

Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR-17)

Contribution from the Communications Regulatory Commission (CRC) of Colombia for the GSR-17 consultation

Summary

This contribution is intended to highlight the importance of developing the digital economy in order to create development opportunities within countries.

First, it will describe the relationship between the digital economy and connectivity, access, markets and forms of financing. It will then describe the steps taken by the Communications Regulatory Commission (CRC) to ensure that Colombians live in an environment defined by opportunities.

Since the turn of the millennium in 2000, governments have been implementing their digital agendas, first providing the infrastructure needed for Internet access and then developing applications and services to enable users to enjoy the benefits of connectivity. Traditional industries subsequently underwent transformation thanks to the use and appropriation of the Internet. This phenomenon is known as the digital ecosystem, and the value of this ecosystem generates the digital economy.

All countries currently have a great opportunity for development thanks to the democratization of information and the ease with which our citizens adapt to these technological changes. In order to ensure that our national digital ecosystems generate value, we first need to have a robust telecommunication infrastructure that will provide very high-quality connectivity. To achieve this, public-private partnerships are crucial, as are regulatory measures that stimulate innovation rather than stifle it.

Our citizens have become “prosumers”¹ and, thanks to ICTs, enjoy increasing access to services and applications which only a few years ago could not have been imagined. To achieve balance in the digital ecosystem, it is essential to have standards that will empower users to enforce their rights as users in the digital economy. With sound infrastructure and well-trained citizens, business opportunities are created and new markets emerge: it is here that governments and regulators must implement measures to encourage the private investment needed for the digital economy. When the four components of the digital ecosystem interact, countries acquire new resources that can be invested in their own advancement.

CRC, as a regulatory authority, has endorsed Colombia’s digital agenda goals under its “*Vive Digital para la Gente*” (Live digital plan for the people) programme, with regulations, studies and forecasts that contribute to the development of the digital ecosystem in the following ways:

- Infrastructure and connectivity. By defining measures that can promote real convergence such as access and interconnectivity systems and rules on infrastructure sharing for telephony, Internet and TV services; and by exploring a new approach to broadband which should help to define minimum broadband requirements for sustaining the digital economy.
- Consumer access. As regulators we have studied the benefits of subsidies, and we are taking care that adopting standards does not increase terminal costs. We have also updated the user

¹ An English acronym formed from “producer” and “consumer”.

protection regime to make it convergent and better adapted to the needs of “prosumers” in the light of a study of consumer behaviour and other factors.

- Market and business opportunities. The CRC is producing guidelines to help regulators of traditional sectors to take account of the innovations emerging from the digital economy. Current barriers to e-commerce in the country will be analysed. There are also ongoing studies on ways of measuring the digital economy.
 - Funding and finance. All these measures will make it easier to generate sources of funding derived from the digital economy.
 - We invite all telecommunication regulators to take a major step forward in terms of innovation and enable the digital economy to be a factor in development.
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