**OPINION ARTICLE**

**DATA CENTRE NEUTRALITY IS SEACOM'S INFRASTRUCTURE ADVANTAGE**

By Prenesh Padayachee, Group Chief Digital Infrastructure Officer at SEACOM

In today's hyperscale economy, connectivity is no longer enough. Enterprises and global cloud providers are demanding infrastructure that is not only high-performance and scalable but vendor-neutral, interoperable, and built on trust. They want the freedom to connect wherever they want, however they want, and with whomever they wish, without being locked into closed ecosystems or bundled platforms.

For digital infrastructure providers, this presents a strategic dilemma: how do you scale up and integrate vertically without compromising client control? How do you build a high-capacity, resilient network while staying data centre-neutral in a market increasingly shaped by alliances and exclusivity?

**Connecting, not controlling**

At SEACOM, we believe the answer lies in *infrastructure without lock-in*—a model that enables performance and choice in equal measure. By connecting key data centres across East and Southern Africa, offering true OnNet scalability, and avoiding bundling that limits flexibility, we are positioning ourselves not as gatekeepers but as enablers of digital growth. In a landscape dominated by "co-opetition" and cloud convergence, neutrality is no longer a differentiator. It is a prerequisite for relevance.

Our approach to the data centre economy is deliberate: be present in the proper facilities, connect the right locations, and leave the control in the hands of the customer. That is why we have focused on interconnecting Africa's most critical data centre hubs—with high-capacity. These low-latency OnNet routes support scalable, DC-to-DC traffic.

It is made possible through our three-tier infrastructure model, which involves owning fibre in some regions, leasing dark fibre in others, and utilising spectrum where necessary. Regardless of how it is delivered, the result is consistent – connectivity that gives clients control over their routing, breakout, and interconnect strategies. We are not trying to control the data centre environment or tie clients to a SEACOM-exclusive stack. We are here to ensure that wherever a customer wants to land, replicate, or exchange traffic, they can – on a resilient and neutral network.

**Why neutrality matters more than ever**

Data centre neutrality is about more than avoiding vendor bias—it is about enabling client trust. In a world of multi-cloud, hybrid workloads, and increasingly distributed architectures, organisations cannot afford to be boxed in by providers who bundle infrastructure and services behind the scenes.

It is particularly relevant for hyperscalers expanding into Africa. These players expect to interconnect on their terms, using partners who enable scale without influencing their decisions. Our neutrality across facilities, cloud ecosystems, and carrier relationships is central to how we build infrastructure—and to how we preserve the freedom our clients require.

We do not restrict breakout options. We do not favour any single cloud provider. We do not design routes that serve our preferences at the expense of client needs. That neutrality, by design, is what enables agility.

SEACOM has continuously operated at the intersection of infrastructure and services. But we are clear about the lines we won't cross. Yes, we provide transport. Yes, we offer digital services. But one is never conditional on the other. That distinction is critical in a vertically integrated world.

Our clients want the ability to engage with us at Layer 1 or Layer 3—or somewhere in between—without being locked into additional services they did not ask for. That means modularity must be engineered into both the network and the commercial model. It is also why we continue to support a non-exclusive services layer. You can take our fibre and bring your IP overlay. You can buy transport only. You can integrate us into a larger hybrid strategy. We are not competing to trap the customer—we are competing to enable them.

**100% tradability: beyond uptime**

One of the performance benchmarks we use internally is what we call "100% tradability." It is not enough for a circuit to be technically online. It must be commercially viable, deliver predictable performance under real-world conditions, and support the client's application stack reliably.

This principle extends across our owned, leased, and spectrum-based infrastructure. Whether we are lighting dark fibre between Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, delivering redundant paths in Mozambique, or enabling breakout in Johannesburg, every part of the network is built to be not just alive, but usable at scale. It is a more demanding standard than simple uptime, and one that reflects the expectations of today's hyperscale, cloud-native clients.

Africa's digital economy is too complex—and too important—to be shaped by monopolies. SEACOM recognises that actual growth will come not from controlling the ecosystem but from contributing to it. That's why we actively interconnect with other carriers, enable peering in neutral facilities, and support cross-provider handoffs wherever they add value.

This model of "co-opetition"—competing in some areas while collaborating in others—keeps the market open, scalable, and fair. It also keeps us relevant in an environment where trust, transparency, and neutrality matter as much as speed and latency. Our infrastructure is designed to complement—not corner—the ecosystem.

**Designed for trust**

Trust in infrastructure is not just earned through performance metrics. It is earned through how you show up in the ecosystem. At SEACOM, we have made strategic choices to remain neutral, interoperable, and client-first—even as we expand our digital services portfolio and increase our ownership footprint.

We have built our OnNet network to support scale without entanglement. We have connected the data centres that matter without claiming exclusivity. And we have ensured that customers can use our transport without inheriting our service stack. In a market shaped by choice, that clarity matters. It allows customers to move faster, design freely, and expand confidently, knowing that the infrastructure underneath them is not only fast but also fair.

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**Editors' notes:**

**About SEACOM**

SEACOM is a diversified ICT provider of scale, offering a wide range of voice, managed networks, security, cloud, and server hosting solutions and services to businesses, network carriers, service providers and enterprises. SEACOM Digital Infrastructure owns and operates one of Africa's largest networks of ICT infrastructure, including multiple subsea cables, a resilient continent-wide IP/MPLS network, and Fibre networks in and across the continent. With a network spanning South Africa, Europe, and Asia, SEACOM empowers African businesses to connect seamlessly and securely to global markets. Businesses partner with SEACOM's Digital Services for cybersecurity solutions, including firewalls, threat detection, cloud-based solutions, and secure network infrastructure, to safeguard their digital assets. For more information about how SEACOM can enhance your enterprise's network and digital infrastructure, contact info@seacom.com to speak with one of our sales representatives.