

SOURCE: National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission,
Thailand

TITLE: **What roles should the regulators play in a Digital
Networked Society?**

Increasing of cloud services has not only introduced opportunities to users but also challenges. In a connected digital world, users and consumers demand new communication services that enable them to connect to the world whereas policy makers and regulators need to play appropriate roles in the challenging situation and changing environment.

Following are some measures and approaches that policy makers and regulators are encouraged to take into account in setting up respective policy and regulation framework in regulating in cloud environment;

I. Data Protection and Privacy

Trust is a key driver to promote usage of cloud services. It should be ensured that personal information of users as well as his/her privacy shall be protected. Below are some issues that needed to be considered;

- a. How to promote building trust?
- b. How to ensure users' privacy?
- c. Users and consumers need to be raised awareness about their rights, possibly through consumer networking
- d. Effective mechanisms for complaints handling and resolution of disputes are essential. Alternative mechanism should be encouraged.

In Thailand, there is an effective alternative resolution of dispute; i.e mediation via appointed mediator. This mechanism can help reduce bringing the cases to juridical bodies.

II. Promote Accessibility

Accessibility is the key driver for success of cloud computing. To achieve full potential of what cloud services have to offer, high-speed access to the Internet, either via fixed or mobile broadband network, is a must. Policy makers and regulators need coordinated and concerted efforts to help bridge this accessibility gap, sometimes called digital divide, and convert it into digital opportunity.

In a fixed broadband world, expansion of network would be the key aspect. Several governments have embarked upon ambitious projects or investment plans for FTTx (fiber-to-the-x (anything)) to reach far-flung customers, even in underserved areas. Just to give those customers the same and equal experience to enjoy benefits of what digital access could provide. Regulators could help realize this by fostering competition at network layer (infrastructure-based). PPP (public-private partnership) also could play a vital role as it is considered a mechanism to promote accessibility since government or private operator alone may not be in a position to self-finance such a high investment projects.

A mobile broadband world, on the other hand, would focus upon speed of data that it can be carried through. The more, the merrier; it seems. Regulators must ensure that there is sufficient spectrum bandwidth to cater for exponentially growth in demand and data-hungry cloud services.

Nevertheless, regulators should ensure that not only the haves can be able to access, but also the have-nots. Affordability is, and always should be guaranteed. Regulators can promote affordability in terms of choice, service, price and quality of service.

Another dimension of accessibility is how to bring people to be 'inside' the connected world. Without proper equipment to access, people cannot get the full benefits and potentials of digital opportunity. Policy makers may need to consider ways and means to enhance access to digital equipment (smart phone, tablet, computing device, etc) at affordable cost.
