

Mobile networks seek new technologies

By [Sam Hungwe](#)

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Two of Zimbabwe's three mobile phone network operators will skip 3G technology and adopt more advanced fourth generation equipment to upgrade services, an industry executive revealed.

Reward Kangai, chairman of the Telecommunications Operators Association of Zimbabwe (TOAZ) and CEO of NetOne, the government-owned mobile phone network, said his company and Telecel Zimbabwe would now take up the more advanced Long Term Evolution (LTE) technology after failing to get 3G technology over the past three years.

"The Long Term Evolution (LTE) will now be implemented (by the two networks)," said Kangai, speaking in his capacity as TOAZ chairman.

Econet Wireless had installed infrastructure for the 3G facilities over two years ago, but had failed to launch the service because of delays in the allocation of requisite frequencies by regulators.

The company was eventually granted the frequencies last week, but these will allow it to offer restricted 3G services in Harare alone, said Econet CEO Douglas Mboweni. This was partly due to the fact that Econet could not pay the entire fee for the frequencies to the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ), instead negotiating for staggered quarterly payments over two years.

The company was however expected to launch the General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) for all its mobile phone users in the country.

The facility had been under trial over two years but will be launched in May, said Mboweni.

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