

Policy and Regulatory Good Practices

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Global Digital Inclusion
Partnership

POLICY AND REGULATORY GOOD PRACTICES

The Global Digital Inclusion Partnership (GDIP) advocacy efforts and on-the-ground work are guided by a set of policy and regulatory practices that have shown to drive down the cost of internet access.

- An individual should be able to use the internet based on their own volition without artificial restrictions (either economic or political);
- Meaningful Connectivity is achieved [when we can use the internet every day using an appropriate device with enough data and a fast connection](#);
- Affordable internet access is where [1GB of broadband data is priced at 2% or less of average monthly income](#);
- Connectivity policy-making must be [gender-responsive](#) and focused on closing the gender digital divide;
- Affordable internet access and meaningful connectivity implies access to the open internet, and this is a significant enabler to economic growth and human development;
- Internet freedom and the fundamental rights of expression, assembly, and association online must be protected;
- Open and competitive markets are the most effective driver of cost reduction, affordable consumer pricing, and new innovations;
- Partial or full network shutdowns and economic and legal barriers to posting and creating online are not acceptable practices.

A. Nurture a healthy and competitive market

- Streamlined licensing process with no legal barriers to market entry
- Ensure a competitive market structure, with limited or no national government ownership of end-user service providers
- Create incentives for transparency and disclosure of pricing and service options to end-users
- Allow for various types of competitive pricing models to be used
- Set policy targets and economic incentives to support affordable and meaningful connectivity.

B. Promote policy and regulatory leadership supported by strong capacity

- Ensure regulators are effective and independent expert agencies, as follows:
 - structurally independent from other governmental entities
 - with a sufficient and predictable funding stream
 - with authority, jurisdiction, accountability, and capacity to enforce regulations
- Foster regulatory certainty with clear, transparent regulations
- Promote the use of ex-ante and ex-post mechanisms to inhibit anti-competitive behavior
- Advocate for consumer interests and rights
- Promote evidence-based policymaking and regulatory processes
- Promote meaningful public and transparent, participatory processes open to all interested stakeholders

C. Streamline broadband's national and international value chains

- Develop effective and gender-responsive [national broadband plans](#) with clear and time-bound targets relating to internet affordability
- Facilitate and/or foster the following policies and practices:
 - The deployment of open-access networks
 - The sharing of passive infrastructure
 - Efficient and effective access to public and private rights of way and tower zoning
 - Coordinated infrastructure projects and “dig-once” policies
- Support for local and virtual content and data caching
- Remove barriers to crossing national borders with network infrastructure and traffic
- Make access to international gateways, cable, and satellite systems available at reasonable market rates
- Foster the deployment of local and/or regional Internet Exchange Points (IXPs)

D. Manage spectrum effectively and efficiently

- Make sufficient and affordable broadband-capable spectrum available and used efficiently
- Establish open, transparent, and fair rules for spectrum allocation and assignment processes
- Harmonize spectrum with international standards
- Implement technology and service-neutral licenses
- Enable innovative and opportunistic usage of unlicensed spectrum, such as for enabling community networks and other technological innovations for connecting the unconnected
- Monitor potential harmful interference to licensed bands
- Prioritize competitive spectrum assignment processes

E. Strengthen the taxation system and establish affordability targets

- Adopt the [broadband data affordability targets](#) established by the UN Broadband Commission
- Refrain from luxury taxation or establishing excessive customs/tariffs on telecom and internet goods and services required for internet access
- Establish tax rates at a comparable level to basic goods and services rather than luxury goods
- Promote device affordability, focusing efforts on smartphones

F. Promote public infrastructure investment mechanisms focused on market failures

- Create or manage the Universal Service Fund (USF) and/or equivalent funds effectively and efficiently
- Prioritize backbone and backhaul deployment and focus on addressing market failures
- Allocate funds through non-discriminatory, competitive, and transparent processes
- Set clear goals for addressing inequalities and using funds to close digital divides, rural vs urban and gender
- Allow multiple stakeholders to be beneficiaries of the universal service and/or equivalent funds, including community networks, small and medium operators, civil



society organizations and individuals

- Establish transparent and consultative processes, incorporating stakeholder inputs and priorities
- Establish clear target goals and monitor the effectiveness and impact of USF programs and projects
- Establish mechanisms to prevent the contingency of funds and/or their unavailability for any fiscal or budgetary reasons

G. Promote efforts to collect, disaggregate and systematize data

- Collect, disaggregate and systematize data on:
 - [Types of services, data charges, and quality of service for mobile data services](#)
 - Broadband pricing, speed, adoption, and usage rates
 - Spectrum utilization
 - Interconnection agreements
 - Access, adoption, and usage related to gender, income quintiles, and rural/remote areas
- Collect data with the help of a wide range of stakeholders
- Openly publish the collected data collect in anonymized form, and disaggregate at a minimum by gender, income levels, and geographic area
- Encourage the participation of all stakeholders in ITU fora

H. Promote [broadband policies for underserved rural areas](#)

- Improve the availability of high-quality, affordable broadband services in underserved rural areas, drawing from real-world experience
- Harness the resources and capabilities of the private sector and complementary providers, such as community networks
- Develop comprehensive and gender-responsive rural broadband policies
- Gather evidence and sex-disaggregated data, and establish minimum standards (e.g., minimum broadband download/upload speeds)

By 2026, [5GB should be at no more than 2% of the average monthly income](#) in any country.

Disclosure: These practices were developed and endorsed by the GDIP team while still at A4AI, in collaboration with multiple stakeholders from the public and private sectors as well as civil society.

GDIP embraces these practices, carries them forward, and will continue to advocate on the same terms.