

Consultation for the GSR-24 Best Practices: The Republic of the Sudan

Introduction: In today's global landscape, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector stands as a cornerstone and a base for other sectors and services. Its significance lies in its integral role in the economic and social development of nations, irrespective of their developmental stage. The advent of modern technology has facilitated seamless electronic communication across time and distance, heralding a new era of connectivity. Recent technological innovations, spurred by the digitization trend, have been instrumental in propelling the ICT market forward. This innovation has driven down tariffs, expanded network capacities, and diversified subscriber services, revolutionizing communication dynamics. Moreover, the convergence of IP-based communication networks with the Internet has birthed novel applications and services such as (over-the-top) OTT applications, reshaping traditional business models in the telecommunications and information technology realms. However, this technological advancement presents policymakers with unprecedented policy and legislative challenges, necessitating the existence of an advance and wise regulations to ensure service quality, availability, fair competition, and technological advancement within the ICT market.

Opportunities and Challenges facing ICT Regulators amidst Technological Convergence:

Opportunities:

1. **Price Reduction:** Technological advancements offer the potential to lower costs while maintaining high service standards.
2. **Innovative Applications:** New applications cater to diverse needs and enhancing user experiences.
3. **Competition Promotion:** Vigilance against monopolistic practices ensures consumer choice and fosters healthy market competition.
4. **Specialized Applications:** Opportunities abound for the development of specialized applications across various sectors.
5. **Network Flexibility:** Internet Protocol-based networks offer flexibility and resilience in fault handling, enhancing overall network reliability.

Challenges:

1. **Regulatory Control:** The proliferation of OTT applications poses challenges in regulating service quality, availability and pricing.
2. **Resource Loss:** Country-specific numbering resources are at risk due to the use of OTT application without Administration's consensus, leading to revenue loss for state authorities.
3. **Security and Privacy:** Ensuring information security and privacy amidst evolving technological landscapes necessitates the establishment of global regulatory frameworks.

Regulatory Measures for Transformative Technologies: Efficient management of the communication and information sector in the era of rapid technological evolution requires innovative strategies, including:

1. **Collaborative Organizational Methods:** Adopting collaborative approaches to deliver digital services efficiently.

2. **Digital Economy Promotion:** Encouraging the adoption of digital economy practices and electronic payment systems.
3. **Broadband Accessibility:** Promoting the dissemination of affordable broadband services, particularly in rural areas.
4. **Infrastructure Strengthening:** Investing in robust digital infrastructure such as data centres, cloud computing and the Internet of Things.
5. **Flexible Policies:** Implementing adaptable policies, strategies and legislation to accommodate technological advancements.

Sudan's Plan for ICT Market Transformation and Promoting Positive Market Behaviour:

The Telecommunications and Post Regulatory Authority (TPRA) of Sudan, in collaboration with stakeholders, endeavours to enhance coordination and cooperation to bolster legal, political, and governance frameworks, facilitating digital transformation. Key initiatives include:

1. **Local Digital Transformation:** Fostering national digital transformation initiatives and nurturing local service markets.
2. **Policy Consistency:** Ensuring policy coherence through long-term policies, regular monitoring and timely adaptations to technological developments.
3. **Organizational Adaptability:** Maintaining organizational agility in the face of rapid digital evolution.
4. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Facilitating collaboration among stakeholders and introducing new partnerships.
5. **Information Security Regulations:** Implementing stringent regulatory frameworks to safeguard information security.
6. **Institutional Clarity:** Establishing clear institutional frameworks to delineate roles and ensure policy coherence.
7. **Innovation Promotion:** Encouraging innovation and development within the ICT sector.
8. **Digital Literacy:** Enhancing digital literacy among citizens through comprehensive skill development plans.

Conclusion: The acceleration of digital transformation necessitates robust policy frameworks, stakeholder awareness, and regulatory interventions. Sudan aims to bridge the gap in policy development and implementation, paving the way for comprehensive strategies, regulations, and integrated governance structures to navigate the fourth generation of ICT services and digital transformation. Addressing these imperatives is crucial amid the country's evolving circumstances.