

July 27, 2015

A4AI-Myanmar USF Workshop: Groups Report Back

Group 1 - Elements of Universal Access Policy

- Establish within a framework of right to access policy – quality of service and access
- Review policy in a regular timeframe (e.g. every 2 years)
- Target un-served in rural areas – address issues such as backhaul and energy costs being too high
- Use broadband to improve education and digital literacy
- Increase availability of local content
- Ensure affordability and availability (e.g. enough infrastructure)
- Consider operator contributions, World Bank loans
- Establish telecenters in villages
- Consider some mode of subsidies for Internet access nodes
- Include gender mainstreaming in policy

Group 2 – Structure of fund

- Fund's board should be composed of more private than public representatives, have more than one ministry representative. Board members should include operators, civil society (e.g. consumer groups) and should be 9-10 people.
- Appoint a CEO to run daily operations
- Board will write rules for USF
- USF should be established as a non-profit
- Departments to include: Technical (reviewing projects, M&E), Financial (Accounts, budgets), Legal, and Administrative (such as communications).
- Proper constitution to manage distributions

Group 3 - Goals for the fund

1. Network – Who does not have access? Where are the operators not providing coverage yet?
2. Services – Focus on demand side – what types of services people want, and who can provide these services?
3. Content Development – natural language processing (Unicode standard in Myanmar languages)

Universal access policies should:

- Encourage PPPs
- Bring all stakeholders together to consult & cooperate
- Involve different ministries (health, education, transport, energy, etc.)
- Address emergencies and disasters

Group 4 – Contributions to fund

- Is now the right time to establish a fund?
- Must ensure that fund is not “jumping the gun”
- Should allow market to organically explore coverage, while acknowledging where operators will likely not cover.
- Must have more transparency on current operator agreements
- Need more data on coverage to inform future fund
- Govt. should focus on framework to address operator challenges
- Propose 5 year timeline – to collect data, measure progress of coverage, take stock, and begin developing fund.
- Establish coverage/service milestones to achieve within 5 years