

Airtel to invest in Rwanda

Manoj Kohli, CEO international and joint managing director of Bharti Airtel, has met with the president of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, to discuss the telecommunication company's progress in the country. The courtesy visit comes two months after Airtel launched [operations in Rwanda](#), expanding Airtel's footprint on the continent.



L to R: Manoj Kohli and Paul Kagame

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During the conversation with president Kagame, Kohli reinforced the teleco's commitment to work with the government in supporting the knowledge-based economy. Airtel plans to invest US\$100 million in its operations over the next three years and will work towards generating both direct and indirect employment opportunities within its ecosystem. The company is expected to bring in partners like IBM and Ericsson to set up and manage world-class facilities in the country.

Making telecommunications a priority

Commenting on the visit, Kohli explained, "Rwanda is a promising telecommunications market and we are grateful to the government and people of Rwanda for the support extended to us since our entry into the country."

"Our strategy for Rwanda is in harmony with the government's vision to make telecommunications a priority," he continued. "We plan to work closely with the government to provide access to affordable telecoms products and services across the country."

Rwanda is among the fastest growing telecom markets in Africa and, according to the National Statistics Institute of Rwanda, mobile penetration in the country was at 38.4% as of July 2011. Airtel was awarded a license by the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Agency (RURA) late last year to operate 2G and 3G GSM mobile services.

Kohli said Airtel's overall strategy remains in line with that of the government, by ensuring that the Airtel network is extended to rural communities, ensuring convenient access to telecommunication services.

Plans to launch 3G services

Kohli also explained that although Kigali is currently operating on a 2G network, the company also plans to launch 3G services in the market within the upcoming quarter. The launch of Airtel's 3G platform will help stimulate change to how subscribers experience the web on internet-enabled devices technology will be beneficial for a variety of users, which include large corporates, small or medium businesses and the youth.

In addition, the organisation is committed to the development of a wireless broadband infrastructure. Wireless broadband is technology that provides high-speed wireless internet access or computer networking access over a wide area.

Consumers to benefit from Airtel Money

Rwanda is also expected to benefit from Airtel's mobile commerce platform - Airtel Money. The service will allow consumers and communities to take advantage of the mobile commerce reality sweeping through the industry by enabling them to conduct a range of financial transactions quickly and easily. Targeted at both banked and unbanked customers, Airtel Money will enable customers to make affordable, fast and secure financial transactions including direct fund transfers from one user to another, bill payments, top ups and mobile banking.

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