

Kenya launches Africa's first mobile commerce platform

By [Carole Kimutai](#)

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MobiKash Afrika Limited, a private company incorporated in Kenya, has unveiled an innovative independent mobile commerce ecosystem. The platform will work across all Kenya's four GSM networks (Safaricom, Airtel, Orange, and Yu) and across participating banks.

The platform is expected to deliver a wide range of revolutionary services through a growing network of partnering banks and agents across the country. It was developed in partnership with Sybase 365, a service provider in mobile commerce and mobile messaging services, with a portfolio of more than 700 mobile operators and an estimated three billion subscribers around the world.

MobiKash was launched on 28 July 2011 following a rigorous one year commercial live pilot programme conducted across three banks (National Bank of Kenya, Postbank and Transnational Bank), in compliance with the Communication Commission of Kenya (CCK) and Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) regulatory frameworks.

Speaking during the launch, Duncan Oduor Otieno, MobiKash's CEO said his company was in talks with players within the financial services sector, with a view to bringing on board more partnering banks. "The potential for this new mobile commerce ecosystem is unlimited, and the one year pilot phase has given us an opportunity to gauge some of the ripple effects of such a service in this market," he said, noting that apart from spurring job creation and stimulating economic growth, MobiKash also presented a unique opportunity for individuals and organizations to transform the way they manage their financial matters.

Services for the unbanked

For the unbanked, MobiKash will offer a universal bank account through its network of agents across Kenya which will allow potential customers to pick a bank account of their choice. The POPOTE Account will be accessible through any MobiKash agent, as well as directly through any of the partnering banks. This, according to Otieno, will bridge the gap between the banked and the unbanked populations in Kenya.

The MobiKash model also allows bank customers to conveniently withdraw cash directly from their bank accounts at any of the MobiKash agent outlet without having to reveal their bank account details to the agents. MobiKash thus allows one agent to conveniently and seamlessly serve all the banks in the market with one single process, one single agent float and thus offering real interoperability between various players in the financial and payments industry.

MobiKash customers will have the capability to link up to 15 bank accounts to their mobile wallet. This innovative

development is the first of its kind in the world.

MobiKash to embark on aggressive countrywide awareness, recruitment drive

The launch of MobiKash's revolutionary mobile commerce ecosystem was attended by a cross section of stakeholders from the public and private sector. Speaking at the event, Prof. Njuguna Ndungu Central Bank of Kenya governor said the service marked a new phase in Kenya's journey towards e-commerce adding that MobiKash had fulfilled all the necessary requirements that resulted in it receiving a license to offer mobile money transfer services and integrated mobile banking and payment system.

Samwel Poghisio, minister for information and communication said Kenya continued to make good progress in its quest to leverage ICT in delivering tangible benefits across the socio-economic spectrum. He said the launch of MobiKash would compliment initiatives spearheaded by individual GSM operators.

MobiKash will embark on an aggressive countrywide awareness and recruitment drive, disseminating information around the salient features of the service. The company targets to enrol approximately 300,000 subscribers in the first six months.

ABOUT CAROLE KIMUTAI

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