

Piracy delays Seacom launch date

According to Seacom, an increase in pirate activity during April and May 2009, in terms of intensity and geographical coverage, has resulted in a delay in the undersea cable installation plans. The ready-for-service date has been postponed from 27 June to 23 July .



The planned route required the ship to transit an area of increased pirate activity where other ships had been attacked or seized. The cable deployment has since been completed and splicing to connect the section of cable from Mumbai to Africa is expected shortly. Testing of the larger cable system will be finalised thereafter.

The cable section from South Africa (Mtunzini) to Kenya (Mombasa), including all south and east African landing stations, has already undergone successful testing, reports Seacom.

Brian Herlihy, Seacom CEO, says: "Due to sensitivities around piracy issues, their impact on the project timeline was only fully established recently and whilst I am personally truly disappointed by the delay, it was imperative that strong measures be put in place to guarantee the successful completion of the cable system and the safety of the ship and its crews.

"This setback should however be seen against the herculean efforts made by the team to see this project come to fruition over an incredibly tight schedule of only 18 months. We remain extremely excited and look forward to witnessing the huge difference that affordable, high quality and plentiful bandwidth will have throughout eastern and southern Africa."