

Infra Dig – the Helios Towers interview

Angus Leslie Melville

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Telecoms infrastructure across Africa and the Middle East is central to this latest episode of Infra Dig – the podcast service brought to you by IJGlobal.

IJGlobal editorial director Angus Leslie Melville sits down for a fireside chat with Helios Towers group CFO Manjit Dhillon and operations and engineering director Lara Coady for fascinating insights into a burgeoning sector.

This podcast – which runs for a little more than 27 minutes – focuses on Helios Towers’ strategy to grow across its chosen markets and its plans for the future.

This latest episode can be accessed on Spotify (embedded above) as well as through [Apple Podcasts](#) and the [Amazon service](#). It is also hosted across a slew of other platforms and is open access on all of them.

Helios builds / acquires telecom tower infrastructure, operating and leasing them to mobile network operators across 9 markets in Africa and the Middle East. One of the key services it performs is to ensure round-the-clock operation, which also involves energy provision.

Manjit (pictured right) says: “Despite all the volatility we have seen globally, we operate in markets – and in an industry more broadly – that continues to grow from strength to strength.

“The growth is quite phenomenal, when you think about it. As an area, Africa and the Middle East is the fastest growing area in population terms on the planet. By the end of the century, it will match Asia in terms of population. So, the growth levels are quite phenomenal.”

He adds: “The markets in which we operate – and the broader area of the Middle East and Africa – is really starting to embrace data. The growth of data in Africa and the Middle East is estimated to grow by 4x over the next 5 years. That far outstrips growth in the rest of the world when it comes to data adoption.

“With that demand, it is estimated that there will be an incremental 85 million new people connecting to digital in our markets alone over the next 5 years. To put that into perspective, that’s about 1.5 / 1.4 times the population of the UK coming online for the first time.

“So, the growth dynamics are incredible.”





Lara (pictured left) – who has a more operational role than Manjit – focuses on the daily running of assets in the markets where Helios Towers operates, and for her the importance of reliable energy sources is essential.

“Power availability is one of the most important operational KPIs that we have, and so remote visibility allows us to ensure that we are providing that power-up time,” says Lara.

“We have successfully deployed a remote monitoring solution across all of our sites that brings that data back in real time from the equipment.

“We are in a position to be able to remotely monitor things like grid availability, the quality of the grid, how much energy we are producing from solar, health of the batteries, what the typical site loads are, whether we need to invest in more capex, how the generators are performing – basically anything that is important to remotely manage all of the 14,000 sites.”

Tune in to this latest episode to learn more about the bigger picture for Helios Towers from Manjit and to receive that all-important operational insight from Lara.



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