



 Sangoma

Success Story

Senegal-based NGO
Sees 30% Cost-Savings with
Switchvox

THE CUSTOMER

CORAF/WECARD is an NGO based in Senegal that is partnered with a mixture of economic communities, intergovernmental organizations, and financial and technical institutions to meet the socioeconomic needs of the African population and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of small-scale agricultural producers, as well as to promote the agribusiness sector.



CHALLENGES

An NGO in West Africa decides to switch from analog to VoIP in search of cost savings and advanced call center features.



SOLUTIONS

CORAF's Switchvox solution introduced the company to Interactive Voice Response (IVR), video conferencing, and much more.

With a Switchvox appliance and 40 Sangoma D-Series IP phones, CORAF reduced their monthly telecommunications costs by 30 percent.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

According to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) manager Gorgui Alioune Mbow, CORAF's old analog telephone system was very costly. In addition, Mbow knew that by today's standards, the quality of analog communications is very poor. "Maintenance on the old system had become too frequent and too expensive," says Mbow. "In order to upgrade or extend its capabilities to match our needs, the expense was going to be much more, so I began looking for an affordable solution."

Mbow engaged in an Internet research project to familiarize himself with the options available when he discovered Visiocont@ct Senegal, a Switchvox reseller. "Visiocont@ct told us about VoIP and Switchvox, how it could be easily adapted to the French language; and all the features we would gain from the UC capability," Mbow says.

THE SOLUTION FROM SANGOMA

Implementing VoIP required building a supportive infrastructure for voice communications. According to Lamine Diop, manager of Information Technology and Services (ITS) in the Office of Analysis Design Development and Training at Visiocont@ct in Dakar, they began by analyzing the existing data network. "We showed CORAF how they could use their existing data network with a GSM gateway to set up the new configuration at an affordable cost," he says.

The GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) is a standard developed by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) to describe protocols for second-generation (2G) digital cellular networks used by mobile phones.

"We did a quick analysis of CORAF's existing data network in preparation for adding voice to it," says Diop. "We laid fiber and did the cabling, which involved about 100 meters between their two main buildings at the headquarters in Dakar, before setting up the gateway and installing Switchvox with about 40 HD IP phones."

THE RESULTS

The change and additional features has been somewhat overwhelming, not because of any difficulty, but due to having so much power and control at their fingertips. "The system is really easy, but we can do so much more— it isn't like we are accustomed to having mobility, conference calling, videoconferencing, or an IVR with call trees," Mbow explains.

"They are still investigating and playing around with a lot of their capabilities, but as we continue to train them according to the level of use, they are actively exploring the possibilities," says Diop.

"Right now, we are still learning about the IVR, so we are only using it on weekends when there is no one here to answer the phones, but we are always using conference calling and video-calling features," says Mbow.

Currently, the remaining eight offices scattered across Western and Central Africa are acting like extensions to the main office in Dakar. "In addition to our eight offices, we also have twenty-two representatives in twenty-two countries in West and Central Africa that we want to bring together so we will save even more money," says Mbow. "We are now gearing up for the second phase, which involves linking them all together into a centralized telephone system."

With the job only recently completed, their first post install bill saw a decrease of 30 percent in telephony costs!

"Visiocont@ct eliminated our old analog set-up and replaced it with classic technology from Switchvox and I can tell you, I am very happy," says Mbow. "This new system is wonderful!"

THE PARTNER

For over 10 years, Visiocont@ct has served as a value added partner in West Africa. Their services are focused on video conferencing and include telephony, hardware, design and more.

