

Advancing Access to Affordable Broadband in Ghana

A global coalition working to make broadband affordable for all



Report and Outcomes of the Broadband Infrastructure Roundtable
24th August 2018

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Questions arising from open discussion & answers



Q: Digital Development Policy, what would be its unique advantage?

A: Meant to harmonise existing policies within the sector and pave the way for emerging digital economy.

Follow up contribution : This new policy should consider the economic needs of the country to be relevant .It should drive innovation & entrepreneurship, encourage literacy skills, infrastructure development , data protection/cyber-security/privacy. There should be a thorough stakeholder review and engagement throughout starting now.

Q: Why the 2-year delay with developing this policy? .

A: Areas needed to be agreed. The Terms Of Reference (TOR) for a consultant has been recently issued. - *Ministry of Communications*

Q: Will industry players be able to make inputs into the policy and at what stage ?

A: The consultant chosen by the Ministry will decide on this.

Follow up contribution : Start engaging stakeholders online on the new policy . Inputs and contributions can be done online on a simple portal ahead of the Ministry /consultant holding a face to face engagement.

Q: Can GIFEC widen its partnership with other non-telco players ? **A:** It is doing so. Also a dedicated Partnerships and Sustainability manager is in place. Review of GIFEC regulations is also imminent . GIFEC is open to engagement .

Questions arising & answers



Q: Spectrum availability needs to be reviewed including prices . How soon?

A: MoC - More options in the 800Mhz spectrum will be made available to drive more competition for broadband services . There's a consultative process in place.

Follow up contribution : pricing needs to be well considered to make it affordable

Q. What should be done to get more utilities companies to share their infrastructure ?
Currently it appears to be discretionary.

A: Nothing in current act or set up prohibits sharing but it is also not mandated. Perhaps a review of utilities act ? Till then have a more concerted effort in engaging water, electricity , power providers. GRIDCO is already sharing aerial fibre with a number of players. There is a current project roll out with NEDCO in the northern region and the plans can be shared with the the Infrastructure working group.

Q. What investment options are there apart from GIFEC into which private sector can tap into?

A: There is the Ghana infrastructure Investment Fund set up by the Government which should be engaged. Although they look at other infrastructure, they could be prioritising those that promote broadband access . *Follow up Contribution:* consider Tax rebates/ rebalancing options



Group breakout session to focus on:

- 1. Legal and Regulatory steps**
- 2. Policy and Institutional steps**

Group 1: Legal and Regulatory



1. **One stop shop:** global best practice is for this unit to sit within the Regulator. Could this be included in the Digital development policy review? In the interim NCA needs a department or a desk focused on enhancing infrastructure development particularly sharing. **Next step:** Infrastructure Group to meet with NCA on assigning a dedicated desk
2. **Infrastructure Sharing Value Proposition:** Lack of clarity around the value proposition for infrastructure sharing impeding progress . **Next step:** Infrastructure Working group in partnership with Telecoms Chamber to meet CFOs, including TowerCos to collate a cogent strong financial document for industry
3. **Lack of data:** NCA needs to do a better job at gathering data especially around existing infrastructure, standards and make this publicly available **Next step:** Infrastructure Group to include this discussion in meeting with NCA
4. **Utility Infrastructure Management:** Case Studies around best practices for utility infrastructure management **Next step:** A4AI to draw up white paper to be presented to MoC
5. **Harmonization around sharing SLA's & pricing:** partnership between Infrastructure Group & Telco Chamber to gather this information and share. **Next step:** Infrastructure Group to meet with Telco Chamber

Group 2: Policy and Institutional



- 1) The need for Ministry of Communications to **formulate Open Duct Utilization Policy** and its corresponding Regulation also formulated by NCA to enable the provision of open access to current and future investors. It was opinion of group that the Private Sector should be in charge of Implementation and not a government sector.
- 2) **One-Stop-Shop Policy** and corresponding Regulations should be formulated. The purpose is to minimise if not eliminate the numerous harassment associated with the private sector quest to attain right of ways and various licences. The Group was of the opinion the Institutional arrangement should be domiciled at the NCA.
- 3) The MoC should institutionalise and **formalise ICT/Telecom Policy Review processes** from the current ad-hoc form that appear to be in existence. This idea was mooted strongly as many discussants heard for the first time that MoC was planning to have a Digital Policy/Strategy formulated but were not privy to the timelines.

Group 2: Policy and Institutional



4) **Financial resources is key.** Who will fund these noble changes? Under the PPP Unit at Ministry of Finance and in furtherance of the government giving opportunity to the Private ICT/Telecom sector to actively support investment drive in the sector (instead of Govt doing that) the MoC should advocate for **Government to create a Technology/IT Fund** solely for the sector independent of the current Infrastructure Fund which does not have component for ICT. A component of funds the industry generates could also be retained to develop the industry further.

5) The impending formulation of Regulations for NITA, GIFEC, NCA should be used as opportunity to address immediate concerns for reforms advanced in the Open Access Research Report as highlighted. This will be a quicker approach in the short run while Acts are considered for reviews.

6) The **Governing Board Framework of GIFEC needs to be reviewed** to be more independent to be tandem with that of NCA which also went through a smooth transition over the years..
Open to more discussion

Summary of discussions and next steps



Sharing of infrastructure between utilities companies, ISPs, Telecoms Sector is a low hanging fruit and should be pursued urgently. A follow up discussion for practical steps to be held between the Telecoms Chamber, ECG, GRIDCO, NEDCO, Water company, ISPs, C-Square, Facebook and other infrastructure companies. **Action:** *Telecoms Chamber can collate the roll out plans of each player for 2019 to share with group.*

Regulator to be engaged to provide an assigned desk or department to help facilitate infrastructure sharing discussions and be the point of call for broadband infrastructure players. This should be the first step to providing regulations (including standards, QoS) on this for the industry. **Action:** *A4AI to engage the NCA on this. Infrastructure working group lead to follow up*

Harmonisation of SLAs and price transparency to be pursued between players. The Telecoms Chamber together with GISPA and the working group champion to agree on details of SLAs to be shared and timelines. **Action:** *Common agreement points to be collated into a common template for use. Players to pursue transparency in the cost and pricing of sharing services.*

Summary of discussions and next steps



Need a merger of Acts . *Action: A4AI via the Infrastructure working group to pursue the process with the Ministry of Communications and NCA*

One stop shop - Engage the NCA to call a stakeholder discussion with various Municipal Authorities on Right of Way (RoW) and other permitting issues. The multiple laws allow for autonomy of fee setting which results in multiple permitting . A4AI to engage Ministry of Communications and ensure this is discussed at Ministerial level between Ministries of local government, Communications and Environment. Encourage Ministry of Communications to take a lead on this and assign a desk.

Infrastructure management and Open duct utilisation sharing policy . Management model needs to be considered. So far Private sector consortium , 3rd party organisation by government options. Research on best practices. - working group

Policy review processes should be institutionalized with regular meetings called by the Ministry or the regulator. A4AI to engage Ministry on the upcoming Digital Development policy and open up to coalition members for inputs . Ministry to set up online portal for comments ahead of draft.



With gratitude to all stakeholders who participated in the Roundtable discussions

Additional resources can be found at: www.a4ai.org

**<https://a4ai.org/who-we-are/where-we-work/a4ai-ghana-multi-stakeholder-coalition/>
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