

Facebook built an undersea cable around Africa

The move highlights Silicon Valley companies' interest in Africa.

Facebook is building a giant undersea cable across Africa, in an effort to increase internet access for more than 1.3 billion people on the continent. The world's largest social network has partnered with telecommunications companies including China Mobile of China, MTN of South Africa, Orange of France and Vodafone of Britain, and other local network operators in the project. named it 2Africa.

Alcatel Submarine, Nokia's supplier of cable systems, has been tasked with building the underground cable line. Facebook claims the cable will be 'roughly equivalent to the circumference of the Earth', with a length of about 37,000 km. According to CNBC, Facebook does not say how many donors and partners are behind it.

Facebook says the main goal of the initiative is to increase connectivity for Africa. The continent is 'currently the least connected' in the world, when just over a quarter of the population has access to the internet. Underground cables will connect 23 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Europe. In a blog post on Wednesday, Facebook announced it would 'provide nearly three times the total network capacity of all submarine cables operating in Africa'.

The 2Africa project is more efficient because it uses aluminum instead of copper, and this can also help increase network capacity. '2Africa is a continuation of our ongoing efforts to expand our network infrastructure globally. We have partnered with partners around the world to build a number of underground fiber optic lines that are at the forefront of accessibility, capacity and flexibility,' Facebook said.

This move by Facebook reflects the growing interest of US technology companies in Africa as a high growth investment opportunity. Last year, Jack Dorsey, Twitter CEO, said he was planning to move to the continent for a while. Google is also working on an underwater cable called Equiano. This cable route will connect Africa with Europe.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic may pose some challenges for the above-mentioned plans because the World Health Organization (WHO) has warned Africa could be seriously affected. Without timely response, the disease could kill about 190,000 people in the area in a year. In addition, home self-isolation has overwhelmed existing networks, due to a sharp increase in the demand for data-intensive services such as Netflix.

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