

## AfricaOnline appoints new MD

AfricaOnline, Ghana's ISP and a Gondwana International Networks (GIN) subsidiary, has appointed Foster Plender as its managing director. Plender, who was in a consulting capacity within GIN before his appointment, brings with him decades of telecommunications experience across both African and European markets.



Foster Plender, newly appointed managing director of AfricaOnline

“I am excited to lead AfricaOnline as it continues to grow and develop as one of Africa’s foremost Internet and related connectivity services providers. Having celebrated 21 years in its pivotal role, AfricaOnline has established itself as a leading Ghanaian business and I look forward to growing and evolving its service offering,” says Plender.

Ghana is showing signs of significant growth, Plender says the country is building itself into a key business hub for West Africa, “We are seeing an uptake in global investment, infrastructure development and an increase in Internet penetration. There is a definite uptake within vertical sectors as well as growth of last mile fibre and wireless technology, 4G mobile, and high throughput satellite deployments.”

He says that Ghana's role within the continent and as a hub for West Africa, will see services launch into landlocked and neighbouring countries: "We see immense potential taking our Internet and connectivity services to these markets. AfricaOnline will also look into moving beyond its core function of wireless, fibre optic and satellite services to address cybersecurity, cloud services and digitisation technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT)."

Through its new Ka-Band satellite broadband service, JOLA, powered by Avanti, Plender says that remote communities will benefit from access to the internet and bring along with it such opportunities as distance learning and telemedicine services as examples, "Our suite of services and solutions will assist Ghana to not only develop and grow but also play a pivotal role within the region."

According to Plender, vertical market growth will play an important role in the development of the Ghanaian economy. Transportation upgrades including rail, roads and the ports authority will immediately enable a business to flow more freely. He says that agriculture and fishing are other priorities, as well as oil, mining, and cocoa production.

"There are several NGOs operating from within Ghana as well as many countries such as the United Kingdom, China, Germany and Japan to name a few, who are making significant investments in the country."

Mathew Welthagen, GIN CEO, is delighted with Plender's appointment: "Foster brings years of telecommunications experience across many countries and regions to both AfricaOnline and the Group. We are excited to watch the Ghanaian business develop and grow under his leadership into a strong economic force within the African continent."

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