# Demonstrating regulatory thought leadership for digital transformation

## What is the best policy approach in enabling and repairing the digital economy to grow sustainably and meet social goals?

1. Collaborative policy formulation. It should be a consultative process Involving all stakeholders to create accountability. Many times consensus by all stakeholders is a tall order; however; including them makes them appreciate the insights of other stakeholders even in the absence of consensus. This encourages compromise, flexibility and balance in policy.

2. It should take a holistic approach due to the blurring of sectors as we have seen with digital payment systems and demonstrated by the 4IR technologies. This also necessitates engagement of stakeholders outside of the sector to ensure complementarity and coherence

3. It should also take into consideration the contribution and therefore involvement of stakeholders beyond government/public sector in realisation of the goals . Bringing these on board during the development process also facilitates buy in and more informed processes

4. Identification of layers of the ecosystem that require joint effort from both public and private sector like Investment models in infrastructure.

5. share with the ICT market stakeholders plans and forward looking strategies, that are SDG oriented, to better direct any investment in the sector

6. Considering the dynamism of the sector, the policy should allow for flexibility in implementation. Focus should not be on the how e.g. technology but on the desired outcome

7. Clarity in evaluating the current status and what is sought to be achieved, important to inform the identification of appropriate strategies and targets. This should include understanding of the grassroots needs and challenges towards inclusive policy. Impact assessment should be conducted in identifying strategies/measures

## What have we learned from the COVID-19 crisis?

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the importance of ICTs in supporting the livelihoods of people, public and private organisations, and Governments. To ensure the availability, access, reliability and resilience of ICT services demands deliberate and intentional actions by ALL stakeholders to fill the gaps and create robust, dependable and affordable ICT ecosystem; for this and future emergencies. There's still a lot of work to do in the areas of accessibility and affordability of ICTs.

2. The importance of strategic partnerships and Collaborations within and out of the sector. The COVID 19 lockdowns created disruption to all sectors of the Ugandan economy. The common fall back option for all sectors has been the strengthening of the integration of ICTs in their work and production cycles. This has created an environment of full dependence on ICTs even in the midst of glaring technical and economic divides. There is need for intentional strategic partnerships and collaboration between all stakeholders (national and international) to bridge these gaps that have been identified and or widened within nations and internationally.

3. The need to quick response and flexibility in regulation to facilitate emergency response. Create room for traditional and alternative processes

4. The need for reviewing working methods in global corporation systems that have in the past been structured around physical meetings as guarantees for consensus and quorum requirements.

5. The importance of regionally or globally harmonised ICT emergency resource planning frameworks. These ICT resources include: ( Numbers and spectrum)
6. The need to strengthen communications infrastructure (cyber security institutional and human capacity); to support increased remote working and global supply chain that has fully moved online despite the vulnerabilities due to capacity gaps.
7. We have learnt and acknowledged the effect of fake news and harmful content and the urgent need for a globally harmonized response to address this escalating vice.
8. importance of trust and good relations between regulator and regulated
9. The importance of network capacity, cost of ICT services, reliability of ICT services and security of ICT services in driving usage and change

**What should we focus on in regulation to prepare for the next 20 years?**
- Improving connectivity, reducing cost, strengthening safety of ICT services
- We need to focus on amplifying the positive outcomes of new and emerging technologies while strongly collaborating to mitigate their negative disruption on the society and humanity.
- ensuring that technology advancement does not exacerbate the digital divide
- improve spectrum availability and management to support innovation and the emergent models of use
- E- waste the ever growing volumes of e- waste, and climate change threats on humanity
- Content regulation in the triple play environment that has blurred boundaries between different delivery platforms
- Cyber Security vulnerabilities for consumers, organisations and governments
- The ever growing digital divide between the developed and developing countries.

**What are the key ingredients for effective, future proof policy leadership?**
1. Focusing on communication as a tool/enabler
2. forward based rather than backward looking
3. dynamic
4. Relationship building / networking with stakeholders within the sector, out of the sector and development partners.
5. Commitment to a common? vision. This creates focus and limits of negotiation

**What leadership skills are required for ICT regulators and policymakers?**

- **Soft skills like** – Communication, positive engagement, collaboration and empathy and negotiation.
- **Complex problem solving** / Analytic – Solution / outcome oriented.
- Adaptability and Cognitive flexibility – in a dynamic environment that is ICT, there has to be constant checks of whether or not it's working; and if it's not working, there is need for flexibility to change course.
- **Innovative and active learning**. ICT is a very dynamic sector; regulators and policy makers have to keep unlearning and relearning in order to be innovative.
- **Research skills**

<span style="color:red">**Vectors of regulatory action: inclusiveness, agility, and resilience**</span>

**What transformative regulatory approaches are at hand to enhance the inclusiveness, agility and resilience of digital networks, traditional and digital players' business models and access to digital services?**
- Regulation has to be market driven and incentivised. Innovation in the sector is leading new ICT products and services; this means that the ICT ecosystem

needs to be adaptive with responsive business models. In advent, this creates the need for flexibility and agility in regulation for it to remain relevant

- In response to the complexity of the intended and un intended outcomes of the new and emerging technologies, there is need for:
  - A multi layered regulatory system both nationally and internationally.
  - Issue specific horizontal collaborations with clear goals;
  - A balance between hard and soft law, light handed regulation, authorisations, self-regulation and multilateralism depending on the specific circumstances and requirements of that market. Theres no single approach.
- Leveraging on innovation in the sector and in regulation to solve the legacy challenges of affordability, Accessibility, QoS, interconnection, infrastructure sharing, and optimum spectrum usage.

  These are the traditional drivers of usage. And when we increase usage, we make the sector more competitive and thus increase the value proposition to all stakeholders including the operators and consumers.


**How to boost the readiness of the digital sector to face unexpected events and emergencies and deliver up to the expectations despite the odds?**

- By investing in research and innovation to strengthen the integration of ICTs in disaster / emergency ***Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery*** Strategies
- For threats and emergencies within the ICT sector
  - There has to be continuous institutional and human capacity building in the evaluation of potential vulnerabilities and mitigation strategies
  - International coordination and cooperation for a harmonised approach to vulnerabilities at the global level.
- For threats and emergencies in other sectors:
  - Multi -disciplinary engagement and joint research initiatives across sectors to see how integration of ICTs can support both preparation and response to.
    (are issues of investment in redundant/back up infrastructure to cater for emergencies relevant?) how about affordability?

**What are the short, medium and long-term strategies for economic recovery and sustainable social development?**

- Small and Medium enterprises (SMEs) are a very critical element in the economic recovery and therefore big attention should be put to this segment considering it employs the majority of the workforce especially the youth and women
- Continue to raise awareness on the benefits of digital platforms and new technologies that have ability to increase SME productivity.
- Long term investment in passive infrastructure with regulatory incentives for some areas.
- Targeted Government stimulus funding to innovation and home grown solutions. Local solutions with bottom-up designs and clear understanding of the local conditions have potential to solve society immediate challenges while creating employment opportunities. For example, mobile telephony continues to play a very vital.
- Government in the Long term can also align the different infrastructural developments. For example, broadband infrastructure like fibre optics can be components of new road and power grid extension infrastructure projects.
- Meaningful broadband access creates opportunities for entrepreneurship and has a multiplier economic effect and therefore there should be deliberate effort to offer broadband access to new communities and improved Quality of service for the existing areas.

## Collaboration across sectors, cooperation across borders, and engagement across the board

**What are the channels and models of collaboration that can deliver positive market and consumer outcomes – broad and constant collaboration, structured and unstructured, across sectors and national borders?**

- International coordination – multilateral – especially on issues of universally shared values like child online protection, fake news, data privacy, digital human rights
- cooperation between member countries – regional corporation. Harmonisation of policy creates bigger and stronger markets that then leverage on economies of scale
- Issue - specific collaborations nationally and internationally create multi stakeholder and multi-disciplinary expertise and a fit for purpose approach to specific digital transformation issues like security, Artificial intelligence, spectrum, digital skilling

**Is there a seat for everyone at the consultation table and who's in the driving seat?**

Yes, there is a seat for everyone at the consultation table.

Governments (Politicians and technocrats) are in the driving seat.

**How do we ensure productivity and efficiency in the application of rules and regulations?**

1. We should have regular impact assessment of or rules and regulations and we should be flexible where impact is negative.
2. Rules and regulations must be openly communicated with clarity and without any ambiguity. This will help avoid back and forth endless tussles.
3. Alignment and relevance - development by using tangible indicators to measure the impact of their applications
4. Incentivise (Small wins and big wins) – different stakeholders and partners.
5. We can also review to ensure we are not over regulating that could stifle innovation and reduce compliance.
6. Through constant with all stakeholders in the sector, regulators should be seen to be transparent and independent in their regulatory instruments