



UK Excellence Award Judging Submission

Excellence in Lean Six Sigma

Submission By: **Helios Towers**

Section 1: What you achieved

- What results are you getting and what has the feedback been?
- How are you measuring the benefits?
- How are you sustaining the momentum/ outcomes?

Helios Towers Tanzania (HTT) owns and operates more than 4200 telecommunications towers in Tanzania. These towers all have their own independent power supply due to the unpredictable reliability of the national utility grid in Tanzania which is reliant on hydro power which can be intermittent due to drought. The 2 key business objectives are 1. Network performance which is measured in Downtime per tower per week (DTPTW) and 2. Project delivery speed, quality and safety. This is our ability to build new towers as quickly and efficiently as possible.

1. The results in DTPTW have improved from 14m 28s in 2015 when we had 2,500 towers to 18 seconds with circa 4,200 towers at the end of Dec 2022. This 48x improvement has been felt by customers across Tanzania who now enjoy a significantly improved level of connectivity to their mobile device than ever before. In addition, 97.8% of our 4,200 towers are meeting the lean six sigma downtime per tower per week of 2 seconds per week. We sustain this momentum by building Lean six sigma into our daily operating procedures and training and developing our partners, suppliers and colleagues to strive for improvement every day.

2. Our speed to market has improved from 210 days per tower constructed in 2015 to 120 days per tower constructed in 2022. During this period in 2022 we built 460 towers and the improvement in speed and quality resulted in additional revenue which enabled the business to beat budget by a





significant amount. Additionally, the Tanzania team delivered 45 towers with an average time of 90 days, this was commended by the Minister of Telecommunications in Tanzania during a national telecomms conference held in DAR in 2022. These improvements have been made by the teams ability to connect on the biggest issues and solve complex problems by applying daily focus and systematic approach to continuous improvement based on the DMAIC methodology.

Section 2: Why you did it

- Why are you doing what you are doing and what did you hope to achieve?
- How does this initiative support the strategic direction and values of your organisation?

As a company, we are doing what we are doing to make our customers happy. More than that however, we want to serve people who do not have access to mobile telecommunications signal, internally we call it serving the underserved. By doing this, we are enhancing the socio-economic fabric of the Republic of Tanzania (and all the markets that we operate in). At Helios, we believe that digitisation has the ability to improve lives of all the people in the world and reduce our global carbon footprint.

At an individual level, The HTT team are lead by a Managing Director called Gwakisa Stadi who drives the team to deliver maximum performance. The entire company is made of 100% Tanzanian employees which supports our strategic mission of developing local talent. In Addition this work supports 2 group wide strategic initiatives called Target 30 and 24/90. Target 30 is a group wide target to achieve 30 seconds DTPTPW across the group by 2026 and 24/90 is focused on delivering new towers in less than 90 days.

Section 3: How you did it

- How did you go about achieving the results you did?
- How did you structure your way of working?
- How did you go about involving stakeholders, gaining their buy in and support?
- How did the team pull together to achieve an excellent outcome?





Since 2015, Helios Towers group embarked on a Lean 6 sigma programme called Business Excellence, we use the DMAIC methodology to drive improvement across all aspects of the business.

In Tanzania, the team structures the entire business around Lean thinking and delivering focused improved projects that target the main business challenges. The MD, builds the business excellence methodology into day to day running of the business during a daily stand up meeting where all functions are represented. We then have a weekly project review where the entire office gets the chance to learn and contribute to the improvement initiatives. Every 3 months we reward and recognize significant contributions which further enhances the probability of other colleagues getting actively involved with leading BE initiatives in the future.

The team pulls together in a way where people are encouraged to challenge the status quo and build on each others idea's, this allows people the freedom to experiment and take educated risks by following old ways of working.

Section 4: What you learnt

- How was learning captured, actioned and shared to benefit others?

HTT is a hotbed of talent and more than 6 staff have been promoted to Group or Regional roles in the last 18 months. This has resulted in key business processes being replicated across other area's of the business. In addition we use Tanzania is also a training hub for new employees to visit for weeks or months at a time to enable them to learn and share best practice when they return to their operating company. All learning is captured on a defined Black Belt, Green Belt or White belt 1 page document with supporting information using the DMAIC methodology. In 2022 the team delivered 8 projects which contributed to the success of the business and Gwakisa and HTT will be formally recognized in the 2023 Annual report.

