

## **RWANDA CONTRIBUTION TO GSR-2021**

### **1.0. Inducing new, effective and agile financing mechanisms to digital infrastructure, access and use**

On this particular subject, the Government plays a vital role in the liberalization of the market through policies, legal and regulatory frameworks that support effective competition.

The Government allocates and assigns spectrum, facilitates access to rights of ways and open access to critical infrastructure. The Government has also the role to attract investors, provide equal opportunities to all operators on the market and give autonomy to the ICT regulator.

The Government further sensitizes the population through digital literacy campaign, to use the internet and facilitates the provision of low-cost user devices and creates e-government applications and digital content that fosters the use of internet.

The Government also monitors the quality of Internet services and supports secure e-transactions. On this note, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) has made the following initiatives to build an enabling environment:

- 1.0. Rwanda liberalized the telecom market and established the institutional frameworks that help the sector to develop;
- 1.1. GoR provided tax incentives or tax deductibility for new investments, both in infrastructure, tangible and intangible assets such as ICT equipment and software;
- 1.2. In the spirit of providing equal opportunity and access to telecommunication/ICT services to all Rwandans and provide coverage in different uncovered and underserved areas of the country, the Universal Access Fund (UAF) supports Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to increase their network coverage countrywide;
- 1.3. Rwanda entered into a partnership with Korea Telecom Networks Rwanda to implement and finance the Fourth Generation network (4G) and the coverage is currently above 96%;
- 1.4. The GoR implemented programs that focused on direct broadband infrastructure development. Which include among others:
  - Low-interest loans to students and teachers to acquire digital devices (laptops);
  - Subsidizing Internet bandwidth to rural communities for accessing the education, health and public services in rural and remote areas of Rwanda;
  - Subsidizing broadband connectivity to ICT Telecentres in rural and remote areas of the country;
  - Connecting all technical secondary and college schools in remote and rural areas to the Fiber and VSAT Internet connectivity;
- 1.5. The GoR established Rwanda Innovation Fund, the initiative that aims to address the financing gap that tech-enabled companies face at different growth stages in Rwanda;

### **2.0. Prototyping the regulatory pattern for post COVID digital world**

- 2.1. Rwanda established the innovation labs that help startups to sit together and get mentorship services and basic digital infrastructure and develop their products.
- 2.2. Rwanda put in place the flexible regulatory framework for startups. The regulations governing sandbox have been developed in the utilities and financial sectors and startup companies are benefiting the same.

- 2.3. Rwanda also developed: the data protection and privacy policy, and law that are able to stimulate the exploration of the data towards data monetization.
- 2.4. Rwanda is developing the startup act that will facilitate the financing of startup companies.
- 2.5. Rwanda is working on the roadmap for fifth generation long-term evolution.
- 2.6. Rwanda is carrying out the feasibility study for implementing the Digital Identity (Digital ID).

### **3.0. Transformation leadership to unleash the power of emerging technologies and business models**

- 3.1. Rwanda established a multisector and converged ICT regulator where Postal, Broadcasting, Telecom and IT are regulated by a single regulator (RURA).
- 3.2. In Rwanda's telecom sector, the interconnection obligations and termination rates are imposed to ensure that operators, especially new entrants, can access each other's networks. This has also protected consumers by making sure that they can connect to any other person, regardless of which operator they are using.
- 3.3. Rwanda's ICT regulator handles dispute resolution between licensed operators in cases where parties cannot come to an interconnection agreement. The regulator also resolves consumer complaints.
- 3.4. Rwanda's ICT regulator set up a new department, which is in charge of cybersecurity and strategic integration. The same department handles issues related to Technology innovation including block chain, IoT, Big data analytics, AI and smart cities. The overall purpose is to establish the light-touch regulation for digital platforms and promoting and streamlining the use of digital services by different organizations in the country.
- 3.5. To fully realize the potential of an independent and accountable regulator, its staff should have the necessary skills. It is in line with this framework that Rwanda established the master's degree course in regulatory economics and competition policy, the second of its kind in Africa.
- 3.6. Rwanda's ICT regulator engages the full range of stakeholders through open consultations, this is particularly important when adopting any digital regulation. Stakeholders in this setting include consumer associations, digital platforms, commercial players in other sectors, such as finance, transportation, and health, as well as other government agencies with overlapping interests and jurisdictions.
- 3.7. For the purpose of the use of evidence-based, decision-making, Rwanda's ICT regulator introduced within the department of economic regulation, the office in charge of regulatory impact assessment. The office assesses the likely positive and negative effects of the proposed regulations, tariff, decisions and consultations.
- 3.8. There is a self-regulation framework in media sector where Rwanda Media Commission (RMC) handles all issues related to the content or digital content published by the media outlet.
- 3.9. Rwanda is going to implement the converged licensing for ICT sector and its concerned regulation has been approved.