

# Network infrastructures: digital highways to be always connected

**S**parkle is a leading global telecommunications service provider offering a complete range of Internet and Data, Cloud, Data Center, Voice and Mobile solutions designed to meet the ever-changing needs of Enterprises, OTTs and Content Players, ISPs, Fixed and Mobile Operators. As part of its expansion and transformation strategy, Sparkle is continuously increasing its efforts in innovating the product portfolio and in investing in a precise infrastructural expansion for the consolidation of its presence in selected key and high growth markets.

In this contest, Africa has always been a continent of reference for Sparkle and will be even more so in the future. Sparkle historically has been playing a major role in providing international connectivity services to North African markets through its open landing Sicily Hub. Strategically built with the target of increasing Sparkle's take in the subsea cable's arena, it is connected to 18 subsea cables, provides a mature ecosystem in an open environment offering interconnection between cables, networks and peerings. This unique mix of neutral facility, private or public peering, quality, competitiveness and flexibility has made the Sicily Hub a marketplace of multi-breed interconnected players to trade any telecommunication solution and thus becoming one of the



**Elisabetta Romano, CEO, Sparkle**



top internet hub for Africa. This has also reinforced Sparkle's positioning for the delivery of connectivity services for multinationals customers in all the North African countries: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

Sparkle is also actively pursuing the goal to connect to its global network and worldwide Tier 1 IP backbone "Seabone" the entire African continent and its most relevant players. Seabone, one of the Top 10 global IP players, provides ISPs, content providers and accelerators access to the Global Internet through state-of-the-art performance, robustness and reliability. To further strengthen its positioning, in the latest years Sparkle has invested in new projects such as the construction of the BlueMed submarine cable - to connect most of the countries bordering the Mediterranean to the main European hubs, in particular in Sicily, Milan, via Genoa, and Marseille - and the opening of new PoPs in Africa. These are the initial steps of Sparkle's expansion plan to support the growing IP connectivity needs in the African continent in the coming years. The new BlueMed cable, along with

the other investments Sparkle is making in the Mediterranean to be even closer to Africa, will provide advanced connectivity and strengthen Italy's role as digital gateway between Africa, Middle East, Asia and Europe. The presence in various new PoPs located close to or in Africa (i.e. Lisbon and Madrid, Djibouti, Lagos and Casablanca) proves that the continent continues to be a market of primary interest where Sparkle offers its telecommunications services.

Sparkle leverages the infrastructures and digital highways it owns and it is investing to offer direct access to platforms to provide services and solutions and to give everyone the opportunity to always be connected. For this reason, it already offers a wide range of services to businesses ranging from connectivity, security, cloud to IoT solutions.

"Sparkle's challenge is to continue to provide connectivity and capacity globally in consideration of the constant growth in demand, which is also shifting geographically. If in the past the main route of internet traffic was between West and East, today the demand is growing exponentially from South, where the largest

number of the next 'eyeballs', the new users, can be found" says Sparkle's CEO, Elisabetta Romano,

"Looking at the African continent, where Sparkle has a leading position in some countries, thanks to a technological leap today mobile allows the introduction of new technologies, such as 5G, and the use of new applications. Let's think of telemedicine for example: Sparkle can guarantee connectivity with low latency and, with access to 5g, cutting-edge services" concludes Elisabetta Romano.

In the longer term, the African continent is destined to have an increasing importance for Sparkle. In fact, an increase in demand for telecommunications services, as the needs for internet connectivity and access to content are growing with the concomitant development of 4G and 5G technologies, is directly related to the development prospects of the African economy and the demographic increase.

All aspects that are at the basis of the growing investments planned by Sparkle in the continent, also in partnership with local operators or with hyper-scalers/OTT to leverage on scale, cost efficiency and time to market. ■

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