

business

Greater Masaka to access e-Government network

Impact. Move meant to reduce cost of operations for public institutions.

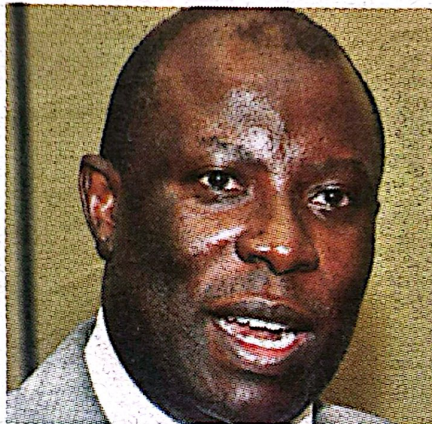
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MASAKA. Government has finalised arrangements to connect districts in greater Masaka sub-region to the national data transmission backbone infrastructure, also known as e-Government network.

In 2011, government through the National Information Technology Authority (NITA), undertook to implement the national data transmission project, a move that would help improve collection of data of public importance and interconnect government agencies to create a faster and reliable communication cycle.

According to Mr James Saaka, the executive director NITA, after completing the first two phases of the project which included connecting 27 government ministry headquarters and public offices in Kampala and other 22 districts, they are going to take on the greater Masaka sub-region up to the Uganda-Tanzania border.

The project, being executed by a Chinese company, Huawei, involves fixing internet fibre cables in selected



NITA executive director James Saaka. FILE PHOTO

areas on top of setting up regional internet transmission and operation sites.

Mr Saaka said they are also looking to connect key government agencies such as the Police, Judiciary, Uganda National Roads Authority and Uganda Revenue Authority offices, and universities among other public institutions in the area, to the national backbone infrastructure which will help improve services delivery.

TARGETED DISTRICTS

The districts to benefit from the project include Mpigi, Kalungu, Masaka, Lwengo, Lyantonde, Rakai, Sembabule and Bukomansimbi.

"In areas that are already connected to the backbone, the cost of internet has been reduced from \$600 to \$300 (around Shs2m to 1m) per month. We hope after connecting the whole country, we shall be in position to help government save more money and invest in other priority sectors," he told a stakeholders' meeting in Masaka recently.

The same phase will also include building a fibre highway to Mbarara-Kabale up to Katuna at the Uganda-Rwanda border.

"This highway will also help promote the use of e-procurement system in this area which is also cost effective and non-time consuming mode of making business," he added.

Mr Saaka said because the projects required digging of trenches and erecting poles to transmit the fiber cables, they are currently engaging local leaders to help create community pro-activeness towards ensuring security and safety of the equipment and installations.

Mr Robert Benon Mugabi, the Rakai District chairperson, said rolling out the new technology will help them reduce the high costs incurred in transport since they will be able to transact business with very little or no movement at all.

The project is expected to cost government about \$70m (Shs24.9b) which is a concessional loan from China.

EAST AFRICA

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