



## WIOCC Group appoints Mohammed Bouhelal to help accelerate the DRC's digital transformation

**Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023** – WIOCC Group, Africa's converged open-access digital infrastructure leader, has brought in experienced senior connectivity and data services professional Mohammed Bouhelal to establish its presence in the DRC – an important new market for the company, with the potential to become one of the fastest-growing digital economies on the African continent.



Mohammed Bouhelal, Managing Director of Open Access Data Centres DRC

Mohammed will work with major enterprises in DRC, particularly within the banking, insurance and financial services sectors - as well as international and local carriers, cloud operators, content providers, fixed-line and mobile telcos, and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) - to help them take advantage of the wealth of opportunities presented by the country's improving access to digital infrastructure and enhanced international connectivity.

*"I want to establish WIOCC Group, the parent company of Africa's digital hyperscale carrier [WIOCC](#) and the continent's fastest-growing data centre company, Open Access Data Centres ([OADC](#)), as the leading enabler to the DRC's digital transformation",* stated Mr Bouhelal, Managing Director of OADC DRC, a WIOCC Group Company.

### **Unique converged open digital infrastructure offering**

Bouhelal added: *"Our unique converged, open-access digital infrastructure (CODI) offering - carrier-neutral, open-access data centre facilities connecting to resilient, hyperscale, open-access, subsea and terrestrial networks - and a rich, vibrant digital ecosystem will help boost the DRC's economy and will expedite digital transformation in the country".*

### **DRC's first open-access, carrier-neutral data centre**

WIOCC Group is building the DRC's first open-access, carrier-neutral data centre, OADC Kinshasa, which will stimulate the country's digital ecosystem and economy by delivering converged open digital infrastructure services, including tailored colocation and reliable connectivity, when it goes live later this year.

Located in Kinshasa, within TEXAF's Silkin Village - one of the largest digital hubs in Central Africa – the 2MW-capable OADC Kinshasa is a partnership between transformational pan-African data centre operator, OADC, and TEXAF, a major long-term investor in the DRC's economy.

As the first third-party colocation data centre in the country, OADC Kinshasa is a strategic foundation for digital infrastructure improvement in the DRC, which the World Bank reported<sup>1</sup> was one of the most under-developed digital economies in Africa. It will not only offer businesses a viable alternative to self-build and self-manage data centre facilities, with all the dedicated resource, expertise, management time and cost benefits that come with that, but also support the cloud infrastructure needs of a wide range of businesses and enterprises, enabling them to improve efficiency, expedite digitisation initiatives and more effectively service business and customer needs. Carriers too will benefit, because OADC Kinshasa offers them connectivity revenue opportunities and the opportunity to extend their service portfolios, by including a managed colocation service capability.

Within the open-access, carrier-neutral facility, WIOCC will create a unique and vibrant digital ecosystem – including international cloud operators, content providers, multiple carriers and ISPs – that will transform the country's digital infrastructure ecosystem.

As the country's first open access, carrier neutral data centre, OADC Kinshasa is expected to be influential in stimulating the country's internet penetration growth, which was only 17.4%<sup>2</sup> at the start of 2022, compared to 43% for Africa as a whole and 68.6% for the rest of the world.

The quality of the facility, which will be Tier-III Certified by the Uptime Institute, together with its vibrant interconnect ecosystem, will draw key cloud and content services into the DRC. Improved access to connectivity, cloud and internet services is expected to increase consumer use of online applications such as Facebook. In April 2022, only 5.4%<sup>3</sup> of the DRC population subscribed to Facebook, compared to 18.6% for Africa as a whole and 38.1% for the rest of the world.

Kinshasa-based Mohammed, formerly CEO of fibre company Benya DRC and before that CEO of Liquid Telecom Sudan, will be supported in his work to help accelerate the DRC's digital transformation by DRC telecoms sector specialist Huguette Kalala, Country Marketing Manager - DRC.

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### **About WIOCC Group**

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<sup>1</sup> ['Democratic Republic of Congo: Digital Economy Assessment'](#) – World Bank Group, 2020

<sup>2</sup> [InternetWorldStats](#), 2022

<sup>3</sup> [InternetWorldStats](#), 2022

WIOCC Group is the parent company of Group companies [WIOCC](#), Africa's digital hyperscale carrier, and Africa's fastest-growing and award-winning data centre company, [Open Access Data Centres \(OADC\)](#).

WIOCC Group is pioneering and accelerating Africa's digital transformation, creating an environment in which all Africans can take advantage of world-class technology developments to build better lives, better businesses and a better world.

It is achieving this by deploying converged open-access digital infrastructure across Africa; infrastructure that will expedite and underpin Africa's digital transformation.