

Djibouti Solidifies Position as East Africa's Digital Gateway with Strategic Submarine Cable Investments

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Djibouti is rapidly emerging as a pivotal digital hub in East Africa, strategically leveraging its geographical location and significant investments exceeding \$200 million in 12 state-of-the-art submarine cables. This infrastructure enhancement positions the nation as a critical node connecting Europe, Asia, and Africa, facilitating the seamless flow of global data.

Located at the crucial intersection of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, Djibouti serves as a vital conduit for international data transmission. This strategic advantage has attracted substantial infrastructure development, including key projects like the extensive Sea-Me-We-6 cable system, a 19,200 km link between Singapore and Marseille that traverses through Djibouti. These investments not only bolster global connectivity but also provide essential support for burgeoning technologies such as cloud computing and artificial intelligence.

Speaking at the recent Djibouti Forum, Prime Minister Abdoulkader Kamil Mohamed highlighted the nation's strategic focus: "The pillar of our strategy in Djibouti is stability. We have become a regional hub not only for shipping, but also for data. Our undersea cables carry the information that fuels global trade."

Further underscoring Djibouti's commitment to regional digital integration is the Eastern Africa Regional Digital Integration Project (EARDIP), supported by a \$130 million investment from the World Bank. This initiative aims to significantly improve broadband connectivity, foster digital trade, and cultivate digital skills across Djibouti and neighboring Ethiopia, with a potential impact on over 40 million people.

Djibouti's advancements in digital infrastructure hold significant implications for neighboring countries, particularly landlocked Ethiopia. Enhanced connectivity facilitates greater economic integration, streamlines trade processes, and improves access to essential digital services, all of which are crucial drivers for regional development. The transformative impact of submarine cables on internet access, as evidenced by initiatives like MainOne's cable system in Nigeria and the increasing prevalence of data centers across Africa, is becoming increasingly apparent. These developments reduce latency, increase internet speeds, and unlock new avenues for economic growth.