



GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Directorate for Development Cooperation



European Union Africa
Infrastructure Trust Fund

Regional Internet Carrier Policy Recommendations

Policy Framework for Regional Interconnection



Session Objectives

- Develop a practical and pragmatic policy framework to be implemented, based on the policy options outlined on Day 1
- The session is a discussion platform to agree on the proposed key changes that will be implemented by the stakeholders and a strategy for ensuring this takes place

The need for rapid action

- The proposed policy recommendations when implemented will create an open and attractive environment for regional interconnection and the emergence of Regional Internet Carriers and Regional IXPs
- The countries that are quick to adopt these policies will have a strategic advantage to position themselves as regional transit points

Prioritising Required Policies

- Although there are a large number of policy options identified for regional interconnection, it is necessary to be pragmatic and focus on the most important policies to identify some quick and immediately achievable policy wins
- The applicability of various policies may vary according to the size, population density, and geography and existing market environment of the country

Key Policies to Improve Interconnection

1. Reduce dominance by incumbents and discrimination against new entrants => create a more competitive environment - issue more operator licenses, including wholesale/carrier licenses, at same time introduce Significant Market Power controls on essential facilities of incumbents
2. Increase access to passive infrastructure ==> mandate dig-once policies and ducts or cable on all new roads/rail/energy links, along with infrastructure sharing policies, including on masts
3. Reduce difficulty of obtaining rights of way and permits, especially for crossing borders
4. Address deficiencies in national backbones ==> increase private financing by improving regulatory environment and top up with public finance for remote and rural areas where needed
5. Address low demand ==> a) improve spectrum management, b) increase government investment in e-services, c) address content related legislative needs, d) institute e-literacy campaigns

Other Important Policies And Strategies to Improve Interconnection

- Provide overall direction through adoption or updating of national and regional broadband policies, this includes establishing multistakeholder/multisectoral information sharing and coordinating mechanisms
- Eliminate restrictions on international gateways which limit them to incumbents and mobile
- Require government owned backbones and public alternative infrastructure networks to sell conditional indefeasible rights of use (IRUs) and dark fibre
- Allow existing alternative infrastructure operators with fibre to provide wholesale services to others
- Provide capacity building on interconnection for policy makers and regulators
- Publish tariff and service level comparisons to measure progress and adapt strategies

Ensuring Policy Implementation

- To make sure that the necessary policies are localised for specific national conditions and are then implemented, the following activities can be considered:
 - Establishing national and regional task forces to oversee and advise on the process. In instituting the Task Force will need take into account the means for enforceability of the execution and clearly identify who is responsible for enacting the plan, who will monitor progress, and how the implementation be funded?
 - Implement a mentorship and capacity building program for ISPs, which, when completed will enable the local ISPs to take advantage of regional interconnections under the new environment.

Addressing Lack of Information for Decision-Making: Data Gathering

- Most countries and regions do not have up-to-date data on the Internet sector that can allow rapid decision making on the effectiveness of new policies implemented. Capacity building of regulators is needed to improve data gathering on:
 - National ICT markets
 - Cross border traffic
 - Existing fibre infrastructure (# of fibres, quality of fibre and add drop points)
 - Availability of alternative infrastructure

Monitoring Progress of Interconnection

In order to measure progress in the Regional Internet carriers support programme, and to adapt to new developments, it will be necessary to benchmark the current connectivity situation in the region prior to enabling policy changes, and then 6 months and 1 year after policy changes. Potential progress indicators that could be used include:

- Number of international networks currently peering in-country
- Average relative access access speeds in-country
- Number of requests to peer at IXPs from international and regional ISPs
- Number of independent cross-border fiber infrastructure that exist
- The capacity pricing between countries and region



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