

PowerTel rolls out 3G network

By [Sam Hungwe](#)

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Zimbabwe's cable telecommunication firm, PowerTel, has rolled out a 3G network after the country's telecommunications regulator granted 3G licences to all telecommunications players in December.

But PowerTel's 3G system is targeted at clients wanting to access the internet through the PC or laptops, unlike the cell phone-based 3G systems expected to be rolled out by the country's three mobile networks.

PowerTel had spent US\$4,4 million for the installation of 3G network services, which is currently accessible to subscribers from Harare. An official said they hoped to spread to other cities and towns outside Harare soon.

Zimbabwe's telecommunications regulator, the Post and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ) granted 3G licences to the three mobile operators and PowerTel in mid-December through an amendment to their operating licences.

The operators will also be allowed to offer Voice Over Internet Protocol services.

"The amendment of licences will enable operators to offer new services which are covered by the current legislation, but restricted by their current licence documents," the regulator said in a statement.

Econet Wireless, the biggest of the three mobile networks, says it had completed the installation of 3G base stations on its network last year, but was unable to switch on the service because the regulator had not allocated it the required radio spectrum.

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