

Corporate social responsibility needs to be at the heart of gambling expansion in Africa – argues industry expert

Gambling business expert Lewis Pék, editor of influential industry title G3, has underlined the huge significance of Africa as a growth market and the central role that the forthcoming ICE Africa (24-25 October, Sandton Convention Centre, South Africa) will play in its development as a sustainable, socially responsible sector of the global industry.

He stated: "There's no doubt that the demographics (of Africa) represent an opportunity for switched-on brands in partnership with progressive governments to develop sustainable gaming economies contributing to both GDP and tax revenues. Such extraordinary figures not only show the scale of the opportunity, but also the need for restraint - for corporate social responsibility to be at the heart of gaming expansion across the continent and for responsible, legal operators to take leadership roles in the future of the sector in Africa. To achieve this, all stakeholders need to participate, to establish dialogue and contribute to a responsibly managed gaming infrastructure. For me, that underlines the incredible importance of ICE Africa to act as a melting pot for responsible long-term growth in this remarkable gaming market."

He continued: "The gambling industry is adept at identifying new markets and G3 has reported on numerous well known organisations that have a considerable presence in Africa, including games developers, distributors and operators. We see most of the growth right now focused on sports-betting opportunities, especially in regards to mobile bets in Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa, Ghana and Tanzania."

A love of sport and the mobile revolution are key drivers throughout the continent. He explained: "The exponential growth of mobile telephony in Africa has brought about unprecedented financial inclusion through the adoption of mobile money across the continent. The majority of adult Africans are unbanked, while over 420 million are aged between 15 and 35, the demographic with the largest proportion of mobile phone users. The combination of mobile adoption and increasing availability of mobile money has meant that, in a country such as Nigeria, 60 million people aged between 18 and 40 spend up to \$5m on sports betting daily and stake an average of \$8.40. In Kenya, an estimated two million individuals engage in mobile-based sports betting, while the combined size of the gambling industry in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa is projected to be worth \$37bn in 2018. All aspects of the pan-African industry, including regulators, need an event such as ICE Africa in order to meet and map out a sustainable and socially responsible future."

ICE Africa will comprise an extensive learning agenda, world class training and staff development modules, products and services from leading gaming brands and

extensive networking opportunities. Supporting partners for ICE Africa include the South African Bookmakers' Association, the Western Cape Bookmakers' Association, the Industry Group for Responsible Gambling and the European Casino Association.

For more information on the first ICE Africa, which takes place between 24-25 October, Sandton Convention Centre, South Africa, and to register, visit the ICE Africa website: www.iceafrica.za.com