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| **The Meeting of the SATRC Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services** | **SAPIX-PRS1/OUT-01** |
| 14 – 16 May 2024, Islamabad, Pakistan | 16 May 2024 |

Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services

**WORK PLAN OF THE SATRC WORKING GROUP**

**ON POLICY, REGULATION AND SERVICES FOR SATRC ACTION PLAN PHASE IX**

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| **Work Item** | **Study of the regulatory challenges concerning new technologies and smart solutions for Fixed and Mobile Broadband** |
| **Lead Expert** | Mr. Saed Taheri, CRA (Islamic Republic of Iran) |
| **Co-Lead Expert** | TRC (Sri Lanka) |
| **Proposed by** | Islamic Republic of Iran |
| **Responsible Working Group** | Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services |
| **Output** | Report / Guideline / Recommendation |
| **Background and Purpose** | To develop Broadband and in order to expand the market of communication services and reduce the investment costs of creating and developing network infrastructure and supplying equipment, many countries have planned and prepared the principles governing the development of fiber optic access networks. But in order to make optimal use of available resources and deal with regulatory challenges, it is necessary to study consult, and use the best practices of pioneers in these fields.As members of SATRC, studying new technologies in FTTx, 5G & etc. and identifying strategies to increase Fixed and Mobile Broadband effectiveness can significantly contribute to digital inclusion efforts in the region. This study topic focuses on fiber optic and 5G development policies and regulatory challenges.Smart Solution: Modern networks need to be optimized and flexible enough to handle the need for ever increasing bandwidth. At the same time, network costs have to be manageable. So any innovative idea or approach that could optimized and improved Fixed or Mobile Broadband such as Fixed Mobile Convergence (FMC),& etc. can be considered.  |
| **Scope** | * Broadband Regulatory challenges
* Use of Fixed or Mobile Broadband with the highest efficiency depending on the location
* The effect of the price of Fixed and Mobile Broadband on each other
* Best Practices, experiences of countries and assessment of standards and requirements for the implementation of the fiber optics access network
* Methods of using the inter-sectional and non-telecomm facilities and capacities
* Tariffs and demand stimulation policies in retail and wholesale on Fixed or Mobile Broadband
* Terms and methods of support and how to allocate subsidies, government aid and financial resources to Broadband development.
* Smart solution for optimizing and improving Broadband connectivity like FMC & etc.
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| **How the output will be beneficial for SATRC Members** | Most countries have limited financial resources and are interested in getting best results from investing in fiber optic infrastructure. There are also some regulatory challenges for tariffs and active and passive sharing policies in wholesale and retail. Also in some countries, FTTx has met with a cold reception, and they need a demand stimulation policy. Return of Investment (RoI) is important to investors and service providers and in contrary overbuilding reduce the profitability. Also fiber development in villages and rural areas is not very profitable and require government subsidies or USO allocation, which these challenges require further studies and sharing the best practices.These studies will therefore help SATRC members to take advantage of best practices for FTTx development. |
| **Time Frame** | * Development of the draft Questionnaire (April 2024)
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| **Utilization of Output** | Regulators, Governments, Industry Stakeholders |

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| **Work Item**  | **Enhancing the Utilization of Universal Service Obligation Fund for Digital Inclusion** |
| **Lead Expert** | Mr. Shishir Kansal, TRAI (India) |
| **Co-Lead Expert** | Ms. K.S.M Vishakha, TRC (Sri Lanka)Ms. Jyotirma Shreshtha, NTA (Nepal) |
| **Proposed by** | Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA) |
| **Responsible Working Group** | WG Policy, Regulation and Services |
| **Output** | Report / Guideline / Recommendation |
| **Background and Purpose** | The Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) is a vital mechanism that aims to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to telecommunications and information services. It is a fund created by governments or regulatory bodies, usually through contributions from telecommunication service providers, to promote universal access to communication infrastructure and services. As members of the SATRC (South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council), studying the utilization of the USOF and identifying strategies to enhance its effectiveness can significantly contribute to digital inclusion efforts in the region. This study topic focuses on analyzing the current utilization of the USOF and developing recommendations to optimize its impact. |
| **Scope** | **1. Assess the Current Utilization of USOF:**1. Evaluate the transparency and accountability of USOF management.
2. Analyse the allocation and disbursement mechanisms of USOF funds.
3. Assess the effectiveness of existing USOF projects in promoting digital inclusion.
4. Identify any challenges or barriers in the utilization of USOF

**2. Identify Best Practices:**1. Study successful international case studies where USOF has been effectively utilized for digital inclusion.
2. Identify key factors contributing to the success of these initiatives.
3. Assess the applicability of these best practices to the SATRC member countries.
4. Determine the potential impact of implementing these practices.

**3. Develop Strategies for Enhanced Utilization:**1. Propose policy and regulatory reforms to streamline USOF utilization.
2. Recommend measures to improve transparency, accountability, and governance of USOF funds.
3. Identify innovative approaches to prioritize and target USOF investments in underserved areas.
4. Explore partnerships with private sector entities to leverage additional resources.

**4. Address Technological Advancements:**1. Analyse emerging technologies and their implications for USOF utilization.
2. Evaluate the need for adapting USOF policies to accommodate new technologies.
3. Identify areas of potential collaboration between USOF projects and emerging technology initiatives.

**5. Stakeholder Engagement:**1. Consult with relevant stakeholders, including telecommunications regulators, service providers, civil society organizations, and communities.
2. Gather inputs and insights from stakeholders to understand their perspectives and recommendations.
3. Encourage participation and collaboration among stakeholders in USOF utilization strategies.
4. **Recommendations for SATRC Members:**
5. Provide actionable recommendations for SATRC members to enhance the utilization of USOF in their respective countries.
6. Prioritize recommendations based on feasibility, impact, and regional context.

By focusing on these scopes, the study will contribute to the SATRC members' understanding of the current state of USOF utilization and provide practical strategies for optimizing the fund's impact on digital inclusion. The findings can guide policymakers, regulators, and other relevant stakeholders in formulating evidence-based policies and initiatives that ensure equitable access to telecommunications and information services for all citizens. |
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| **Utilization of Output** | Regulators, Governments, Industry Stakeholders |

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| **Work Item**  | **Enhancing E-Waste Management Regulations for Sustainable Development** |
| **Lead Expert** | Ms. Sabina Islam, BTRC (Bangladesh) |
| Co-Lead Expert | Mr. Muhammad Farhan Khan, PTA (Pakistan)Ms. Roja Kiran Basukala, NTA (Nepal) |
| **Proposed by** | Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA) |
| **Responsible Working Group** | WG Policy, Regulation and Services |
| **Output** | Report / Guideline / Recommendation |
| **Background and Purpose** | The increasing volume of electronic waste (e-waste) poses significant environmental and health challenges worldwide. SATRC (South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council) members have a crucial role in promoting sustainable development within their countries. This study aims to investigate e-waste management regulations and identify opportunities to strengthen them, thereby facilitating effective e-waste management, resource recovery, and the promotion of a circular economy. |
| **Scope**  | **1. Evaluation of Current E-waste Management Practices:**a. Assess the existing e-waste management regulations and policies in SATRC member countries.b. Analyze the effectiveness of present practices in mitigating environmental and health risks associated with e-waste.c. Determine the level of compliance and enforcement of e-waste regulations.d. Identify challenges and gaps in the current e-waste management systems.**2. Examination of International Best Practices:**a. Study successful e-waste management models and regulations implemented in other countries or regions.b. Identify key components and approaches that have proven effective in these models.c. Evaluate the feasibility and applicability of adopting such practices within SATRC member countries.d. Showcase case studies highlighting positive outcomes resulting from robust e-waste management regulations.**3. Enhancement of Regulatory Framework:**a. Propose amendments or updates to existing e-waste management regulations to address identified gaps and challenges.b. Recommend strategies to harmonize e-waste regulations among SATRC member countries to promote regional cooperation and enforcement.c. Develop guidelines for establishing comprehensive e-waste management systems encompassing collection, transportation, treatment, and disposal.d. Incorporate provisions for extended producer responsibility (EPR) to encourage manufacturers' involvement in e-waste management.**4. Promotion of Awareness and Education:**a. Identify strategies for raising public awareness about e-waste hazards, proper disposal, and recycling options.b. Develop educational campaigns targeting consumers, businesses, and educational institutions to promote responsible e-waste management practices.**5. Monitoring and Evaluation of Progress:**a. Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of enhanced e-waste management regulations.b. Develop metrics and indicators to assess the effectiveness of e-waste management practices.By addressing these research objectives, this study will provide SATRC members with a comprehensive understanding of e-waste management regulations and strategies to strengthen them. The findings will guide policymakers, regulators, and stakeholders in developing and implementing effective e-waste management systems, leading to reduced environmental pollution, improved resource recovery, and the promotion of a circular economy in the region. |
| **Time Frame** | * Development of the draft Questionnaire (April 2024)
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| **Utilization of Output** | Regulators, Governments, Industry Stakeholders |
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| **Work Item** | **Study on Challenges and Addressal of Online Scams and Digital Financial Frauds taking into account the consumer information protection and rights** |
| **Lead Expert** | Ms. Roja Kiran Basukala, NTA (Nepal) |
| **Co-Lead Expert** | Mr. Manish Jain, TRAI (India)Ms. Tharalika Livera, TRC (Sri Lanka) |
| **Proposed by** | Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) |
| **Responsible Working Group** | Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services (PRS) |
| **Output** | Report  |
| **Background and Purpose** | Technological innovations in the telecommunication/ICT sector have introduced many innovative services for making daily lives of consumers convenient. However, such technical innovations are changing rapidly in such a way that such technical improvements need to be incorporated in regulations urging the need for revision/review of traditional consumer rights regulations based on basic telecommunication/ICT services. These changes provide consumers with more commercial opportunities, and also bring a number of new and emerging risks on protection of consumer information.With the introduction of more digital services, online scams and digital financial frauds remain as major obstacle to digitization because they make people distrustful of digital technologies. Regulators and industry are facing such challenges in increasing trend ultimately providing negative impact on economic growth and social innovation. Additionally, it can have a devastating impact on consumers. Victims of these scams can lose money, their identities, and even their sense of security. This can make it difficult for consumers to participate in the digital economy and enjoy the many benefits that it offers. Therefore, an adequate regulatory framework is required for consumer rights protection including online scams and digital financial frauds so that the internet can remain as a safer and convenient place for everyone supporting digital transformation. |
| **Scope** | Consumer information protection in a digitized environment has changed and will continue to do so, due to the emergence of new services and their widespread uptake. Consumers are not in par with this digital transformation and hence an adequate regulatory framework is required to protect the information of consumers. Also, the regulatory measures for addressing online scams and digital frauds need to be addressed too. Clear understanding is required whether the consumer rights had been addressed in the existing law, as well as the gaps in the present legal framework which may cause disadvantage to consumers.The scope of this Work Item is to study the issues and challenges of online scams and digital financial frauds taking into account the consumer information protection and rights and prepare a report accordingly for developing new policies and regulations and changing old policiesTherefore, SATRC members are welcome to share their experiences & plans on the following issues:1. Emerging technologies and innovations used for digital transformation.2. Consumer-protection policies, standards, guidelines adopted by national regulatory agencies.3. Collaboration with other local/international authorities to strengthen the capacities of digital consumers by sharing experiences and good practices. 4. Cross-border cooperation among regulators in protecting consumer information in the border-less digital economy.5. Identifying the challenges faced in addressing these issues.6. Developing strategies to prevent these scams from happening. |
| **How the output will be beneficial for SATRC Members** | The output of this study will offer guidance to the authorities and regulators in SATRC countries to design or enhance policies and regulations that can effectively tackle online scams and digital financial frauds. This will help to create a conducive environment for digital transformation. |
| **Time Frame** | * Development of the draft Questionnaire (April 2024)
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| **Utilization of Output** | Regulators, Governments, Industry Stakeholders. |

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| **Work Item** | **Analyzing the impact of convergence and emerging services of the Tariff policies in SATRC countries.**  |
| **Lead Expert** | Mr. Mohammad Farhan Alam, BTRC (Bangladesh) |
| **Co-Lead Expert** | Tshering Dorji, BICMA (Bhutan)Tshering Penjor, BICMA (Bhutan)Ms. Zulaikha Ibrahim, CAM (Maldives) |
| **Proposed by**  | Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) |
| **Responsible Working Group** | Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services (PRS) |
| **Output** | Analytical Report |
| **Background and Purpose** | As like all others countries, SATRC countries have also overseen transition from traditional circuit based network to IP based network in the last decade.it has not only transformed the network topology and service delivery, but also the method of price regulation, This is specially creating new tariff setting methodologies to balance among, but not limited to, decreasing ARPU, increasing investment requirement, maintaining competition, auctioning spectrum, tax policy etc. This work item aims at analyzing the change in the tariff setting methods in the SATRC countries, especially it will focus in the shifting strategy of the regulators in addressing the convergence of network and service as well as how they are balancing among different conflicting factors.   |
| **Scope** | The work item will collect the tariff policies from SATRC members, would use questionnaire to received information on the regulatory strategy of different countries with and would analyses them. It will present good practices followed across the region and would document the plan and strategy of SATRC members in addressing emerging and new dynamics in the industry. |
| **How the output will be beneficial for SATRC Members** | The outcome of this work item will act as a good reference for member countries to know about alternative measures of tariff policy in changed and converged network era and an opportunity to share knowledge from good practices for their own planning. |
| **Time Frame** | * Development of the draft Questionnaire (April 2024)
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| **Utilization of Output** | Regulators, Governments, Industry Stakeholders |

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| **Work Item** | **Smart cities and societies, experience and cases studies in SATRC countries in deploying IoT, Big Data and similar technologies** |
| **Lead Expert** | Mr. Ikram-ul-Haq Kiyani, PTA (Pakistan) |
| **Co-Lead Expert** | Mr. Muhammad Zakaria Bhuiyan, BTRC (Bangladesh)TRC (Sri Lanka) |
| **Proposed by**  | Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) |
| **Responsible Working Group** | Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services (PRS) |
| **Output** | Report comprising case studies and good practices.  |
| **Background and Purpose** | Internet of Things (IoT) can serve as a key enabler for creating smart infrastructure in urban and rural areas. Furthermore, IoT, Big Data or similar technologies are helping to promote development, research, and delivery of services, monitoring and evaluation of projects in different areas that encompass every aspect of human life. In view of expansion of the domain of such technologies, their potential needs to be adequately harnessed within the smart and sustainable city ecosystem, especially for the benefit of SATRC countries.This work item aims to contribute to the exchange of experience and good practices among the SATRC countries, allowing SATRC Regulators and their stakeholders with common interest’s similar characteristics to use this report as a reference for knowledge sharing and planning.  |
| **Scope** | Under this work item, case studies and experience of deploying IoT, Big Data of similar technologies for developing smart city and societies would be collected from SATRC members, Through questionnaire their comment and suggestion would be sought for the effective deployment of smart technologies in SATRC region.  |
| **How the output will be beneficial for SATRC Members** | The outcome of the work item would benefit SATRC countries through the mutual knowledge sharing on smart initiatives, specially how the deployment of IoT, Big Data of similar technologies are promoted in their countries by the telecom regulator, It would help SATRC members in understanding the challenge from the experience of their peers and would help in their own planning.  |
| **Time Frame** | * Development of the draft Questionnaire (April 2024)
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