

Microsoft Africa internet plan moves forward with fibre deal

By [Jeffrey Dastin](#)

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Microsoft Corp has reached a deal with Africa's biggest independent fibre network toward its goal of expanding internet access on the continent, its president Brad Smith said.



Source: Reuters/Gonzalo Fuentes

The agreement, with Liquid Intelligent Technologies, by 2025 aims to widen connectivity in countries such as Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to 20 million people, out of Microsoft's previously announced 100 million target.

"Our goal here is to use digital technology and investment as a catalyst to create more economic opportunity for the population," Smith told *Reuters* on Tuesday, 28 February ahead of next week's U.N. conference on the least developed countries.

Cloud computing and AI

The effort aims to build a new cloud computing and AI market longer-term, which would benefit Microsoft, Smith has said.

The software maker's so-called Airband initiative brings together telecoms and electricity providers, non-profits and

governments to increase internet access.

Smith also said Microsoft would work to improve food production in Africa through various partnerships, including applying artificial intelligence to monitor crops.

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