

Government apps to support service delivery

Vodacom is launching new mobile platforms namely Thetha Nathi and Link, to support service delivery and promote active citizenry.

Thetha Nathi

OR Tambo District Municipality's citizenship engagement platform, "Thetha Nathi" (which means "Talk to us"), allows residents of the district to engage the municipality on any service delivery concerns. The solution provides the municipality with an omni-channel system through which citizens can access services and engage the municipal administration.



For the first phase of deployment, the municipality has prioritised the management of water and sanitation. Residents will be able to engage the municipality through multiple channels, namely voice, a mobile app, USSD and email, through the use of their cellular phones. The District Municipality will use the same platform to respond to any queries logged by residents to dispatch water management technicians, ensuring a speedy response to all residents' water management complaints.

The Thetha Nathi platform will evolve over two more phases to cover other service delivery areas and will later integrate to the province's service delivery "war rooms". This will provide the municipality with 360-degree visibility of the handling of citizens' service delivery concerns. OR Tambo District Municipality is the first municipality to launch the solution, which is now available for use by local residents. Vodacom plans to introduce the solution to other municipalities across the country.

Link

The second app, Link - Powered by Vodacom (Link), is a zero-rated general community app that enables communities to report service delivery issues such as blocked drains, burst pipes, electricity outages, missing manhole covers and refuse issues.



It also offers additional services including the ability to connect to a variety of the internet of things (IoT) devices as well as follow community channels which allow users to report and view safety and security related incidents in their communities, view local job advertising and businesses. The platform was built over a period of six years by skilled engineers in South Africa, Sweden, and the US.

Both platforms share the same back-end system, which makes the platforms interchangeable. This means that all reported information relevant to a particular geographic area is shared between the apps. The app has a free service for all residents' associations, safety and community forums to report security issues and community information.

"Unprecedented level of transparency"

Vodacom business chief officer Vuyani Jarana says: "We are essentially bringing government to the people and providing an unprecedented level of transparency and accountability in the process. As a corporate citizen, Vodacom is responsible for helping government deliver services as efficiently as possible and we are excited to see the positive change which the Thetha Nathi and Link solutions will bring to communities across the country."

The platform is available for use on feature and smartphones, through a USSD service (*134*606#) or by downloading the app from the IOS App store or from Google Playstore, which accommodates various languages including English and Xhosa. The municipality will use the accompanying web-based management and reporting portal to receive incident reports from different channels (lodged through the mobile app, via the USSD platform, by municipality walk-ins or via the call centre), allocate reported incidents for resolution, track the time taken to fix reported issues, set and review incident status and pull management reports.

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