

# Zinia's call to Government: empower municipalities now!

Internet service provider Zinia has thrown down the gauntlet to the telecommunications industry and Government to take faster action and make last mile internet connectivity for South African municipalities a reality.



Warren Bonheim, CCO of Zinia.

On the back of the announcement by Cabinet to fast-track the roll out of broadband in the SA Connect policy, Warren Bonheim, CCO of Zinia, says it is time to move from politics to delivery.

“The commitment to broadband rollout has been dragged out over the years. This has left many municipalities, who are not in major metropolitan areas, in the dark ages relying on analogue dial-up,” he says.

“To put this in context, a consumer on his/her mobile can get six times more speed than an entire municipal department. I think it is time to talk delivery,” says Bonheim. “The reality is that no single network will be able to cover all municipalities in all areas: the decision to go with one provider will result in the same bureaucratic politicking, all hot air and no action.”

He cites comments made in the media which stated that all voting stations would have connectivity in the latest municipal elections – but the reality is that most voting stations outside of key metros had old infrastructure and poor to little connectivity.

## Opening up the network

His call to Government and newly elected mayors is clear: to empower municipalities to engage with local ISPs to enable faster deployment of connectivity. There are many solutions which can be rolled out quickly and cost effectively to get municipalities better service to drive local government efficiency,” he says. And to the telecommunications industry, Bonheim believes that they need to come to the party to make last mile internet more cost-effective.

Bonheim says that a strategic action plan using a handful of ISPs can get all municipalities 5Mbps delivered within six months. “Yet if one provider owns the entire project the likelihood of failure is high. By working together with a combination of fibre, microwave and wireless or even a worst case scenario of uncapped 3G or LTE would be the better route to go. The industry has done it for corporates so why not municipalities?”

He believes it is about the industry’s willingness to get it done and high levels of bureaucracy that is hampering progress.

“The more we open the network up to more players, the better it will be for our country. If government and municipalities would award a few businesses in each region to deliver together, the problem would be resolved quickly – not only empowering businesses but also local municipalities.”

He also explains that once municipalities are connected they could become a connectivity hub for surrounding small business, improving revenues to the municipality as well as servicing small businesses.”

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>