

## Contribution to GSR13: Innovative and Smart Regulatory Approaches

### Communications and Information Technology Commission

#### Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Like Saudi Arabia, many developing countries only launched their National Regulatory Agencies (NRAs) since the turn of the century. The initial focus was to develop a legal and regulatory framework to support the introduction of competition, to issue licenses to new entrants, and to support new entrants in the commercial launch of competitive service – usually against the strenuous opposition of the incumbent.

Conditions have changed significantly, and many lessons have been learned in the first decade. True competition has been achieved in many markets, many new services are being offered, technology has evolved to digital and IP and high-speed broadband, subscriber numbers have soared, and service providers are facing new revenue challenges.

This clearly calls for a change in focus of the NRAs. In the case of Saudi Arabia, the Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) began a significant organizational restructuring in 2011 to focus on a wide range of areas, including, but not limited to:

- Manage competition and foster infrastructure collaboration among the service providers to minimize costs and maximize the use of scarce resources;
- Improve customer service levels, ensure the expeditious and fair handling of consumer complaints, and protect the consumer as new services are being rolled out;
- Educate and support the public on new services, ICT awareness, cybersecurity, the facts related to potential health issues, the reasons for regulatory decisions, and many other important topics;
- Expand our strategic planning role and methodology to better meet the needs of the evolved markets and to include all stakeholders;
- Improve processes based on lessons learned to better ensure fairness and predictability in the markets and thus better attract investment in the sector.

CITC has also been taking a significantly more active role as a partner for development and social inclusion. Our Universal Service Fund (USF) is fully underwritten by the government and not by universal service fees paid by subscribers. We have been awarding USF projects since 2010 and we are on track to have 100% broadband Internet and voice coverage in Saudi Arabia within five years. We have also initiated a number of projects to foster growth and development of the sector. These include among others:

- A program to identify, promote, support and grow the domestic ICT industry and create national ICT champions;
- Annual IT reports focusing on particular segments and aimed at reducing barriers to entry and encouraging investment;
- Fostering and promoting the transition to IPv6;
- Introducing inspection and monitoring programs in the national CERT to improve cybersecurity and confidence in ICT;
- Identifying strategies and implementing programs to increase broadband penetration;
- Increasing focus on creating additional spectrum for new mobile broadband services.

CITC has launched a number of projects to automate its services for stakeholders and consumers. These include among others:

- Applications for numbers and frequency allocations;
- Domain names registration;
- Consumer complaints;
- Information security incident ;
- Information security support;
- Service providers performance indicators;
- Telecommunications and information technology companies directory
- Frequency allocation Service;
- Electromagnetic radiation measurements;
- Number portability;
- Equipment type approvals;
- Process inquiry;
- Stolen mobile devices;
- Promotional offers.

CITC is also determined to simplify regulation and the burden on the service providers as soon as warranted by market conditions. For example, we no longer require pre-approvals for a range of mobile promotional tariffs, simply notification.

The markets are evolving, conditions are changing, and all principal stakeholders must adapt to meet current needs and prepare for the future.