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Affordable connectivity and digital entrepreneurial ecosystem for rural Africa

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Abstract:

Innovation on sustainable ICT technologies to realize affordable broadband connectivity for rural and underserved communities is a crucial component of the effort to achieve the aim of "leaving no one behind by 2030" as championed by the United Nations. Digital connectivity and the creation of a digital entrepreneurial rural ecosystem (DERE) are two interconnected interventions necessary to achieve digital inclusion with rural communities as the main target. This paper defines the ecosystem components for the DERE, which include affordable broadband, sustainable business models and co-creation of relevant ICT services involving beneficiary rural communities. This framework presents a proof of concept on rural SMEs-driven digital inclusion being implemented at four sites in South Africa.