



# EASTERN CARIBBEAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY [ECTEL]

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## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **Do Small Businesses Use ICTs**

ECTEL conducted a study to determine the level of usage of Telecommunications and ICTs by Small and Medium Sized businesses in the ECTEL Member States. The study, which began in August 2008, is based on responses from 504 businesses.

The results revealed that 97.4 of the respondents considered telecommunications to be essential inputs for their businesses. Fixed line services was the most popular form of telecommunications service utilized by the SMEs at 96.6 percent. Next in line was internet at 78.3 percent. Mobile phones were third at 73 percent. Some businesses (14.1 percent) also had mobile broadband. Private leased circuits were used by 11.3 percent of the firms.

Approximately 83.4 percent of the firms intended to keep the fixed line. More than half found fixed to fixed calls were highly priced and even more (95.3 percent) considered fixed to mobile calls expensive. Only 4.9 percent were very likely to terminate the fixed line largely because it was too costly and due to poor quality of service.

Mobile phones were considered useful for their mobile workforce by 45.1 percent of the firms, while 17.2 percent thought that mobiles were more accessible. Roughly 14.4 percent were better able to control expenditure, while 11.8 percent considered a mobile phone to be cheaper than a fixed line. Approximately 38.4 percent of the respondents were satisfied with the rate of calls to the same network, while 90.5 percent believed that the rate between networks were high. Likewise, 87.2 percent believed that the rate of local mobile to fixed calls were too high.

International calling through fixed line phones was the main choice for 67.1 percent of the firms. This was followed by VOIP service at 14.3 percent and mobile phones at 10.6 percent. Approximately 78.7 percent of the respondents stated that fixed rates were high, while 83.9 found rates for mobiles to be high, while 41 percent indicated that VOIP was priced right.

Approximately 90 percent of the firms stated that they had some form of internet access and a further 2 percent planned to get access within the next twelve months. Firms with broadband indicated that the speed of service (61.5 percent), availability of service (17.9 percent) and quality of service (10.3 percent) were the major reasons for choosing broadband service. More than 95 percent of the respondents who used the internet used emails and 48.7 percent had their own website.

ECTEL  
January 26<sup>th</sup> 2009