

Africa: The new frontier of igaming

The African continent is the ideal territory for the localised development of the online gambling and betting market

MARKETS in developing countries often offer investment opportunities not to be missed and this is precisely the case in the digital gaming sector in Africa.

Despite what one might think, in fact, the African population is anything but backward in terms of the use of electronic devices for leisure and the igaming market in Africa is definitely in turmoil.

It is estimated that, in the richest countries of the continent, such as Nigeria, more than \$2bn is spent every year on gambling activities such as sports betting, online poker and digital casinos.

The time has come, therefore, for European companies active in this sector to look more convincingly at the African market. *INTERGAMINGi* talked about it with Dario De Robertis, digital marketing specialist at 1Stop Translations, a leading agency in the creation and localisation of multimedia content in igaming.

"This is by no means a sudden phenomenon, but a natural consequence of the steady progress that this continent is experiencing in various sectors and in particular in digital development and communication," he said.

"Let's say that, in general, the passion of the African population for games, sports betting and technology is a consequence of an increased well-being in the continent. In Africa the average age is quite low compared to European countries, so the majority of the population is made up of young people.

"And, as happens all over the world, the 18 to 40 age group (but often even beyond) is very attracted to new technologies, being a digital native.

The spread of smartphones and electronic devices is really high and to this is added the growing passion for sports betting."

De Robertis added that the gaming industry is likely to see a compound annual growth rate of 12 per cent during the timeframe 2021-2026. "The Covid-19 pandemic had a positive effect on the African gaming market; mandatory stay-at-home orders led customers to spend more time and more money on different types of games and consoles, which caused the commercial side of the gaming market to grow. Possibly, our industry too will register a similar increase.

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"Local sports and European championships are very popular and the physical betting points have been a common meeting point for young Africans for years, both in large cities and in small villages. Obviously, with the pandemic social habits have changed a bit and this has created a real boom in online betting, accompanied by an increase in interest in igaming in general, from slot machines to virtual casinos.

But is Africa ready to offer this kind of service at a good level? "Of course," he said. "Also, thanks to investments and aid from the most developed countries, in Africa there are now state-of-the-art internet infrastructures, which ensure a usability of online services that is easily comparable to what we experience in Europe."

Also, he doesn't think it is risky for a foreign operator to venture into a territory that is still new to the igaming market. "I wouldn't talk about risk, I would talk about opportunity. The real risk is to be cut off from an expanding market, which in the coming years is undoubtedly destined to expand more and more and give great satisfaction to those who know how to move in time.

"It is undeniable that, in such an operation, there are many variables. For an igaming company, therefore, it is essential to be supported by a subject who knows the market in Africa perfectly and is able to identify the solutions that best meet every need. The first step is certainly to identify the right countries in which to operate.

"Every igaming company has its goals and every African country has its habits, its laws, its culture. For example, there are countries where typical casino gambling is currently prohibited, but at the same time sports betting is allowed. In other countries, the lack of laws and regulations on the subject favours the entry of foreign operators, who are free to propose their offer without too many limitations.

"It is therefore necessary to find the ideal match between the offer of the igaming operator and the cultural and regulatory characteristics of a given territory. And that's exactly what we at 1Stop Translations do.

"Our activity is not limited to suggesting to our customers the territory in which to act, but is above all aimed at characterising the offer of the igaming company according to localisation criteria, adapting the promotional content and corporate communication to the expectations of the customers of that specific country.

"It is not, therefore, a question of simple market research, but of carrying out for our customers all those international digital marketing activities that allow an effective business development: SEO translations and content writing, website localisation, link building, social media management, digital PR,



influencer marketing, etc."

Its services also include the acquisition of licences and the purchase of domains on the web. "But this is just the first part of the play; igaming operators find in 1Stop Translations a highly operational partner, which, in relation to the African market, is able to offer fundamental services such as localisation of content, translation to and from any language and the drafting of original content, with the utmost professionalism."

De Robertis added: "We pay particular attention to the creation and translation of SEO content to ensure maximum visibility of the igaming company on the web and this result is also achieved through specific technical solutions, such as an accurate link building strategy.

"This is the right time to explore the African igaming market. I'm telling you frankly, whoever stops now is lost. All market research converges in this direction; the speed in making such an investment will be a decisive factor in the fight with competitors."