

Question 10-1/1: Impact of the convergence of telecommunication, broadcasting and information technology

1 Statement of problem or situation

Convergence has become one of more heavily used words in ICT industry. The word is used to describe almost any trend representing the ever closer contact between the IT, broadcasting and telecommunications sectors. Regulations in these three sectors face new challenges. Technological convergence, or the development of network interoperability constitutes a major challenge to those responsible for legislating and regulating the different sectors.

The question posed is whether or not it is relevant to maintain different regulatory systems according to the level of convergence between the three sectors.

2 Question or issue proposed for study

It is proposed that rather than making a choice between tearing up our regulatory structures or sticking to the status quo, we should follow an evolutionary path. If those problems cannot be solved within the current legislative framework, it may be necessary to amend the legislation on a case by case basis in advance of possible wider change. When a reform in institutional design becomes necessary, its objective should be strong but flexible and unified regulation of networks with enlarged competition skills.

The study group should study the following issues;

- 2.1 Is there general agreement to this evolutionary approach in the short term?
- 2.2 What else can be done to make current structures work better?
- 2.3 What will be the key regulatory issues in the digital future?
- 2.4 What regulatory approaches are likely to be appropriate?
- 2.5 How soon, and under what circumstances, will it be necessary to make fundamental changes to regulatory method and framework?
- 2.6 What are the implications for the regulatory framework?
- 2.7 How to manage the transition period?
- 2.8 What regulatory framework is most likely to be generally appropriate once services become substantially converged?
- 2.9 How to evaluate the performance of regulatory structures?

3 Specification of the expected output

A report answering the questions listed above relating to the various approaches to the regulations framework required to accommodate convergence. This report may contain draft recommendations.

4 Required timing of the expected output

Within two years.

5 "Proposers/Sponsors" - Those who requested study of the Question or issue

European countries.

6 Input required, in carrying out the study

Contributions are required from Member States and Sector Members and also BDT programmes. Relevant ITU-D reports will also be taken into account. These contributions will enable those responsible for work on the Question to develop the most appropriate conclusions, recommendations and output.

7 Target audience for the output

a)

	Developed Countries	Developing Countries	LDCs
Telecom policy makers	YES	YES	YES
Telecom regulators	YES	YES	YES
Broadcasting regulators	YES	YES	YES
Broadcasting operators	YES	YES	YES
Manufacturers	YES	YES	YES
Service Providers	YES	YES	YES

b) Target audience - Who specifically will use the output

Users of the output are expected to be among operators and regulators worldwide.

8 Proposed methods of handling the Question

It is proposed that this Question be handled within a project group which should be composed of experts.

9 Coordination requirements of the study

The ITU-D Study Group dealing with this Question should coordinate closely with interested institutions, international organizations Unions, regulator's groups, etc."
