
Hughes Hubbard & Reed

Firm Paves Way for High-Speed Internet in African Nation

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Hughes Hubbard assisted the Republic of Gabon and the World Bank in the conception and management of a fiber-optic network that will provide high-speed Internet access throughout the Central African nation and beyond its borders.

The deal, which closed on April 8, 2015, was structured through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) scheme and marked the first development financing agreement between the World Bank and Gabon in seven years.

Described by industry watchers as "historic and vital," the network will connect the Central African nation's five provinces via the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) submarine fiber optic cable and cross over to neighboring Republic of Congo. The new infrastructure will help the country increase geographical reach and usage of regional broadband network services and bring down connection costs for businesses and consumers.

Among other things, Hughes Hubbard drafted the PPP contract, the agreement of transfer of digital infrastructure and the loan documents. Hughes Hubbard also assisted Gabon in the bidding process, negotiations with the Consortium Bouygues-Axione and in notification of the transaction to the ACE.

ChinaCommunication Service International, a subsidiary of China Telecom Group, won the contract to build out the network, with work scheduled to be completed within four years.

Sena Agbayissah, Agnes Braka-Calas and Sandrine Fraise worked on this matter.

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