



Telecommunication
Development Bureau (BDT)



Ref.: BDT/DKH/RME/DM/190

Geneva, 23 March 2021

National Regulatory Authorities of ITU Member
States

**Subject: Consultation for the GSR-21 Best Practice Guidelines
Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR-21)**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to launch the consultation for the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) 2021 Best Practice Guidelines. Contributions will be coordinated by Ms Mercy Wanjau, Acting Director General, Communications Authority of Kenya, and GSR-21 Chair.

GSR-21 will be held under the overall theme “Regulation for digital transformation – Accelerating inclusive connectivity, access and use”. The GSR-21 Best Practice Guidelines will build on the collective wisdom of the previous editions spanning over two decades to draw patterns for regulatory uplift for ubiquitous, open and resilient digital infrastructure in the turmoil of global social and economic disruption. The consultation also borrows from the lead themes of the Road to Addis agenda with the aim of intertwining the vision and strategy for digital development with rethinking high level policy principles and regulatory best practices.

The overall theme of the GSR-21 Consultation is “**Regulatory uplift for financing digital infrastructure, access and use**”. Digital markets are driven by accelerating technological development and digital transformation that are driving massive change across the board. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the evolution of existing policy and regulatory frameworks to more holistic, future-ready agendas for digital regulation.

Concretely, you are therefore invited, as part of the GSR-21 consultation process, to provide your ideas, views and experiences on the following topical areas:

- **Inducing new, effective and agile financing mechanisms to digital infrastructure, access and use**

Digital infrastructure and services have become the foundation of the digital economy and society, and a powerful driver for development. What new policy and regulatory tools can be leveraged to trigger a multiplier effect on investment in digital infrastructure and services? Is there a ‘silver bullet’ for accelerating the rollout of ubiquitous connectivity? How can regulation improve affordability and enhance use? What regulatory incentives can stir the forming of new financing models, such as blended and pooled financing? What is the new role of policy makers and regulators with regards to bridging financing gaps? How can new regulatory patterns help craft new breeds of partnerships among different types of market players, funding agencies, banks and non-traditional players?

- **Prototyping regulatory patterns for the post-Covid digital world**

Rising up to the market and societal challenges, countries need to leap forward to the next level of policy and regulation, with new approaches and a new toolbox. Is there a silver lining to the current

financial hardship of digital markets – and can regulation help find it? What new regulatory practices, tools or initiatives can regulators introduce to tool up regulatory frameworks for emerging technologies and help solve investment conundrums? Are there innovative regulatory approaches that can unlock the power of new and emerging technologies? How can safe space for regulatory experimentation allow fine-tuning new business models and foster resilience? Are regulatory sandboxes the answer to the high complexity of new digital technologies and services, reducing the time to market and helping secure funding for broad rollout?

- **Transformational leadership to unleash the power of emerging technologies and business models**

Technology developments and economic disruptions in the aftermath of the global COVID-19 crisis are affecting policy settings. Investment gaps and scarce available funding for digital infrastructure and services are exacerbating the need to review policy and regulatory frameworks beyond national boundaries or sectors. Is traditional regulatory action going to be increasingly matched with new co-regulation and self-regulation channels to deliver better market and consumer outcomes? Is digital regulation multimodal by design? What mechanisms for collaborative governance are best suited to provide a holistic, agile interface for the digital transformation? How can the fifth-generation collaborative regulation (G5) span geographies and markets to enable cross-border collaboration and coordination on thorny issues related to digital trade, taxation, data protection, data flows, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence?

Please submit your contribution to gsr@itu.int (maximum two pages) no later than 14 May 2021. Recalling the series of GSR Best Practice Guidelines since 2003 that capture established regulatory mechanisms and tried and tested practices, I encourage you to focus your 2021 contribution on novel, bold, and groundbreaking approaches and tools for digital regulation.

In the lead up to the core GSR event, the 2021 series of GSR+ regional events [www.itu.int/gsr21] will provide a platform for discussion and input to this edition of the GSR Best Practice Guidelines. A summary of the insights provided at each GSR+ event will be posted as a contribution to the consultation and considered in the elaboration of the draft Guidelines.

The final GSR-21 Best Practice Guidelines will be presented and adopted at the GSR-21 Heads of Regulators Executive Roundtable on 21 June 2021. All drafts of the Best Practice Guidelines as well as individual contributions will be posted online.

I look forward to receiving your contributions and I take this opportunity to encourage you to register for GSR-21 as a participant, panellist or moderator. Further information is available at: www.itu.int/gsr21.

Yours faithfully,

[Original signed]

Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Director