



Press Release

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Orange and Vodacom create a joint venture to expand network coverage in rural areas in the DRC

Orange and Vodacom have joined hands to form, a first of its kind, rural towerco partnership in Africa. Through this partnership, the companies will collaborate to build, own, and operate solar-powered mobile base stations in underserved areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The initiative will extend network coverage and enable access to telecommunications and mobile financial services to up to 19 million people in less densely populated rural communities, reinforcing their commitment to bridging the digital divide and driving inclusive growth.

Deploying and operating networks, particularly in deep rural areas, continues to be a significant challenge in the DRC. To bridge the digital divide and expand network coverage in underserved communities, the companies have pledged to jointly construct up to 2,000 new solar-powered base stations over six years, using 2G and 4G technologies. This agreement commences with an initial commitment of 1,000 sites after which Orange and Vodacom may scale the project by a further 1,000 towers. The completion of this joint venture remains subject to the approval of administrative, regulatory, and competition authorities.

Beyond enhanced population coverage, this combined investment will enable consumers to access voice, data, and mobile money services. With the first base station expected to start operating in 2025, Orange and Vodacom will be sharing active and passive equipment owned by the joint venture as anchor tenants for an initial term of 20 years. The joint venture will offer its passive infrastructure to any MNO interested wherever technically feasible to increase usage and promote a wider range of options for the population.

"With a footprint serving over 210 million customers across Africa, we have the opportunity to significantly contribute to the continent's socio-economic development by building a digital society and fostering inclusivity for all. This aligns with our purpose to connect for a better future, and our partnership with Orange is a crucial step towards providing mobile coverage to people in previously underserved areas in the DRC," says Shameel Joosub, CEO of Vodacom Group.

"Our longstanding presence in Africa, including over 10 years in the DRC, has equipped us with a deep understanding of the market and customer needs. Collaborating with Vodacom by sharing both passive and active infrastructure is the most effective approach to fulfilling our commitment to accelerating connectivity access for everyone, including rural areas, while

minimizing our environmental footprint.” says Orange Middle East and Africa CEO, Jérôme Hénique.

Mobile Internet penetration in the DRC is at 32.3% and Orange and Vodacom's announcement to construct new base stations in the country aligns with the country's new vision for the digital economy as included in the National Digital Plan Horizon 2025 adopted in 2019. The plan aims to foster digital transformation across various sectors, leading to improved public services, enhanced economic growth, and equitable access to digital services for all citizens. This initiative emphasizes e-citizenship, e-government, and e-commerce and is expected to contribute to job creation, bridge the digital divide, and boost the country's GDP.

For nearly 12 years, Orange RDC, a subsidiary of the Orange Group, has been connecting Congolese people through innovative connectivity solutions and a proactive corporate responsibility policy. As the first and only telecom operator in the DRC to offer fiber to its subscribers and a pioneer in launching new technologies, Orange RDC plays a key role in the country's economic and human development. The company is committed to digital and social inclusion, with initiatives such as the Orange Digital Center & Clubs in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Matadi, and Kananga, which provide free digital training to thousands of young Congolese. Today, it has over 15 million subscribers across the country, with more than 3,400 sites, over 90% of which are 4G-enabled.

About Orange

Orange is one of the world's leading telecommunications operators with revenues of 39.7 billion euros in 2023 and 128,000 employees worldwide at 30 September 2024, including 71,000 employees in France. The Group has a total customer base of 292 million customers worldwide at 30 September 2024, including 253 million mobile customers and 22 million fixed broadband customers. These figures have been restated to account for the deconsolidation of certain activities in Spain following the creation of MASORANGE. The Group is present in 26 countries (including non-consolidated countries).

Orange is also a leading provider of global IT and telecommunication services to multinational companies under the brand Orange Business. In February 2023, the Group presented its strategic plan "Lead the Future", built on a new business model and guided by responsibility and efficiency. "Lead the Future" capitalizes on network excellence to reinforce Orange's leadership in service quality.

Orange is listed on Euronext Paris (symbol ORA).

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About Vodacom

Vodacom Group is a leading and purpose-led African connectivity, digital and financial services company. The Group, including Safaricom, serves over 210 million customers spanning across the consumer and enterprise segments. From our roots in South Africa, we have grown our business to include operations in the DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Tanzania. Our mobile networks cover a total population of over 500 million people. Vodacom is majority-owned by Vodafone (65.1% holding), one of the world's largest communications companies by revenue.

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