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Telecom Regulator and NSO Collaboration - Key to Better ICT Indicators

……..The Case of Pakistan

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ICT Data Collection Agencies in Pakistan

- Market Research Organizations (BMI, Gallup, Ericsson Research Lab, etc)
- International organizations (ITU, GSMA, World Bank, etc.)

Challenges

- Need for a lead organization on pooling ICT data from all sources i.e, PTA in Pakistan (ownership)
- Lack of funds for inclusion of ICT data in regular surveys
- Insufficient coordination among stakeholders
  - NSO major source for Regular primary data Collection
- Overlap in regulatory ambits of Government bodies such as FBR, PTA, SBP, PBS (e.g. revenue reporting and tax collection; telecom indicators for GDP calculation)
- Requirement of immediate provision of urgent/ Top Priority information by the Government
- Issues in timely and accurate provision of data by operators
  - Manual data collection and management

Challenges (Contd..)

- Confidentiality of Financial information
- Legal Limitations to data provision
- Technical difficulties in calculation of some indicators
- Multifaceted Compliance to various Government departments for data reporting (Operator view)
- Non-availability of geographical and gender-based ICT data
  - Require periodic Household Surveys for detailed ICT indicators

PTA's Efforts to Improve Data Collection

- **Ownership:** PTA agreed to lead on ICT data collection hub
  - Availability of funds from its own sources for NSO, if required
- PTA raised the issue at highest level i.e Minister of Finance and IT Minister to convince NSO to include ICT indicators in its PSLM and other regular HH surveys
- Engaged the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (NSO) to carry out separate surveys for measuring ICT data at HH level and include few indicators in regular surveys
- Periodically ICT Indicators Symposium for all local stakeholders
- Formation of a National Working Group on ICT Data Collection

  representation from all stakeholders.
- Developing a centralized state-of-the-art ICT Indicators Database (in process).
- Revision/Updating of the data collection forms to collect quarterly data from telecom operators

The Outcome

- NSO agreed to include few ICT Indicators in its annual HH data collection survey
  - In the first phase, NSO incorporated ICT indicators in its HH survey
  - Based on survey results, ITU questionnaires have been updated
- Accuracy improved in ICT data provision to various international agencies – reflecting true ICT development in the country
  - IDI value of Pakistan improved
- Focused approach to use ICT indicators for the monitoring of SDGs – WG of MoIT, Planning Commission, NSO and PTA
- NSO agreed to have separate ICT survey after 2-5 years intervals subject to funds availability
- PTA on list of experts list of NSO to review questionnaires for HH data collection

Way Forward

Collaboration between Government agencies- under a centralized lead agency

- MoIT may take the lead role

Regular consultation with telecom operators

Automation of ICT Indicators Database

- On-line data reporting
- PTA's in-house database
- Big data analytics

Annual Symposium/Conference on ICT Indicators

- Progress review
- New data requirements

Thank You

ICT Data Sources

Telecom Operators	Government Bodies	International Sources	Media reports
• Cellular • Local Loop • Broadband • LDIs • VAS	• PBS • SBP • FBR • FAB • PEMRA • BOI • USF • PSEB	• ITU • GSMA • Research firms (e.g. Delliote) • Online Data Portals	• News • Blogs • Articles • Magazine

ICT Indicators Collected by PTA

By Frequency

- Monthly (subscribers and data usage)
- Quarterly (detailed/on prescribed format)
- As required

By Type of Data

- General
- Network
- Financial
- Traffic
- Quality of Service
- Mobile Financial Services
- Economic Indicators (investment, employment, revenues, contributions etc)
- Need based indicators

ICT Indicators Collected by PTA (cont.)

- By Type of Operators
  - For each CMO
    - 57 indicators are collected at the end of each quarter
  - For each FLL Operator
    - 37 indicators are collected at the end of each quarter
  - For each WLL Operator
    - 26 indicators are collected at the end of each quarter
  - For each BB Operator
    - 30 indicators are collected at the end of each quarter
  - For each LDI operator
    - 30 indicators are collected at the end of each quarter

Importance of ICT Indicators

- Accurate, meaningful and objective analysis of ICT indicators help governments to:
  - *Design and evaluate ICT policies and strategies*
  - *Country vs. region vs. world comparison of ICT development*
  - *Devise means and ways to bridge the digital divide*
- ICT data is the key parameter for investors to make their business decisions
- ICT indicators help monitor the progress towards the road to information societies.
- The growth and development of ICT indicators require continuous review of ICT definitions and methodologies.

~~Recommendations to ITU~~

- ~~Ranking of countries sensitive, which needs careful selection of indicators~~
- ~~A single software for data collection (i.e, ICT EYE) across countries that enable to get ITU data immediately except confidential info~~
- ~~Free of cost online data sharing platform for members by ITU~~
- ~~Availability of latest data with ITU of all countries (normally there is lag)~~
- ~~Play lead role for capacity building and to educate the countries on coordination for ICT data collection (needed in Pakistan)~~
- ~~Working group on ICT Indicators should be made operational immediately and quarterly meetings to be held.~~
- ~~Skills/education data for IDI ranking must be replaced with HH data of skills instead of mean education. Pakistan has serious concerns~~
- ~~Technical support for data audit of operators for data accuracy~~