



Overview of Assessment and Identification of the Most Appropriate Commonwealth African Country in which to Pilot Iceni Mobile's Rural Connectivity Solution for Iceni Mobile

Recent innovation trends in the mobile phone ecosystem have changed the way people use their phones while on the move. People have learnt to access a diverse and great range of useful added services through their mobile phones. Today, there are a number of value added services accessible and enabled by recent mobile platform technology developments and innovations. One company that has successfully developed a platform to support Value Added Services is Iceni Mobile. Before the tremendous success of Iceni Mobile's enabled M – Pesa Service in Kenya, the CTO was looking to contribute to improving m-content development in Africa, and conducted a study to determine the best country to pilot an Iceni Mobile solution. This study had an objective to investigate opinions and attitudes of key stakeholders in Commonwealth African countries and make recommendations to Iceni about the most appropriate country to pilot an Iceni Mobile solution.

The findings of the study are based on factors like phone ownership and usage, policy and regulatory environment and rural connectivity projects to name a few. The CTO hopes that the findings and observations presented in this study will contribute to other mobile projects occurring in the Commonwealth and worldwide.

Key Observations and Recommendations:

1. There is widespread mobile ownership even in poorly served communities. Also, a complementary relationship exists between use of private and public phones exists i.e. they are not mutually exclusive. Evidence collected during the study indicated that if Iceni Mobile developed a public access terminal to be used on their network extension, it will be patronized.
2. Consultations with stakeholders indicate that mobile penetration in rural areas would increase if the mobile operators were able to provide rural users with tariffs that took into account their relatively low incomes.
3. Financial services were considered more important than agricultural services by respondents. Recommendations were made to Iceni Mobile to consider providing a range of financial services to users, including its money transfer offering.
4. Few key stakeholders believe that a volatile oil market would negatively affect mobile roll-out. Indeed, most felt that operators should make provisions for the increased OPEX associated with diesel generators. Despite this consensus, it is clear that low power consumption GSM infrastructure and devices will become increasingly important in the coming months and years.