

## **International Chamber of Commerce input for Global Symposium for Regulators 2023 Best Practice Guidelines: Regulatory and economic incentives for an inclusive and sustainable digital future**

Drawn from private sector experience and innovative regulatory approaches, the [ICC White Paper on Delivering Universal Meaningful Connectivity](#) showcases how an interoperable, seamless ICT ecosystem is crucial to help populations reap the benefits of ICT and development opportunities. Such an ecosystem consists of:

1. accessible and affordable infrastructure and devices;
2. appropriate applications and services built upon the infrastructure; and
3. user ability to use a device and understand the features of applications and services.

We find that it takes a unique mix of technology, regulatory approaches, and business models to deliver such an ecosystem and appropriately respond to the needs of each community. This paper provides a menu of concrete policy options for decisionmakers to consider, combine and adapt to their specific needs.

### **Financial solutions and business models**

**Partnerships** between a broad range of actors can unlock funding and resources, reduce risk exposure, and allow companies to share both responsibilities and rewards. Policymaking should make such partnerships easy and economically attractive.

**Innovative business models focusing on value creation** can address inherent risks in underserved areas by investing in skills training and local applications, thereby enabling populations to improve their livelihoods.

### **Technological considerations**

It is essential to enable and expand the uptake of network technologies, both old and new. Policymakers should encourage **investment in broadband** development, consider effective and technologically neutral ways to **manage spectrum**, support the development and deployment of **innovative technologies, services and applications**; and promote the development of **locally relevant content**.

### **Regulatory approaches**

Given the large variety of barriers to connectivity to be addressed, as well as the speed at which new services, players and business models appear, it is vital that regulatory regimes are **flexible, forward-looking**, adjust to rapidly evolving markets and **encourage innovation and large-scale private sector investment**. Policy and regulatory mechanism should **promote the value of the entire communications and digital services ecosystem**.



Furthermore, policies should be non-discriminatory, technology-neutral, and supportive of innovative business models and the development and deployment of a wide range of technologies, standards, and system architectures.

We identify the following three areas for priority action by policymakers:

#### 1. FACILITATE INVESTMENT ACROSS THE ENTIRE DIGITAL VALUE CHAIN

- Foster investment, competition, and innovation in the development and deployment of broadband services and connectivity devices, to expand affordable access and end-user choice for broadband connectivity.
- Facilitate investment in and enable the development of content that helps drive and sustain adoption, including through e-government services.
- Invest directly in digital literacy and skills development, while facilitating and supporting multi-sectoral initiatives that meet these objectives.

#### 2. EFFECTIVELY MANAGE SPECTRUM

- Allocation and licensing of spectrum should be transparent, fair, economically efficient, technology-neutral, and aimed at ensuring that sufficient broadband-capable spectrum is made available.
- Reducing the cost and complication of licensing and permit processes, and providing access to sufficient spectrum, both licensed and unlicensed, can encourage innovative technological approaches and competitive services.
- Providing access to low-cost licensed spectrum, and providing greater access to unlicensed spectrum, can help to reach unserved or underserved areas.

#### 3. GROUND POLICIES IN EVIDENCE AND DATA

- Policymaking and regulation should be evidence-based, transparent, inclusive of all interested stakeholders, and aimed at improving the ease and predictability of doing business.
- Policy solutions should be specific, flexible and non-discriminatory, especially when targeting rural and remote areas.
- Private investments and public funding mechanisms alike should be informed by accurate information and reliable data.

Please refer to the [ICC White Paper on Delivering Universal Meaningful Connectivity](#) for case studies that explore the potential of new economic and regulatory approaches to securing an inclusive and sustainable digital future.