

THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY: ECTEL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

The Governments of the OECS having reviewed the available options for economic development concluded that there was need for diversification of their economies. The services sector was targeted as the motor for this diversification and it was decided that in order to facilitate this, there was need to reform the telecommunications sector.

The project started from a review of the sector, evolved as a World Bank funded project of US\$10.2 million and now today there is a process with new legislation and the imminent formation of a regional regulatory body.

The review of the telecommunications sector included the existing legislation and tariffs along with an analysis of the existing licenses, agreements and the rights/privileges of the existing license holders.

This paper shows how the OECS Telecommunications Reform Project, acting on the mandate of the Heads of Government, is well on the way towards:

- achieving the development of a regional regulatory framework,
- carrying out cost analysis and developing cost oriented tariffs,
- effectively managing the electromagnetic spectrum,
- carrying out a technical assessment of the capabilities and potential of the network and

- developing of a trained skills base for Informatics.

It is important to note in the report that the involvement of the OECS as an organization is critical in the reform process. The reform and innovation that the reform of the sector entails can more efficiently and effectively be dealt with and applied in a regional framework.

The reform process has been driven by economic and political necessities and has seen success through development of a unique model of a regional regulator. The process has been guided by the development of regional telecommunication policy and strategy through a consultative process.

Model legislation has been harmonised for the five participating countries and a common set of regulations is now being developed.

A blend of independence for the regional regulatory body has been coupled with the need for respecting the sovereignty of the participating nations. The formula adopted has been by assigning responsibility for the creation of the regulatory framework to the regional body and leaving the implementation to the national bodies.

The regional body would:

- devise the application forms;
- authorise the tender procedures;
- determine fees and tariffs;
- recommend directions to licensees and frequency authorisation holders;
- advise on the Universal Fund;
- promote competition between telecommunications providers;
- promote the research;
- development and introduction of new telecommunications services and telecommunications technology;
- encourage local investment in telecommunications;
- safeguard the public interest and national security;
- develop human resources through training and transfer of technology; and settle disputes between licencees

The process ensures that in establishing a liberalised environment new legislation is produced with accompanying regulation and the necessary regulatory instruments and bodies created.

In order to create the investor friendly climate the countries have engaged the incumbent provider in negotiations. While the liberalisation is not subject to these negotiations the OECS countries consider it important that the route of negotiations be preferred to litigation.

Of the lessons learned from the process thus far high on the agenda should be the need for clear policy, involvement at the top political level and ensuring involvement of all the stakeholders. The OECS telecommunications reform process has registered its major successes due to the aforementioned reasons.

The liberalisation of the sector will bring the expected benefits of increased economic opportunities and with it a set of issues related to liberalisation. The OECS will be now using a shock liberalisation approach and for this reason it would be a trying period.

In concluding the Project will now be addressing a set of follow up issues to ensure that the platform now being created is used to propel the envisaged economic development.

The OECS welcomes the opportunity to share its experience with the world and would be amenable to providing further information for interested persons.

Thank you.

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1. HISTORY

i. **Modifying the Caribbean image**

The mention of the Caribbean normally conjures up in the minds of the listener or reader, island paradises with bright sun, palm trees swaying in the cool breeze and white sandy beaches liberally sprinkled with tropical beauties in revealing beach wear. Our tourism campaigns have been successful perhaps too much so! Some education may therefore be necessary so as to disabuse you of the notion of sunny island paradises with only smiling beauties. The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, (OECS) wishes to draw your attention to our small island states buffeted by the impact of decisions taken in small green rooms. Decisions that overnight remove the base of our economic development. Small island states striving to define their space in a New World order, where we see reflections of old forms of domination.

This paper is not to provide a list of our woes but rather to present our plan and strategy as a response to the changing world economic environment.

It is in the context of the changing world economic environment that the project to reform the telecommunications sector was conceived. In order to understand the achievement of the Eastern Caribbean States in establishing a new regulatory environment for telecommunications we would need to provide an explanation of the existing political structure and the administrative environment in which the OECS operates.

ii. **Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States**

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) came into being on June 18th 1981, when seven Eastern Caribbean countries signed a treaty agreeing to cooperate with each other and promote unity and solidarity among members. The OECS is now a nine member grouping comprising Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands are Associate Members of the OECS.

The Secretariat is headquartered at the Morne in Castries St. Lucia and headed by a Director General Mr. Swinburne Lestrade. The OECS receives its mandate from the Heads of Government, the Authority, who meet at least once a year with the Chairmanship rotating between countries.

The Secretariat has four directors each with responsibility for; Functional Co-operation; External Relations; Corporate Services and Economic Affairs.

There are several units including;

Natural Resource management Unit (NRMU);

Solid Waste Management Project (SWMP);

OECS Education Reform Unit (OERU);

Technical & Vocational Education & Training Project (TVET); Eastern Caribbean Drug Service (ECDS);

Export Development & Agricultural Diversification Unit (EDADU); Eastern Caribbean Investment Promotion Services (ECIPS); Directorate of Civil Aviation (DCA)

The OECS also has diplomatic missions in Brussels and Ottawa.
(Additional information on the OECS is available at their web site www.oecs.org)

ii. Small island economic realities

The present position in the OECS is characterised by a telecommunications sector dominated by a single exclusive provider. Service is provided in the context of outdated laws, licenses and agreements. Existing tariffs are not based on costs. Regulation is currently carried out by overworked and understaffed units within the Ministries of Communications and Works. The situation is complicated by having different Ministries, often with limited coordination, share different aspects of regulation-often the case in the Broadcasting sector.

iii. Why telecommunications reform

A review of the telecommunications sector in the OECS would identify the following deficiencies:

- laws, licenses and agreements that were outdated and restrictive;
- exclusive provision of all main services within the sector, such as the public switched telephone network and cellular radio, by the incumbent provider;
- unbalanced tariffs that were not cost based and that allowed for excessive profit margins on certain service types;
- limited availability of new services. For example, there was no packet switched service for business;
- a quality of service that was often well below the expected average.

The logic for the need for reform would then become obvious.

Five countries in the OECS have joined together in the process of telecommunications reform and have obtained a loan from the World Bank for US \$6 million and put up \$4 million in counterpart funds

The countries involved in the reform project have decided that they will ensure the participation of all the stakeholders in the process. It is for this reason that OECS adopted a process of national consultation on all major issues. The development of policy and the drafting of legislation have all been done through broad consultation involving all stakeholders.

2. POLITICAL PROCESS

i. OECS Authority

The Heads of Government meeting as the Authority agreed that economic diversity would be a necessity if the economies of the region were to develop. The future economies of the region would be based on a platform of a new telecommunications environment where services would be provided on a competitive basis and a regional regulatory body would be established. This is the basis of the OECS Telecommunications reform project and the genesis of ECTEL.

The Authority decided that:

- a) The economies of the OECS countries needed to be diversified away from a mono-crop agricultural base.
- b) The focus would be placed on telecommunications as the sector that would provide the platform for the new economy.
- c) The telecommunications sector would have to be reformed to fulfill its role as the driver of the new economy.
- d) The OECS Secretariat would be charged with the responsibility for the implementation of the reform process.

ii. Loan negotiations

A six million US dollar loan was negotiated with the World Bank and this was supplemented by four million US dollars in countries counterpart funds. The Loan was divided equally between the five participating countries and a separate Project Agreement was signed to allow the OECS Secretariat administrative responsibility for project administration.

iii. Policy and strategy

The success of the OECS Telecommunications reform project thus far could be attributed to the early development of a clear policy and strategy, involvement of the various stakeholders and the high level of commitment from the political directorate.

The policy and strategy was produced through a series of national and regional consultations. The consultations were conducted using a discussion paper that was circulated then discussion with focus groups that culminated in national consultations. Regional consultations were then organised to harmonise the final strategic and policy paper for submission and adoption by national Parliament.

3. THE PROJECT

i. Objective

The objective of the project is “. To Introduce pro-competitive reforms in the telecommunications sector in order to position Telecommunications as the motor for economic development. “. Increase the supply of informatics-related skills in the five OECS borrowing countries.” “ ... an independent regional regulatory authority is to be established and new sector legislation is to be passed in each country’ ‘ ... address the high cost for telecomm services and lack of trained personnel in this area.

The project is for the reform of the sector, the introduction of pro-competitive reforms and the enhancing of the informatics skills in the member countries.

The mission statement of the countries could be stated as being:

...The Governments of the member countries aim to ensure that the demand for existing telecommunications services is met in order to support economic growth and diversification, provide a suitable environment for tourism, informatics and financial sectors, and satisfy the educational and social needs of the community. the Governments will endeavor to develop the telecommunications infrastructure and services providing a liberalized and competitive environment with open entry to stimulate the introduction of an increased range of services using state of the art technology.

ii. Project Management Unit transition

The Project management Unit was established to implement the Project and its mandate was, to:

Establish a Regional Regulatory Body

Create and introduce a new regulatory framework for a competitive environment.

Conduct a review of the use and management of the electromagnetic spectrum and provide a framework for the efficient management of the spectrum, and

Facilitate the development of informatics related skills

The most critical function of the PMU however would prove to be the transition of itself into the new regulatory body ECTEL.

The establishment of ECTEL will necessitate enhancements to the efficiency of financial management processes and the soundness of internal controls. With this in mind, the need was identified for the contracting of a firm or qualified consultant(s) to assist ECTEL in establishing appropriate financial management systems for the new entity. A critical component of the new internal control arrangement will be the transition of oversight from the OECS Secretariat (and eventually from the Bank as well) to the new ECTEL corporate governance structure.

iii. ECTEL.

ECTEL is a regional body established to provide legal and technical advice to member states on all matters relating to Telecommunications. This was done by

Treaty on May 4th, 2000 through the signature of the Heads of Governments of the five participating states; Commonwealth of Dominica; Grenada; St. Kitts/Nevis; St. Lucia and St. Vincent & the Grenadines

ECTEL will also be responsible, in conjunction with member states, for the management of the electromagnetic spectrum and the numbering resource.

ECTEL will assist in setting tariffs, rates and regulations for the sector.

License will be classified as individual and class licenses. Class licenses will be those of a general nature where those applicants meet pre-established criteria and these would include all of the so-called value added services.

Licenses for mobile telephony, international service and domestic telephony will be treated as individual licenses. License applications will be made to member countries and individual license applications will be forwarded to ECTEL for review and recommendation. A positive recommendation from ECTEL will be a necessary but not sufficient condition for the award of a license. Countries will have to establish their own national commissions to review and advise on class licenses.

The new laws and sector policies proposed by the OECS and implemented by project countries lay out plans to move toward divesting from telecommunications entities and independent pro-competitive regulation for all sectors of telecommunications and related value-added services coordinated and advised by ECTEL. In particular, the regulator(s) will seek to:

- Collect appropriate fees for spectrum usage and regulatory costs
- Ensure license holders adhere to conditions
- Ensure cost-related tariffs and prevent cross subsidy
- Prevent abuse by dominant operators (especially over interconnection)
- Approve equipment and set technical standards
- Liberalize leased line provision, value added services, customer premise equipment and private networks
- Publish timely information on quality and cost of services
- Ensure free and simple access to emergency services

The headquarters of ECTEL will be in St Lucia.

ECTEL's powers and responsibilities under the treaty include:

- Advisory and coordination roles with the contracting states and with other states and international bodies regarding telecommunications
- Recommending to states regional policies on issues including universal service, interconnection, numbering and pricing, forms and areas of licensing and frequency authorization, methods of standardizing applications procedures, cost-based pricing regimes
- Recommending license terms and conditions, systems of frequency authorization management, license fee structures, technical standards and procedures for approval of equipment, management systems for and operation of universal service funds
- Designing and operating open tender proceedings for individual licenses as requested
- Review all individual license applications made in contracting states

- Maintaining a harmonized regional radio spectrum plan and manage radio spectrum and frequency authorization
 - Mediating or issuing opinions on disputes between licensees
 - Monitoring in collaboration with states, license effectiveness
- Recommendations are to be implemented by member states ‘whenever practicable.’

iv. Project’s uniqueness

The project involves five sovereign independent states and is unique in that for the first time independent states will give up some sovereignty in the establishment of a regional regulatory body.

A policy has been developed through a consultative process involving all the stakeholders. This policy has served as the guide for the development of new legislation, which is in the final phase of drafting.

v. Components

A Project Implementation Unit (PMU) has been established in the OECS Secretariat with the objectives of: (i) assisting the OECS in the management of the project; (ii) ensuring compliance with Project accounting, financial reporting and auditing requirements; and (iii) supervising specialized consulting firms. When the regional telecommunications authority is established under the Project, the PMU’s responsibilities, services, staff and goods are to be transferred to the authority. A Project Implementation Committee (PIC), which includes officials from each of the participating countries and regional officials, was set up to monitor compliance with policy guidelines and with the Project Agreement.

- ECTEL is in the process of developing from a legal entity into a functioning institution. It is designed to promote liberalization and fair competition, harmonization of regulations and policies across member states, universal service, fair pricing, access to advanced services and overall sector development.

4. LEGISLATION

i. Policy formulation

The countries embarked on a process of policy and strategy formulation so as to provide the basis for development of appropriate legislation. The draft policy identified the issues for consideration and provided the available option for dealing with the issues.

In the case of the OECS as in other countries the key issues were:

Interconnection – making it mandatory and using reference interconnect offers.

Numbering – a resource previously controlled to a large extent by the incumbent.

Universal service obligations – previously little or no build out obligations by the provider and the need for compulsory conditions in the licenses and

Spectrum management – the need for providing clean spectrum for new entrants.

ii. Consultative process

Critically important in the OECS telecommunications reform was the consultative process applied. At all levels there was consultation.

In developing the process there was a high level of consultation at the top political level. In determining policy and strategy there was wide consultation among all of the stakeholders. Discussion documents were prepared and distributed. Focussed discussion held with special interest groups. National consultations followed and led to regional consultations. Experts in selected areas were used to facilitate discussions and top level political involvement was had at all stages.

The process led to stakeholder ownership of the process and a raising of the level of understanding of the issues involved.

iii. Model legislation

A model legislation whose purpose is to establish a regulatory regime to implement obligations and purposes of the countries signatory to the Treaty establishing the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority. In that Treaty Heads of Government of certain states in the Caribbean have recognised that a harmonised approach in the region for the management of telecommunications is in the best interests of the development of the region. The purpose of the Treaty, *inter alia*, is to promote open competition in telecommunications, harmonised policies on a regional level for telecommunications, a universal service, fair pricing and the use of cost-based pricing methods by telecommunications providers. The Treaty seeks to achieve these objectives by establishing a monitoring body to be known as the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL). This body will not only advise on appropriate technical matters but also recommend to Contracting States a harmonised legal regime relevant to current realities of telecommunications.

The Bill seeks to provide for the regulation of telecommunications

and for that purpose to establish a National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission.

The Bill is divided into seven parts.

Part I - Deals with matters of a preliminary nature, that is, short title, interpretation, and the telecommunications services to which the Act shall not apply. It also provides that the principal object of the Bill is to give effect to the purposes of the Treaty and obligations of this country under the Treaty.

Part II- This Part establishes the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (the Commission) to be subject to the direction and control of the Minister responsible for telecommunications

Part III – The Bill prohibits the operation of a telecommunications network or a telecommunications service without a licence. Under this Part, unless otherwise exempted, a person who wishes to engage in providing telecommunications services shall first obtain a licence. There are to be two categories of licences, namely, an individual licence and a class licence.

Part IV - This part deals with the provision of universal service, interconnection and infrastructure sharing. Under this part, any telecommunications provider may, on the recommendation of the Commission and after the Commission has consulted ECTEL, be required by the Minister to provide universal service to any person, whom the Minister may specify in an Order.

Part V - As the Commission is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Act, this Part establishes the appropriate administrative machinery

Part VI – Offences. This Part lists generally in prohibitory form offences under the Act. These would include connection of terminal equipment to a public telecommunications network without the approval of the Commission, use of equipment that creates electrical interference, unlawful interception of communications or disclosure of personal information

Part VII – Miscellaneous. This Part provides for stoppage of a message, which appears dangerous to the security of the country or contrary to public order or decency. This Part deals with issues of copyright, liability of private and public officials, installation and operation of telecommunications by diplomatic missions. Provision is made for the making of regulations by the Minister to give effect to the Act.

iv. **Liberalisation schedule**

The OECS countries driven by harsh economic necessity have decided to opt for shock liberalisation. Their schedule would to a large extent be guided by the administrative capacity of the OECS states. The present schedule is for legislation to be assented to by mid November. This would then mean that all-existing license holders to come in line within six

months. This gives the outside date of March 31st as the date for full liberalisation. All participating countries have passed the model legislation, the regulation will be ready for January 2001 and ECTEL has been launched. We are ready!

5. REGULATION

i. Regulatory structure

The twenty-four pieces of legislation required by the legislation will be completed by late December. The first pieces however will be ready for late November and would include those dealing with license application forms, numbering and interconnection.

One of the critical issues in liberalisation would be interconnection. ECTEL has in the model legislation that was passed in all member countries made interconnection on the part of the incumbent telecommunications provider mandatory. The legislation now currently being drafted provides the mechanics for the interconnection to be realised.

The approach to be adopted would be to use what is known in the industry as the Reference Interconnect Offer (RIO), the incumbent would make its reference offer as a basis for commercial negotiations. The final interconnect agreement would then be subject to regulatory approval so as to prevent the incumbent using market power to force a one-sided agreement.

Numbering would also be critical in liberalisation and it would appear that Cable and Wireless are in the process of hoarding numbers in a sort of preemptive strike to have competitive advantage. Countries need to assume ownership and control of their numbering resource.

ii. Licensing process

The licensing process will be to classify the licenses in two types. All license applications will be on the relevant form and will be forwarded to the country in which the applicant wishes to operate. The individual licenses will be forwarded to ECTEL for a recommendation. The recommendation of ECTEL would be a necessary but not sufficient condition for a license.

It is envisaged that there may be cases where an applicant would wish to operate in all of the participating states and the process is being designed to facilitate this.

iii. Proposed environment

The major question regarding the proposed environment has not yet been completely defined. It is certain that it would be a competitive environment that would have a transparent and fair regulatory structure. The OECS is also defining the optimum number of market entrants for specific services.

Whether there would be auctions or beauty contests or even tenders for some of the services are yet to be decided.

A clear definition of this environment would be presented in late January 2001 to potential investors by way of an investors symposium in the OECS.

6. NEGOTIATIONS

i. Investor confidence

The governments will encourage investments in the sector from all appropriate sources by developing an enabling legal and regulatory framework, making it possible for the public and business users to obtain telecommunications services at fair prices that reflect economic cost and efficiency...”

A critical lesson learnt is the process is that in the presence of perceived exclusivity by the provider and the decision to liberalise, it is preferable to negotiate. Litigation does little to foster investor confidence while negotiation indicates a responsible attitude on the part of the government.

Negotiations are proceeding smoothly in the OECS and we expect a conclusion shortly.

ii. OECS position

The liberalization of the telecommunications sector was never subject to the negotiations with the private incumbent monopoly provider. It was always however the position of the OECS that existing commercial licenses would be respected until such time as it would be possible to change them by mutual agreement or by legislative action. Initial negotiating positions were informed by the perception that the incumbent operator had some exclusive privileges. The OECS Supreme Court decision in the Marpin case however has radically changed the perception of exclusivity. In the absence of any exclusive rights and the guarantee for non-exclusive licenses then the incumbent operator would have no basis to seek compensation for loss of any perceived exclusive rights.

The OECS position has always been that they will negotiate with Cable and Wireless as a group and seek a common date for termination of the existing licenses. There will be no acceptance of the claims for compensation.

iii. Negotiation framework

Countries are fully cognizant of the need to maintain a good investor climate and not to send the wrong signals. They have therefore engaged with the incumbent provider Cable and Wireless in discussions regarding the early termination of their existing licenses. These discussions are expected to conclude shortly and are not expected to impact negatively on the decision to liberalize the sector by mid-2001.

The future discussions with Cable and Wireless will center on the conditions for their new licenses and the arrangements for the provision of services.

7. LESSONS LEARNED.

i. Stakeholder ownership

The great complexity in the creation of a regulatory body covering several independent member states in such a fast-moving sector requires significant resources merely to bring together participants, and great flexibility of project design.

The critical element for success has been ensuring stakeholder ownership through constant involvement by consultations and provision of timely information.

The constant training of all the various regulators has also ensured that the regulators develop as the process develops.

The centrality, especially in multi-country projects of this nature, of strong commitment and close involvement of the regional coordinating body (in this case the OECS), participant countries and their citizens is a key to the projects success thus far.

- The complexities of the transition process between the project management unit and its evolution to a regional authority is another le

ii. Political commitment

The level of political commitment has ensured the success of the process.

Commitment through the provision of resources, involvement in the process and providing relevant policy and guidance. This involvement has been provided from the level of Ministers and Permanent Secretaries as well as the technocrats of all of the member countries.

iii. Building networks

The OECS telecommunications reform Project has allowed for the building of people networks. These links have proven useful in the development of strategies and in the planning of the liberalisation process.

8. CONCLUSION

i. **Economic opportunities**

The conclusions based on our experiences indicates that in working towards liberalization countries need to be clear in their objectives for liberalization. If attracting investment is an objective then ensuring investor confidence would be important.

In the march towards liberalization the various stakeholders should be involved and cooperation with other countries in similar situations is most useful in learning from their experience and joining forces.

The OECS based on our experience thus far would like to offer the following recommendations:

- Clearly define all the rules and regulations for the “game’**
- Engage all the stakeholders in discussions regarding the transformation of the sector so that they may feel ownership of the process**
- Develop policy early as the guide for transformation of the sector.**
- Ensure clarity of purpose at the highest political level on major issues before moving forward.**
- Share experiences with other countries that are in or have experienced similar situations**
- Use a consultative approach with all shareholders to establish owners**

ii. **Liberalisation issues,**

In the reform of the sector there are several issues that need to be addressed and in order of priority the putting in place of a sector policy would be the most important. The policy would serve as the guide for drafting the legislation that would serve the new environment.

Legislation is needed to reflect the regulation of telecommunications in a new environment where competition is a given and technological convergence forces one to develop new paradigms.

In the case of the OECS, policy has been drafted, legislation passed and regulation in the final phase of completion.

The sovereignty of nations is critical for the OECS, The regulatory body will be operating across borders and the issue of policing and enforcement would impinge directly on the sovereignty of the member states.

If the process is to result in the attraction of new investors then the potential investors would need to be assured that the process of licensing is not arbitrary and that the regulator is independent and operates in a transparent manner

The management of the spectrum is of critical importance. Frequencies have to be made available for the new services and before this is done then an audit of the spectrum would be required. The audit would determine the present use of the spectrum, what is available and what level of frequency migration is required.

The OECS is in the process of its spectrum audit and we have found that quite a bit of outdated equipment is in use and a moratorium would be required for the phased obsolescence of this equipment.

In an effort to ensure that the universal service obligations are met all providers of service will have to contribute to a fund. The provision of service in remote and rural areas would be put up for tender for the supply of service and if need be financed from the Universal Service Fund.

Interconnection is another issue of critical importance and the key factor would be the determining of costs for determining interconnection charges.

The preparation of the future regulators is a priority for the OECS we are in the process of coordinating with various training institutions for the training of our regulators. The use of the Internet for conducting distance-training courses is being explored

The OECS is in the process of transition to a fully liberalized environment by March 31st 2001. The transition issues would be a review of the requirements for liberalization and a roll out plan.

The Secretariat will be identifying the precursor elements required for the achievement of full liberalization. A technical team has been established to review these issues.

iii. **Follow up**

In conclusion the telecommunications reform project has thus far concentrated on the consolidation of the process to ensure that the major objectives could have been completed in the time frame specified. The primary objectives having now been achieved the participating countries are now in a position to consider expanding the membership of ECTEL.

Follow up issues would include:

- the satisfactory transition from the telecom project's PMU under the OECS Secretariat to the management of ECTEL itself, which will include changes to the Loan and Project Agreements;
- the purchase of spectrum management equipment, utilizing the skills of a procurement specialist;
- the staffing of ECTEL with trained professionals; and
- the approach to new potential new member countries.

Beyond these immediate concerns, the time is ripe to look forward to maximizing the benefits of a competitive telecommunications regime on the broader economy increasing private investment in the sector and beyond, and reaping the full advantage