# Contribution from the
# National Communications Agency (ENACOM), Argentina,
# for the GSR-17 consultation

This document presents three cases of policies and measures in which ENACOM is involved in the interests of advancing the collaboration needed to lift the barriers and achieve affordable access to the digital world.

**Consumer access**

*Measures adopted under the "We care" campaign in Argentina to combat device theft*

ENACOM and the Ministry of Communications (Mincom), together with the Global System for Mobile Association (GSMA) and the mobile telephony companies, launched the "We care (*Nos importa*)" campaign with a view to fostering actions in favour of user protection. This initiative serves as a space within which mobile operators will be able to collaborate with one another and with government authorities to maximize the potential of mobile technology and contribute to economic and social well-being in Latin America. A key concern of this agency is to combat mobile device theft and eliminate the existence of anonymous SIM cards by implementing personal registration.

One specific solution consists in a system, available via the ENACOM website (http://www.enacom.gob.ar/imei), whereby any user wishing to purchase a new mobile can find out, by means of the device's IMEI code (unique worldwide identifier), whether it may have been stolen.

By helping to eliminate the illegal circulation and trafficking of devices, this checking facility discourages theft. ENACOM's Resolution 2459 requires operators to maintain a blacklist, while at the same time highlighting the duty of users to report any robbery, theft or loss. It is important that the public be made aware of such campaigns on our part.

Last but not least, users in Argentina can call the nationwide number *910, accessible from mobile devices, to report the loss or theft of their device to the corresponding mobile telephony provider. The data thus received is added to the aforementioned blacklist.

**Infrastructure and connectivity**

*National Broadband Plan*

The National Broadband Plan was established under Joint Resolution 2/17 of 19 April 2017 with the central aim of providing for the needs of the many communities in Argentina that are without a fibre-optic infrastructure for the provision of telecommunication services. In pursuit of this objective, the State will guarantee the deployment of fibre-optic cabling from the backbone to households that are still without it.

This new programme is underpinned by, among other things, the need to expand "access to technological tools and to services which enable the full exercise of citizenship, contribute to the socialization of knowledge and stimulate development of the productive sector, in line with the objectives of communicative democratization and reduction of socio-economic divides throughout the national territory".

While Argentina is among the countries with the highest levels of Internet access in Latin America, private investment in telecommunication access infrastructure has focused on the major urban centres, resulting in significant regional disparities that run counter to the policy of equitable development among social groups and productive sectors nationwide.

For some time, the Argentine State has recognized as state policy the digital inclusion of all its citizens, making the federalization of communication services a pillar in the achievement of that objective. The aim is to reduce costs, broaden coverage and improve quality of service, particularly for areas currently unserved by the private sector.

**Funding and financing**

*Telecommunication network deployment in rural and vulnerable areas with the aid of universal service funds*

In the Argentine Republic work is under way, using universal service funds, on the development of telecommunication networks in the most vulnerable and disadvantaged areas so that all the country's inhabitants can have access to information and communication technologies (ICTs).

The Argentine State, as the guarantor of universal service, i.e. the body of ICT services to be provided to all the country's inhabitants, ensures quality and affordable access thereto at fair and reasonable prices, irrespective of geographic location, income or capability. ENACOM is the entity responsible for elaborating, establishing and monitoring the implementation of the corresponding programmes.

The foregoing is established in ENACOM's Resolution 2.642 of 17 May 2016, approving the "General Regulations governing Universal Service", Article 19 of which summarizes the programmes which could be implemented:

1       Provision to groups of users which, on account of their special social needs or of physical, economic or other considerations, are limited in their access to services, irrespective of their geographic location.

2       Connectivity for public institutions.

3       Connectivity in rural areas and areas whose geographic conditions are unfavourable to the development of ICT services.

4       Financial support for cooperatives and for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) providing ICT services, to enable them to expand and modernize their existing networks.

5       Connection of licence-holders, cooperatives and SMEs to the Federal Fibre-Optic Network (REFEFO).

6       Any works, project or technological advance which contributes to the development of universal service.

The "Connectivity Programme", adopted by ENACOM's Resolution 3.597 of 8 June 2016, can serve to supplement other universal service programmes with the aim of fostering the implementation of projects for the provision of wholesale and/or retail services in areas with unsatisfied needs, through the development of transport networks and/or strengthening of existing access networks and/or generation of economic conditions conducive to the deployment of new access networks.

The programme is being created with the following aims:

•       Generate equitable access to telecommunication services.

•       Foster the development and social integration of the various regions.

•       Stimulate competitiveness, trade, investment and integration of the productive apparatus in the domestic and global markets.

- Promote access to information technologies and foster digital training processes for the public.

- Promote competition within the sector at the wholesale and retail levels.

To be eligible under the programme, projects must display the following attributes:

- <u>Sustainability</u>: must not need subsidization to ensure their operation or maintenance.

- <u>Services comparable to those in metropolitan areas</u>: the services to be provided in each project coverage area must be generally comparable, in terms of performance, quality and pricing, to those provided in the country's main urban centres.

- <u>Technological neutrality</u>: providers may freely choose their technology provided that it complies with domestic and international standards and that the expertise is on hand to ensure its robustness and proper functioning.

- <u>Open access</u>: other operators must be able to access the active and passive infrastructure constructed under each project.

- <u>Transparency</u>: providers having been awarded a project shall provide information regarding the various aspects of its implementation and progress.

The contract awarded will require, among other things, the submission of reports on the following:

- Achievement of the targets specified in the schedule of work.

- Request for access by other providers.

- Agreements giving access to other providers.

- Evolution of wholesale services.

The Connectivity Programme includes two important programmes that are currently under way through the universal service fund:

1 Project for access to ICT services through the Federal Fibre-Optic Network (REFEFO).

2 Competition for non-reimbursable contributions.

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