
Awards Category: **3. Best product or service to Connect the Unconnected**

Project Title: **WiFi Bus**

Project Description:

The City of Tshwane is the first metropolitan municipality in South Africa to roll out Free WiFi. With the vision of bringing WiFi within walking distance of every citizen in South Africa's Capital City, Project Isizwe is a non-profit organisation working alongside local government to turn this into a reality for the City's 2.9 million people.

Since its inception in 2013, Tshwane Free WiFi - the collaborative partnership project between the City and Project Isizwe - has deployed 752 Free Internet Zones (FIZ) across Tshwane's public spaces predominantly in the low-income, township communities, in a large-scale attempt to bridge the digital divide. To date, 1.9 million users have successfully connected to the internet.

Project Isizwe's non-profit structure allows the organisation to pool bandwidth and utilise the capacity of local internet service providers without incurring the the traditional excessive mark-ups associated with enabling connectivity. The organisation's commitment to building collaborative working relationships with service providers in a way that facilitates development as a priority, has made the roll-out of connectivity affordable and possible for the City of Tshwane.

Like any big city, people in Tshwane are on the move. In December 2014, the City's Bus Rapid Transit system, A Re Yeng, was launched. With the bus transport service, Project Isizwe switched on WiFi Bus - a world-first in mobile connectivity, with the rollout of uninterrupted Free WiFi for commuters on board.

As an extension of the City of Tshwane's Free WiFi network, the A Re Yeng busses are equipped with the technology to provide 500MB of Free WiFi to each user. 350 000 connected commuters receive a free, uninterrupted online experience, with the ability to look for jobs, access learning materials and keep in touch with their friends while on the move around the city.

This innovative system makes use of the Radwin Mobility Solution, with more than 9 kilometres of fibre optic cable strung along the transit route, creating a dedicated high speed backhaul for the specialised, high capacity Radwin base stations. On the bus itself, a Radwin Vehicular Mobile Unit (VMU) connects to the mobility wireless canopy and provides backhaul to the Ruckus Wireless R300 access point. This in turn delivers the Tshwane Free WiFi to the end user devices.

“Onboard the buses passengers have access to connectivity. Connectivity remains uninterrupted so you are able to do your assignments, [send and receive] email and communicate with friends at no cost. So that is the true value,” Kgosientso Ramokgopa, City of Tshwane’s Executive Mayor.

“In today’s connected world, access to the internet is essential and should be available to everyone - regardless of circumstances. With the Free WiFi on busses initiative, Project Isizwe and Radwin are helping bridge the digital divide by allowing passengers to access information, education and jobs online, on-the-go,” Alan Knott-Craig Jr., Founder of Project Isizwe.

“Radwin and Project Isizwe are excited to play a key role in the City of Tshwane’s Free Wi-Fi initiative. FiberinMotion connects buses on-the-move to the city’s internet backbone, enabling commuters to benefit from wireless connectivity where and when they need it,” Peter Turvey, Radwin’s General Manager, Middle East, South and East Africa.