



New Kenyan HQ: Tullow Oil explores the depths with 10Gb/s cabling performance

When business thrives, supporting its growth can pose challenges. Such was the case with oil exploration giant, Tullow Oil, whose operations in Kenya expanded rapidly. This demanded relocation to new premises to accommodate growing staff numbers, prompting a complete IT infrastructure upgrade. Global IT infrastructure specialist Siemon was chosen to deliver against Tullow Oil's challenging set of requirements.



Founded in Tullow, Ireland, with global headquarters in London, UK, Tullow Oil plc is a leading multinational oil and gas exploration company with interests in more than 150 licenses, across 25 countries. The majority of production is located in the southern North Sea, in Asia and particularly Africa, where the company has been successfully operating since 1986.

Thriving business

Today, Tullow Oil is the leading independent oil company on the African continent, with significant exploration success in Uganda's Lake Albert Rift Basin, offshore Ghana and, most recently, in Kenya's South Lokichar Rift Basin. Fast growth of the Kenyan operations in recent years, with an increasing workforce and limited expansion space, prompted Tullow Oil to relocate its head office to bigger premises. Its search for a new location ultimately led Tullow Oil to Westlands.

Located three kilometres northwest of Nairobi's central business district, the Westlands area has developed over recent years into a business hub and many businesses have moved from the busy city centre to this desirable outer suburb. Leading brands including Barclays Bank and Safaricom operate from Westlands, where Tullow Oil now occupies four floors in the 8-floor 150,000 square feet, West End Towers. This prestigious, high tech development has become the company's new Kenyan head office, providing a modern work environment for 400 of a total global workforce of over 2,000 and leading the East African operations into the future.

The office move also presented Tullow Oil with the opportunity for a complete IT infrastructure upgrade, as Anthony Mile, IS infrastructure analyst responsible for the project, explains: "Our previous offices operated on a category 6 copper cabling network, but the demands of a rapidly growing business soon pushed the network to its limits, both in capacity and reliability."

For Tullow Oil incorporating technological advancement was therefore one of the primary imperatives in selecting a new network, with increased network performance, capacity and reliability being the key drivers. At the same time it required future-proof cabling foundations which would serve the organisation for many years to come, supporting a growing number of network users and to handle increased network traffic and data throughputs, including video and other high-speed applications.

Finding the right partner

The new cabling standard specified by Tullow Oil globally is category 6A copper. Category 6A instantly provides 10 gigabit Ethernet capability, delivering additional bandwidth and network speed to serve Tullow Oil's growing business.

"After careful evaluation of several vendors, we chose to work with global IT infrastructure expert, Siemon", explains Anthony. "We have a long standing history of working with Siemon in East Africa and this certainly contributed to our decision. However, it was the quality and the performance capability of Siemon's Z-MAX® category 6A F/UTP copper cabling system that were the decisive factors."

The Z-MAX® category 6A F/UTP system offers consistent best-in-class performance, unparalleled usability and speed of termination. The Z-MAX® 6A F/UTP system also provides outstanding margin on all TIA and ISO performance requirements for category 6A/class EA, including critical alien crosstalk parameters.

For maximum support of the copper cabling network in the office area, Tullow Oil selected a high performance 10Gb/s OM3 fibre optic cable from Siemon in the backbone, which connects all four office floors with eight telecommunication rooms and a data centre.

"With this choice of system, Tullow Oil also benefit from the desired future-proof solution", explains Iyer Sivakumar, sales manager Africa at Siemon. "With an extended 20 year system warranty including quality, performance and applications assurance, the new cabling system is expected to support multiple generations of active equipment. The company can rely on application support today and in the years to come, whilst increasing its return-on-investment."

The extended life cycle eliminates the need to re-cable and add additional labour costs and downtime risks for the business. This will have a positive impact on the environment as it means reduced waste and conservation of copper, aluminium and other natural resources - a principle which is very much in line with the company's approach to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Team effort

Tullow Oil required an experienced installation partner to install and certify both the category 6A copper and fibre optic cabling systems within the enterprise LAN and data centre. Based on their experience in implementing Siemon solutions at various sites within East Africa, Siemon appointed Mehta Electricals Kenya, one of its most experienced certified installers in the region.

Mart Networks Kenya actively supported the installer in overcoming installation challenges and in offering an extended product warranty. Satnam Kaur, sales channel account manager East Africa for Mart Networks said: "For Mart Networks it's all about service and responding to customer needs. Siemon products are of a very high quality and this gives us great confidence when we distribute their solutions to installers within East Africa."

Speedy installation and timely project completion

Besides its high performance, high bandwidth capabilities, Z-MAX also provides exceptional benefits in terms of installation. With an average termination time of just 45 seconds per outlet it offers significantly reduced installation time, saving valuable time and money. Mehta Electricals successfully completed the project within the designated timeline and issued Tullow Oil with a certified installer (CI) warranty certificate. All 400 employees moved across to the location at Westlands in June 2014, as scheduled.

Today Tullow Oil's new head office operates on a smart building network infrastructure, which supports the company's CCTV and access control systems at the same time as data and voice applications. Running multiple applications over one structured cabling network provides many compelling benefits, including a reduced number of cable types and pathways, which translates into material and labour cost savings.

400 staff at Westlands and a steadily growing number of remote offices throughout Kenya benefit from stable connections and increased bandwidth for fast and reliable performance.

"From the backbone to the desk, Siemon has provided us with a complete end-to-end cabling solution. Both, the product and the installation work were of excellent quality," summarises Anthony Mile. "At our old premises, we used to experience interruptions due to limited network capacity. This is now a thing of the past. We have fast access to all services and we also no longer need to be concerned about downtime, which would have a big impact on our businesses both financially and non financially as our business relies on centralised systems for services", he concludes.

About Siemon

Established in 1903, Siemon is an industry leader specialising in the design and manufacture of high quality, high performance low voltage infrastructure solutions and services for data centres, LANs and intelligent buildings. Headquartered in Connecticut, USA, with global sales, technical and logistics expertise spanning 100 countries, Siemon offers a comprehensive suite of copper and optical fibre cabling systems, cabinets, racks, cable management, data centre power and cooling systems and intelligent infrastructure management solutions. With more than 400 patents specific to structured cabling, Siemon Labs invests heavily in R&D and the development of industry standards, underlining the company's long-standing commitment to its customers and the industry.

Siemon Interconnect Solutions (SIS) is a Siemon business unit comprised of a team of dedicated technical sales professionals supported by Siemon Labs, mechanical, electrical and signal integrity engineers committed to solving industry and customer driven interconnect challenges. Siemon provides custom network infrastructure solutions to OEMs, leading manufacturers, value-added resellers and system integrators.

About Tullow Oil

<http://www.tulloil.com>

About Mart Networks

<http://www.mart-networks.com/#!/home-ea/c100w>

About Mehta Electricals

<http://www.mehta.co.ke/about/>

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