

FNB's eWallet shows strong growth in Africa

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First National Bank's eWallet continues to show strong growth in its African operations with a 119% year-on-year increase. It has also maintained growth in SA with the total number of eWallets in all countries reaching 2.5m, an 84% increase from the previous financial year.



Strong growth for FNB's eWallet in Africa. Image: [Everything.co.za](#)

The eWallet was launched in 2009 as part of FNB's strategy to increase the accessibility of financial services to all South Africans. According to the Mobility 2012 report by World Wide Worx, 51% of the mobile money users in SA were FNB eWallet users. Mobile money involves the use of a cellphone to transfer funds between people and bank accounts, to deposit or withdraw money, to pay bills or to buy services such as airtime and pre-paid electricity.

At a presentation in Cape Town last week, Yolande van Wyk, chief executive of eWallet solutions at FNB, said that the success of eWallet in SA and in the rest of the continent proved there was a growing need to send money easily and instantly. She said over the past financial year alone, over R3.2bn had been sent into eWallets across countries in which the service is available. These include SA, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, Lesotho and Zambia.

Botswana, Namibia show growth

"Outside SA, two countries in particular had shown high customer acceptance," Van Wyk said. "Both Namibia and Botswana's growth has exceeded expectations with about 17% of citizens in Botswana and, in less than a year, more than 5% of the population in Namibia receiving money in an eWallet," she said.

"The growth of eWallet in the African subsidiaries has been a lesson in how local conditions (influence) how people adopt and use a service. We have noticed that Botswana and Namibia's low population density contributes to the take-up. With a population density of less than four people per square kilometre in both these countries, there is clearly a need to send money across a distance, and eWallet has fulfilled this need," Van Wyk said.

Building the business in Africa

She said that in SA there were no discernible corridors as eWallet users tend to send money within a region or province, with Gauteng being the predominant province from which people are sending and receiving money.

"Outside of Namibia and Botswana we are still building the eWallet business. Some of our (businesses in) countries such as Zambia and Lesotho are relatively young, and we believe that eWallet will support the growth of the bank in those countries," Van Wyk said.

"Also with the expansion of our ATM network, as well as new technologies such as the Slimline ATMs, we have the potential to grow the eWallet business even further across all countries," she said.

Recently the bank introduced the Slimline ATM, to replace its mini-ATMs, which are designed to function in remote and rural areas that are not supported by conventional bank branches or ATMs. Slimline has a touch screen with an integrated camera, a card reader for chip- and pin-enabled cards with a numeric keypad.

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