

High-speed Internet cable to link Europe, western Africa

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France Telecom and 19 partners will invest 700 million dollars to bring high-speed Internet to 20 countries in western Africa, the company said in a statement on Tuesday.

The [Africa Coast to Europe](#) (ACE) fibre-optic cable will stretch 17,000 kilometres (10,500 miles) underwater from France to South Africa, and is slated to be completed in 2012.

It will connect 23 countries en route, including Spain and Portugal and countries along the western coast of Africa including Mauritania, Gabon and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Landlocked Mali and Niger will be connected by an overland cable.

[France Telecom](#) will contribute 250 million of the 700-million-dollar (585-million-euro) cost of the project, according to the agreement.

"By signing this agreement, France Telecom-Orange is reinforcing its presence on the African continent and helping to reduce the digital divide in the region," the company said in the statement.

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