

# More competition for MTN in Nigeria

MTN faces renewed competition in Nigeria, its biggest market, where a smaller competitor has set its sights on growing its network following a change in ownership.



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Teleology, a company backed by former MTN Nigeria CEO Adrian Wood, said it had paid a \$50m deposit towards the acquisition of 9Mobile, the country's fourth-biggest mobile operator, which was previously called Etisalat Nigeria.

Etisalat Nigeria floundered under a hefty debt burden. Teleology said in a statement its deposit reflected its "financial capability and readiness to revive the organisation".



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Wood, a director at Teleology, said his company planned to double the size of 9Mobile's network, with new 3G and 4G sites and "several thousand kilometres of fibre-optic cable across the country".

Wood said Teleology had partnered with Safaricom, the East Africa-focused operator that is partly owned by Vodacom and which operates the M-Pesa mobile money business.

## Undertaking a rural internet coverage programme

Teleology wanted to increase 9Mobile's employee base by 50%. The company would undertake a rural internet coverage programme, while investments in broadband internet technologies that were new to Nigeria were also planned.

Teleology said its entry in the market would "herald a new era of intense competition and quest for market share among Nigeria's telecom operators".



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MTN reported earlier in March that it had won back subscribers in Nigeria, following a period in which its smaller rivals in the country ate into its market share. The group added, on a net basis, about two-million subscribers in the last three months of 2017. This was partly thanks to its "welcome back" offers to entice former customers to return.

MTN plans to list its Nigerian business in that country in the first half of 2018. It agreed to the listing as part of its fine in Nigeria for failing to disconnect unregistered SIM cards.

*Source: Business Day*

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