

Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe

- Global Indicators Workshop on Community Access to ICTs – Mexico City, Mexico, 16 – 19 November 2004
- Community Access Indicators – a case for Zimbabwe



Introduction and Background

- In 1998 the Government licensed two private Companies to provide Mobile Cellular Service in competition with the incumbent Operator.
- Year 2000 Government enacted the Postal & Telecommunications Act, Chapter 12.05
- The Act created the Postal and Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe and led to the demerger of the former Posts and Telecommunications Corporation into three Commercial entities namely the incumbent telecommunication company, a Mobile Cellular Company and the Public Postal Operator.

Introduction (Cont.)

- The Act also provided for the setting up of the Universal Service Fund
- In year 2001 Regulations were gazetted which required every Operator to make a contribution towards the Universal Service Fund, as a percentage of their Gross Turnover
- In year 2001 the Regulatory Authority introducing a new licensing regime where rollout targets and Universal Service Obligations were imposed on each Operator.

Introduction (Cont.)

- In Year 2001 the Government also announced a number of Sector Policies including Policy on Universal Service modelled along the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Universal Service Guidelines
- The Policy on Universal Service identifies certain Community Access targets which the Regulatory Authority should achieve by set deadlines.

Community Access Targets as set out in the Policy

	Current 2003	Target by 2006
Urban Teledensity (Urban population is about 33% of Total population)	6.27%	10%
Rural Teledensity (Rural population is about 67% of Total population)	0.43%	3%
Internet penetration (Internet Access)	206,078	500,000

Community Access Concept

- The Policy on Universal Service envisages the setting up of Community Communication Centres to be managed by organisations such as;
 - a) Rural District Councils and other local authorities
 - b) Schools
 - c) Development Associations
 - d) Co-operatives; and
 - e) Local entrepreneurs

Universal Service and Community Service Obligations on Licensees

- As from 2001 all licences were reviewed or amended in order to impose Universal Service and Community service obligations, such as;
 - a) Roll out targets in under-serviced areas including rural areas
 - b) Provision of public payphones
 - c) Provision of access to public emergency call service and directory information service
 - d) Operators to provide services throughout the Country including rural areas and at Community Centres in under-serviced areas.

Success of licence obligations

- Public payphones which use coins being phased out due to higher tariffs
- Card payphones not economic to consumers in rural areas (too costly and not readily available)
- Economic difficulties as a challenge to achieving set roll out targets, Universal Service and Community Service obligations.
- As a result licence obligations have not been successful in achieving the desired levels of Community access to Telecommunication services.

Setting up of the Universal Service Fund

- As from 2001 Licensees were required to contribute a percentage of their revenues towards the Universal Service Fund (USF)
- To date some funds have been accumulated but not enough to finance any meaningful Community Access projects.
- No injection of donor funds (into the USF) due to the obtaining political situation.
- Hence, as yet, no Community Access objectives have been achieved through the setting up of the Universal Service Fund.

Conclusion

- Universal Service Policy is in place
- Roll out targets, Universal Service and Community Service Obligations have been imposed on licensees
- Universal Service Fund has been set up
- BUT no tangible results are visible yet.
- Economic difficulties making it almost impossible for licensees to achieve set targets and no donor funds available due to the current political situation.

Thank you for your attention