



Industry Advisory Group for Development Issues and Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers' meeting (IAGDI-CRO)

An industry perspective on development and regulatory issues

Tuesday, 22 June 2021
14:45 – 16:30, CEST

Outcome Statement

The meeting of the Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues and the Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers (IAGDI-CRO) was held back-to-back with GSR 2021 on 22 June 2021. Serving as a platform for industry and private sector participants to reflect on the impact of the pandemic and the recovery process, the meeting facilitated a constructive exchange of perspectives on the **importance of innovative policies and the right regulatory incentives to foster new investment for achieving meaningful connectivity, and to effectively address new development issues** faced by the ICT Industry.

The diversity of industry participants in the meeting underpinned the importance of **multi-stakeholder participation and the urgency for resetting policy, regulatory, and enforcement frameworks**. Participants emphasized on the need to **ensure light-touch regulation**, in particular as regards **licensing** and **cumbersome administrative processes and procedures** in obtaining rights of way, and **more flexibility** as regards **spectrum availability and allocation**. In this regard, **ad-hoc measures** taken by regulatory authorities to mitigate the impact of the crisis such as ensuring more **flexible access to needed resources (e.g. spectrum)** and **support (e.g. reduced taxation or industry fees)**, and thus to temporarily ease regulation on certain

fronts, should be kept and **not reversed**. Participants maintained that the **lessons** learned, and the **emergency actions** taken last year **should be leveraged to continue the forward momentum on policy and regulatory reset**.

All acknowledged that societal and industry dynamics have changed, driving an accelerated pace of digitization. Operating in such dynamics is now heavily reliant on **technology-neutral advanced** and **converged resilient broadband networks**, which require sustainable mechanisms and approaches to their financing, funding and investment. In this regard, the meeting stressed that businesses and the ICT Industry must be incentivized to continue to serve as the engine of progress on unique regional and national priorities as well as on globally agreed sustainable development goals. However, the enablement of such engine requires adjusting regulatory approaches, setting better incentives, adopting agility and evidence-based regulation to reflect the prevailing and emerging trends within the digital ecosystem, which now increasingly houses a highly diversified group of digital inhabitants.

The regulation of the future should not constrict but rather provide sufficient room, incentives and predictability, as well as a level-playing field that should ease sustainability in innovation and investment and should also help close the broadband adoption gaps. The meeting drew attention to key aspects of such frameworks by emphasizing upon the necessity for **flexibility** in **spectrum availability and allocation, and licensing (such as "blanket licensing")**; a review of industry fees, charges and taxes towards minimization of **sector specific taxes**; new and **more flexible approaches to funding, financing and investment** into broadband infrastructure and broadband demand initiatives that include contributions from (*and incentives for*) a wider group of contributors; revision and repurposing of **Universal Service Funds**, as applicable; and better policies and harmonization on **data sovereignty, privacy and security**. Given the increasing need to reach out to non-ICT stakeholders, for example in the Education, Healthcare, and Finance sectors, the regulation of the future should enable partnership development, and governments should champion the collaboration and innovation fronts.

To move forward and accelerate actionable measures and to put into force **earlier recommendations** made by the IAGDI-CRO and the ITU, the meeting re-affirmed the Private Sector's commitment to supporting governments, particularly the Regulators, during the post-pandemic phase and to achieve common goals both in the near and long term. Participants also agreed to play a more active role in supporting ICT development work, and to use existing networks to promote the ITU-D Sector for the purposes of recruiting more private sector participants, promoting national digital transformation agendas, and to contribute to ongoing preparations for WTDC-21.

IAGDI-CRO expresses its continued readiness toward working closely with governments to achieve common goals and acknowledges ongoing support from the Regulators to the Industry as we define new fronts to work together, to materialize the 5th generation of collaborative approaches to make progress in the "final decade of action".