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Econet Wireless Zimbabwe

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Econet Wireless Zimbabwe, a subsidiary of Econet Wireless International, is the first and largest mobile network services provider in [Zimbabwe](#). The telecoms giant became popular with its products and services such as [Buddie](#). It has established branches in different corners of the country and enjoys a subscriber base of more than 9 million, undoubtedly the largest in [Zimbabwe](#).^[1] Among other services, it has acclaimed dominance in telecommunications services, providing solutions in mobile, fixed telephony services, internet and satellite access and payment solutions, and mobile money services.

Econet Wireless Zimbabwe



Trading name	Econet Wireless Zimbabwe
Type	Private
Industry	Telecoms
Founded	July 10, 1998 (1998-07-10) in Harare
Founder	Strive Masiyiwa
Headquarters	No. 2 Old Mutare Road, Harare , Zimbabwe
Key people	Douglas Mboweni , <i>CEO</i>
Parent	Econet Wireless Zimbabwe
Website	www.econet.co.zw
Footnotes / references	
Office Hours	
Mon - Fri 0800 hrs - 1600hrs	
Sat 0800 hrs - 1130 hrs	
Sun & Public Holidays CLOSED	
Contact Number +263 4 486121/6	

Background

The company was founded by a Zimbabwean businessman [Strive Masiyiwa](#). It was licensed in December

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1997 and went on to launch its service in July 1998 the initial offices being in [Harare](#). It eventually became Zimbabwe's largest provider of telecommunications services, providing solutions in mobile, fixed telephony services, internet and satellite access and payment solutions. Its flagship business South African based Econet Wireless International is now a global telecommunications group with operations, investments and offices in more than 15 countries that is Africa, Europe, USA, Latin America and Asia-Pacific. It was listed on 17 September 1998. It is one of the largest companies on the [Zimbabwe Stock Exchange](#) in terms of market capitalisation. The network became the first operator in Zimbabwe to launch data services under 3G technology in 2009.

Establishment

Econet Wireless was founded by Zimbabwean national, [Strive Masiyiwa](#) who first came to international prominence when he fought a landmark constitutional legal battle for five years in Zimbabwe. The ruling, which led to the removal of the monopoly of telecommunications, is generally regarded as one of the key milestones in opening the African telecommunications sector to private capital. In 1994 he decided to create a cell phone network on his own, after he met with fierce opposition first from the then Zimbabwe Post and Telecommunications (ZPTC) which held monopoly in telecommunications. He also faced a hurdle from the Zimbabwe Government which swamped him with red tape and demands for bribes and kickbacks. He decided to pursue his case through the courts. After a landmark four-year legal battle that went all the way to the nation's Supreme Court, Econet finally won a license to provide cell phone service in Zimbabwe. The court declared that the government monopoly on telecommunications had violated the constitution's guarantee of free speech. Econet's first cell phone subscriber was connected to the new network in 1998.^[2]

Name

When Masiyiwa took his business proposal to the bank he wanted to call his business '[Enhanced Communications Network](#)'. Then Dr [Nkosana Moyo](#) who was the then CEO of [Standard Chartered Bank of Zimbabwe](#) suggested an Acronym "ECONET" the name which was then adopted.^[3]

Founder

Strive Masiyiwa was born in 1961 in Zimbabwe. His family fled to the neighbouring Zambia to seek refuge from the hostile war environment when he was 7 years old and settled in a town called Kitwe. His mother was an entrepreneur and his father first worked at nearby mines and later joined the family business. By the time he was 12, his parents could afford to provide him with a coveted European education, he was sent to a private school in Edinburgh Scotland. After graduation in 1978 he went back to his country of birth, intending to join the anti-government guerrilla forces to liberate Zimbabwe from colonial rule. Strive was advised by senior officers that they were about to win the [Second Chimurenga](#) war and needed people like him to help build the country. He returned to school in Britain, graduating with a degree in electrical and electronic engineering from the University of Wales in 1983. He worked briefly in the computer Industry in Cambridge England but soon returned to [Zimbabwe](#) in 1984.^[4]

EcoLife

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EcoLife was first launched in October 2010 but faced a few legal hic-ups after the expiry of the contract with its major partners. The product was subsequently launched in December 2014 under the EcoSure brand. The product was launched after a long legal battle which even reached the supreme court following a number of legal procedures which needed to be cleared.^[5] Econet had fought a legal battle against Trustco, a Namibian based company which contested the launch of the product.

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- [Kwanele Ngwenya](#)
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Launch of 3G

In August 2009, Econet launched the 3G service which allowed mobile phone users to have internet access on their cellphones. The 3G service was also accompanied by a General Packet Radio System or GPRS would enable customers with compatible handsets to send and receive data on their mobile phones.^[6]

Launch of 4G- August 2013

The technologically advanced Econet 4G LTE was launched on August 21, 2013 in Harare. At the launch, econet announced that it was going to start selling the dongles a few days later which would see the subscribers getting access to the fastest internet.^[7] 4G was generally a welcome development especially among tech conscious Zimbabweans as some experts commented that it was 10 times faster than the existing 3G model. LTE stands for Long Term Evolution, a standard for wireless communication of high-speed data for mobile phones and data terminals. Some of the benefits of LTE include Higher user speeds, faster connection times, less latency.^[8]

Higher Life Foundation

The Higher Life Foundation had four trusts which whose main agenda is philanthropy. These are : **Capernaum Trust** This branch which specialises in philanthropy is headed by [Tsitsi Masiyiwa](#). Capernaum Trust was founded in Zimbabwe in 1996 by Mr. and Mrs. Masiyiwa to support orphaned and vulnerable children by providing school fees. The organization has since grown beyond scholarship support and now also provides educational support and training, career guidance and medical assistance. Initially based in Zimbabwe, the organization now has presence in Zimbabwe, Burundi, South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland.

Christian Community Partnership Trust The Christian Community Partnership Trust (CCPT) was founded in December 2005. It is mainly an ecumenical movement with Christian biases. It was launched to support evangelism and discipleship efforts by church and church organizations working in the least evangelized rural areas of Zimbabwe. CCPT's major partner is **Econet Wireless Zimbabwe**.^[9]

Joshua Nkomo Scholarship Fund It was established in 2005, as a scholarship fund focused on the

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identification and development of academic talent in Zimbabwe. It was launched in honor of the late Vice president of Zimbabwe [Joshua Nkomo](#) who was instrumental in the formation of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe. Students on the Joshua Nkomo Scholarship program are offered full scholarship they are equipped with leadership skills and are provided career guidance.^[10]

National Healthcare Trust Zimbabwe The National Healthcare Trust Zimbabwe (NHTZ) Trust, a registered Trust in Zimbabwe & South Africa was formed in response to the healthcare crises besetting Zimbabwe in 2008. the Trust provides for swift crisis response programs involving logistical, drugs and materials support as well as developmental programs as characterized by its six key strategic drivers; Human Resources for Health Development, Infrastructure Development, Water, Sanitation and Waste Management, Total Wellness & Transformation, Lobbying and Advocacy and Health Information Systems. The Trust has become the partner of choice in all government and community programmes aimed at responding to national health crisis such as cholera, building and maintaining capacity in the health system. At present, National Healthcare Trust Zimbabwe (NHCTZ) is involved in refurbishing hospitals, training and equipping Community Health workers and provides 200 Scholarships to medical students at the [University of Zimbabwe](#)".^[11]

EcoSchool The inaugural EcoSchool facility was launched in 2014. The facility provides students from tertiary institutions with devices such as tablets on credit facility to help them in their studies. The EcoSchool facility was initially meant for medical students at the [University of Zimbabwe](#) but it went in to include students from other universities in the country. Under this facility, students can also get access to online material and digital resources which are essential in their studies.

Products/ Brands

- Buddie
- Econet Premium
- Eco Farmer
- EcoSchool
- EcoSure
- EcoFarmer
- [EcoCash](#)
- EcoSolar
- Econet Health
- Econet Connected Car

Services

- Broadband ON THE GO
- Buddie Beatz
- Econet Mail
- ETXT
- Sim Registration
- Airtime Transfer
- Buddie Zone



- Call Home
- Call Me Back
- MMS
- Messaging
- Missed Call Alert
- Entertainment
- Voicemail

Key Subsidiaries

Econet Wireless Zimbabwe has the following key subsidiaries

[Steward Bank](#)

it is a registered commercial bank in Zimbabwe. It was formerly known as [TN Bank](#) and rebranded in July 2013. The bank was involved in a scandalous raid of a publications offices due to a story which had been run by the publication revealing how the government had resorted to borrowing money from local sources and that the bank was contemplating getting land from [Phillip Chiyangwa](#) whom they had given a loan of two million dollars. The raid was denounced as an attempt to gag the press since journalists were allowed by the constitution to protect the identities of their sources of information.^[12]

[Mutare Bottling Company](#)

[Mutare](#) Bottling Company engages in the soft drinks bottling operation and is based in Mutare, Zimbabwe. Mutare Bottling Company ([MBC](#)) is owned 69 percent by Econet through [Pentamed Investments](#), including a 6 percent shareholding in the form of convertible instruments. The remainder is owned by the Goldberg family.^[13] MBC holds the Coca-Cola franchise for the [Manicaland](#) region.^[14] MBC employs in excess of 250 people.^[14]

Liquid Telecom

Liquid Telecom is one of the leading independent data, voice and IP provider in eastern, central and southern Africa. It supplies fibre optic, satellite and international carrier services to Africa's largest mobile network operators, ISPs and businesses of all sizes. It also provides payment solutions to financial institutions and retailers, as well as data storage and communication solutions to businesses across Africa and beyond.^[15]

Philanthropy

Econet Wireless Zimbabwe under its Capernaum Trust which was established in 1996 pays school fees for thousands of underprivileged students from primary and secondary schools in both rural and urban areas of Zimbabwe. Another sister branch is the [Joshua Nkomo](#) Scholarship Program. This was introduced in honor of the late vice president Joshua Nkomo who was instrumental in the birth of the company. The fund is specially meant for students who excel in their respective studies and they are



given scholarships to study in both local and foreign universities and colleges. In 2013, Econet also partnered other international organisations in donating towards the deadly Ebola disease which claimed thousands of lives in West and Central Africa since March 2014. The campaign which was called "The Campaign against Ebola Initiative".

Successes

The telecoms company has grown to be the largest in Zimbabwe with an estimated 9 million subscribers as at 2014. Besides boasting of the biggest subscriber base in the country, Econet has also made headlines for offering quality services especially mobile network and internet services. The company also boasts of the largest mobile money platform in the country with the largest subscriber base.

Awards

- 2013- Capital Finance International (CFI.co) Awards- Best Telecoms Service and Solutions provider.
- 2013- Global Telecoms Business Award for the ground breaking EcoCash service.
- 2013- Marketers Association of Zimbabwe- Top ICT Sector Award
- 2013- Marketers Association of Zimbabwe- Consumers Superbrand- Buddie
- 2013- Marketers Association of Zimbabwe- Consumers Superbrand- Ecocash
- 2012- Marketers Association of Zimbabwe- Top ICT Sector Award
- 2011- Marketing Association of Zimbabwe- Superbrand 2011 Awards
- 2011- Ministry of ICT in the ICT Achievers Awards 2011.
- 2011- Frost and Sullivan Award Winner

Tax Evasion Allegations

In July 2014, Econet was alleged to have been involved in a tax dispute with the [Zimbabwe Revenue Authority](#) over tax evasion allegations. The dispute, which emerged after tip-off from a whistle blower, identified as [Edward Mutambanadzo](#) in documents seen by the Financial Gazette could result in ZIMRA claiming over US\$600 million from Econet. The company was said to have falsified invoices for imported capital equipment since its inception 16 years ago, prejudicing the country's tax agency.^[16] Econet however responded to the allegations and described them as not only dubious but also defamatory. The allegations seem to have been dubious indeed since the matter was not taken to the courts as is usually the case in Zimbabwe.

Econet [NetOne](#) Disconnection

Econet disconnected service from the government owned NetOne in August 2012. In the notice Econet showed that as much as US \$20 million (excluding interest) was owed from as far back as 2009. Econet says it has tried engaging the Zim telecoms regulator, POTRAZ, and the government but all in vain. The disconnection was however temporal as the two parties reached an agreement resulting in the immediate re-connection.^[17]

Econet Telecel Disconnection

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Again on August 25, 2013, Econet disconnected service from a fellow telecoms company Telecel Zimbabwe following the latter's failure to renew its operating licence which had expired in 2013. As part of the legal requirements, registered companies were supposed to conduct business only with licenced and registered companies. The relations between Telecel returned to normalcy following the intervention by POTRAZ some days later.^[18]

About Pindula

Pindula is a place to find information about local things on the internet. We do it a lot like Wikipedia, except everything is hyper-local. We started work on Pindula because we needed something like it. There's so little useful information about local things online and we're working to change that

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