



East African
Communications
Organisation

Communications for all in East Africa

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NEWSLETTER

**EACO Members Committed
to the Allocation of Radio
Spectrum at WRC-19**

**Digital Learning in
Response to COVID-19**

**Promoting Satellite
Technology in East Africa**

**How the EAC leverage ICT
solutions to mitigate spread
of COVID-19**

Editorial

East African Communications Organisation (EACO) has a core mission of harmonising ICT policy and regulatory frameworks in East Africa. In addition, EACO works to promote the development of telecommunications, broadcasting and postal sectors, and devising ways and means to achieve fast, reliable, secure, affordable and efficient communication services within the East African region.

EACO recognizes the role of ICT as a main driver of the East African economy, which effectively offers solutions to a wide range of problems, and it's crucial to fast-tracking the economic growth and ensuring sustainable development. EACO has therefore embarked on some regional projects to enhance ICT in the region. Some of these project include; Development of an E-waste strategy and implementation of a regional Data bank.

The COVID -19 pandemic which broke out early this year, clear showed the need of ICTs world over. Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, the Governments in the East African region have adopted many measures, including ICT solutions to slow down the spread of COVID-19 pandemic that was confirmed mid-March this year.

This Edition of the EACO Newsletter will look at COVID-19 pandemic effects on the East African Region economy in general and review the ICT interventions by different regional governments to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. Other stories covered in this edition include Spectrum as a key ICT driver and outcomes of the WRC-19.

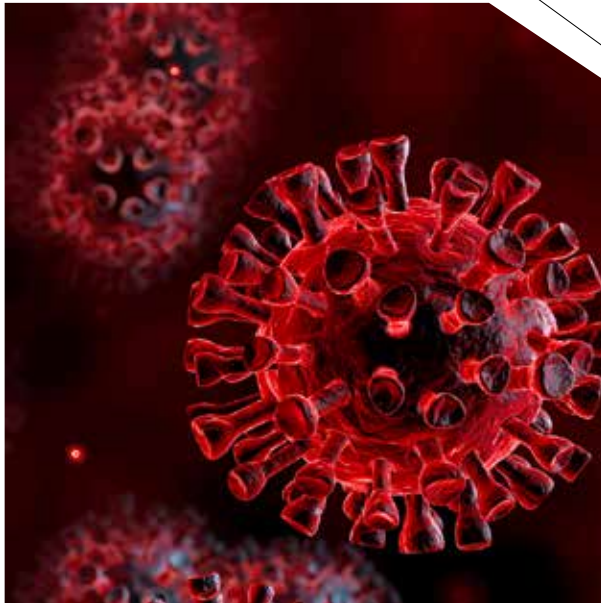


Vision Mission

“Access to communication services for all in East African region”

“Coordination of development of the communications sector through harmonization of policy and regulatory frameworks in the East African Community”.

Contents



How the EAC leverage ICT solutions to mitigate spread of COVID-19



EACO Members Committed to the Allocation of Radio Spectrum at WRC-19

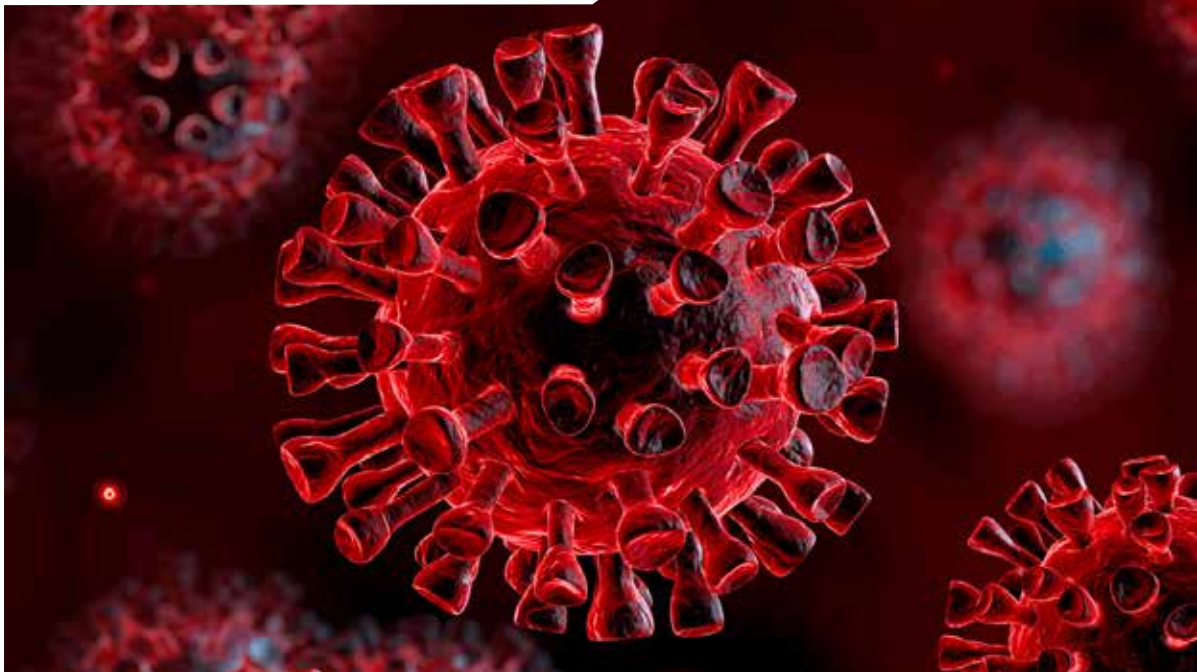


Digital Learning in Response to COVID-19

Promoting Satellite Technology in East Africa

EACO Upcoming Online Meeting

How the EAC leverage ICT solutions to mitigate spread of COVID-19



In response to the crisis, most EAC partner states adopted ICT solutions and encouraged players from both the production and consumption sides to leverage ICT solutions to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

C COVID-19 has affected nearly 215 countries and territories around the world. By 23rd September 2020 there were approximately 31.6 million cases, 21.8 Million recoveries and 971,000 deaths had been recorded worldwide.

Aside from causing loss of lives, the COVID-19 pandemic has grossly affected and continues to pose deleterious effects on country economies.

Measures put in place to combat the spread of COVID-19 impedes movement and interactions among people as the virus mainly spreads from person to person through mainly physical contact with infected

persons. With the exception of a few partner states the lockdowns and quarantining of border districts affected trade between countries. The closure of borders and airports aggravated the economic situation with many companies facing closure while several others cut down on the numbers of employees.

Most East African Community (EAC) partner states have adopted ICT solutions to mitigate further spread of the COVID-19.

In response to the crisis, most EAC partner states adopted ICT solutions and encouraged players from both the production and



consumption sides to leverage ICT solutions to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“ICT facilitating a swift to cashless economy”

- » After health experts had confirmed that physical money could be one of the vehicles for transferring the COVID-19 in communities, the governments and stakeholders like telecommunications services providers operating in the EAC

region encouraged the people to use alternate modes of making payments for services. As we entered year 2020, the governments in the EAC region were on high alert and come up with measures to prevent further spread of the Coronavirus, including a swift from a cash economy to cashless economy.

- » With limitation to physical interaction, development and use of Online portals as well as digital apps is on the rise amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.
- » Virtual Meetings and workshops have become a new normal. A number of organizations and entities are holding a number their meeting online which would have ordinarily have been physical.



The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized that ICTs are essential services for our development and livelihoods. Policy makers should therefore work to ensure that everyone in EAC has access to ICT facilities.

EACO recognizes that there is still room for harmonization of strategies and measures to guard against further spread of the virus.

Digital Learning in Response to COVID-19



East African Community (EAC) partner states have leveraged digital learning to cope with the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 pandemic on education. After the closure of schools between March-June in most of the East African countries, it was crystal clear that the right to education for millions of children in the region remained in total jeopardy a situation that called for urgent interventions.

The pandemic, also, posed a threat to access to education and quality of learning, and regional

governments envisaged a pending upsurge in school dropout rates and inequality gaps.

With the support of key stakeholders like UNESCO the education sectors in the region, developed COVID-19 education plans that involved the utilization of radio and TV content as well as raising awareness on the use of mobile phones, computers, iPads and laptops to facilitate students' learning in their homes.

To increase effectiveness of digital learning, governments sensitized parents and communities to help students access the lessons to mitigate the effects of schools' closures that authorities enforced as one of the prevention measures of further spread of the novel Coronavirus that was confirmed in the region in March, 2020.

EXAMPLES OF USE OF THE BROADCASTING MEDIA

Broadcasting media television and radio have been a key avenue used to provided learning



material. Broadcasting has been a more common approach given its wide coverage in the most countries in East Africa.

In South Sudan, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction launched a distance learning programme to facilitate students' learning while at home. The programme caters for lessons in core subjects (English, Mathematics and Science) delivered through radios and TV.

The Kenyan government in partnership with the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) launched platforms as early as 23rd March 23, 2020, facilitated by media houses like Taifa, Iftini FM and others, with broadcast educational programmes to aid digital learning. The Education TV owned by Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development (KICD), also, started special education broadcasts via its Edu Channel TV, and enabled access to schedules through its website.

In Rwanda, the government made similar efforts. Since 4th April, 2020 the Rwanda Education Board (REB) has been promoting digital learning for particularly English, Mathematics and Elementary Sciences. The national broadcaster and community radios in the Secondary cities of Rubavu, Huye, Rusizi, Nyagatare and Musanze air lessons for 6 hours a week.

Radio and TV were used by Tanzania and Uganda to promote access to digital learning. For example, the Education Sector Taskforce under the Tanzania Education Ministry developed a concept note and work plan,

which explicitly shows how to develop and rollout distance learning programmes to Pre-Primary, Primary, and Secondary students via radio and television, among others.

Digital learning has also been provided via the internet. And Learning material have been made available via online platforms.

KEY CHALLENGES

Employing digital learning has exposed a number of challenges in the East African region:

- » Affordability of the internet and digital devices
- » Infrastructure gaps in some areas of East Africa affect availability of ICT services that aid digital learning
- » Limited Awareness and digital skills among the people poses a challenges to fully harness digital learning

The East African region, purposes at closing the digital gap and addressing the ICT challenges that have affected the digital learning. EACO recognizes that harmonisation of ICT policies and regulatory frameworks in the region will in tandem have a positive effect on areas such as digital learning.

EACO under WG02 had developed a Digital Inclusion Strategy that aims to ensure reliable and affordable ICT services are available for the people in East Africa.





EACO Members committed to the Allocation of Radio Spectrum at WRC-19

The World Radio Conference (WRC) is the conference where international recommendations and deliberations are made on how radio spectrum is allocated for appropriate usage.

Africa depends heavily on wireless connectivity for ICT networks. This makes Radio spectrum a vital resource for ICT development in Africa given that all both satellite and terrestrial networks rely on availability of radio spectrum

The World Radiocommunication Conference 2019 (WRC 19) took place in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt held from 28th October - 22nd November, 2019. The WRC-19 resolved to continue playing a role in helping to fast-track of the Sustainable Development Goals including providing a solid foundation to support a wide range of emerging technologies.

The East African region ensured to adequately prepare for the WRC-19. EACO organized a number of preparatory meetings prior to WRC-19. It was through these preparatory meetings that common positions to the Agenda items of the WRC-19 were developed.

EACO members under the leadership of Mr. Andrew Kisaka from TCRA, showed great diligence being at the forefront of discussion and debates of radio spectrum and ensuring that the East African region registered wins at the Conference.

SOME WRC-19 OUTCOMES¹

- Additional globally harmonised spectrum was identified for IMT-2020 (5G) to facilitate advanced mobile broadband
- New orbital slots were opened up for broadcasting satellite, to which priority access was given to developing countries to regain access to spectrum orbit resources with the view of replacing the severely degraded plans
- Earth stations in motion will enable connectivity in planes, ships, and trains
- Identified additional spectrum for HAPs (High Altitude Platforms)
- Satellite services supporting meteorology and climatology that aim to safeguard human life and natural resources will be protected from harmful radio-frequency interference,
- Resolution approved on Railway radiocommunication systems to facilitate the deployment of railway train and trackside systems to meet the needs of a high-speed railway environment;
- A new Recommendation was approved on Intelligent Transport Systems towards connecting vehicles, improving traffic management and assisting safe driving.

¹ Source: https://www.itu.int/en/itu/news/Documents/2019/2019-06/2019_ITUNews06-en.pdf

Promoting Satellite Technology in East Africa



In order to achieve its objectives EACO coordinates various regional program and projects aimed at the development of the communications sector in the region. The projects and programmes enhance regional integration through collaboration by the key stakeholders in the region and mobilizing resources for those programmes.

Therefore, one of the projects EACO would like to promote in the satellite technology.

Satellite technologies are among the key enablers in achieving the sustainable development goals and addressing with the digital divide.

Members of EACO Working Group 5 held a three-day meeting in Kigali, Rwanda from 21st - 22nd January 2020 to discuss and deliberate on approaches to promote satellite and Space technologies in the region.

One of the outcomes of the meeting was a concept paper on a cubesat project. The main goal of having a regional EACO CubeSat project would be to plant a seed for innovation and investment in the Satellite and Space sector in the EAC region.

2019 EACO landmark activities in pictures



23rd EACO Congress and 26th EACO Assemblies (Tanzania)



4th Regional E-waste workshop (Burundi)

2019 EACO landmark activities in pictures



23rd EACO Congress and 26th EACO Assemblies (Tanzania)



Crossborder Coordination Exercise



Courtesy Visit from ERICSSON



Courtesy Visit from AFRALTI



EACO members at SPIDER Capacity Building



WG5 meeting in Kigali (Rwanda)

CALENDAR OF EACO EVENTS 2020/2021

TITLE OF MEETINGS/TRAINING/ WORKSHOP	DATES	VENUE
The Sustainable E-waste Management Webinar	13 th October 2020	Online
The 3 rd International E-waste Day	14 th October 2020	Online
EACO/GSMA Spectrum Workshop	22 nd October 2020	Online
EACO WTSA-20 Preparatory Meeting	26 th October 2020	Online
EACO WRC-23 Preparatory Meeting	12 th November 2020	Online
Workshop on Addressing & Postcodes System	18 th November 2020	Online
Broadcasting workshop	3 rd December 2020	Online
EACO Excellence Awards 2019	2021 Date to be Confirmed	Arusha, Tanzania
The 1 st Annual East African Post & Logistics Forum (EPLF)	2021 Date to be Confirmed	Nairobi, Kenya
Training on Cybersecurity	2021 Date to be Confirmed	Arusha, Tanzania
24 th EACO Congress and 27 th Annual Assemblies	June 2021 Date to be Confirmed	Online



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