

Number portability for Kenyan mobile users

DELFT and NAIROBI: The Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) has chosen the Dutch company PortingXS to provide number portability to Kenya. Mobile users in the East African country will be able to keep their mobile phone number when changing providers.

Until now, changing providers in Africa without losing your mobile phone number was only possible in Morocco, Egypt and South Africa.

Train local students

Kenya started a tender for number portability in October last year. Of the six firms that made a bid - some African, some European - PortingXS was appointed. According to CEO Ronald Vlasman, PortingXS not only due to economical reasons, but also because his company plans to provide services from a local office in Nairobi and will train local students as employees.

Kenya has 30 million mobile users. The main providers are Safaricom (78%), Zain Kenya (17%), Orange (4%) and Yu (1%). Changing providers is difficult for clients, because they lose their number in the process.

PortingXS will start number portability services in a few months, depending on the consultations with national providers and the CCK. "It's our first giant step into the African continent, but definitely not our last," CEO Ronald Vlasman said. "There are talks with surrounding and other African countries to implement number portability as we speak and we hope we can provide our services there as well."