrastructures at little cost. For us, it is a noble goal to converge our efforts to, at the same time as water, provide high-speed Internet to the population.*"

Mila Aziable, Minister of Energy and Mining remarked, "*There is a real convergence between electricity and telecommunications. Electrical distribution infrastructures are a natural vector for the delivery of high-speed broadband to companies and households. The extensive presence of fibre-optic links will promote the digitalisation of our electrical grid and thus improve quality of service. This synergy between the electrical and telecommunication sectors will play a decisive role to enhance our citizens' access to basic social services and ensure the harmonious development of Togo.*"

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