



Research on ICT Regulation

June 2009

Summary

Since the launch of *infoDev* in 1995, research on the theory and practice of ICT sector regulation has been a cornerstone of our work, in particular of the “Access to ICTs for All” workstream. Highlights include the [Telecommunications Regulation Handbook](#) (first published in 2000), the [ICT Regulation Toolkit](#) (published since 2004 with ITU and the World Bank) and the [Information and Communication for Development Report](#) (published in 2006 and 2009, with the World Bank). The 2009 financial year sees the launch of the [Global Capacity Building Initiative for ICT Regulators](#) (GCBI) which is the subject of a separate project concept note. The topic of the developmental impact of broadband, which has important regulatory implications, is also covered separately. This document covers the ongoing and new work in the other *infoDev* regulatory products and services.

Purpose and objectives

The purpose of *infoDev*’s products and services aimed at serving the ICT regulatory community is to provide resources, expertise, informed analysis and capacity-building, especially for newly-created regulators in developing countries. This activity is conducted as part of the Bank’s commitment to fostering access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) for all as a tool for reducing poverty and creating an enabling environment for growth. The regulatory products cover:

- Knowledge maps, toolkits and practical guides backed up by practice notes, case studies and web resources.
- In-depth research on topics of emerging or ongoing interest to regulators;
- Training resources, both online and face-to-face, for ICT regulators and policy-makers and for others involved with regulation.

The objectives of *infoDev* research on regulation during the period 2009-2011 are to maintain and further develop the existing range of products, services and web resources, to launch the GCBI as a multi-donor training initiative and to remain at the cutting edge of research and content creation in this field.

Project description

In addition to the GCBI and broadband for development projects, described separately, *infoDev*’s regulatory work has five main components:

1. Updating, extending and promoting the **ICT Regulation Toolkit** as a web resource for regulators. The module currently has seven modules and the publication of the Universal Access module in October 2008 completes the current cycle in the production of new material. Several modules, including Module 3 on Authorization of Telecommunication/ICT services and Module 5 on radio spectrum management, are currently being updated. Through a revised Memorandum of Understanding with the other partners, *infoDev* will commit to a more comprehensive cycle of updates and development of new material. *InfoDev* will also seek funding for additional modules, including on numbering and convergence, as well as adding new components to existing modules, for instance on spectrum trading.

2. Together with its partners, ITU and the World Bank, *infoDev* will prepare a revised edition of the **Telecommunications Regulatory Handbook**. Scheduled for release in 2010, this tenth anniversary edition will take into account the growth in the numbers of newly created regulatory agencies over the last decade and the impact of new technologies – such as broadband, 3G and 4G mobile, IPTV etc – on the theory and practice of regulation. The Handbook is designed to complement the other regulatory resources, such as the toolkit and the GCBI, by providing an easy-to-access reference source as well as a textbook for would-be regulators.
3. Together with GICT and the Peace-building Trust Fund, *infoDev* will initiate a new research programme on the **role of ICTs in post-conflict reconstruction**. Specifically, *infoDev* will be contributing one or more country case studies to a wider programme of work looking at how ICTs have been used in the immediate aftermath of conflict to rebuild the national economy and to re-establish communications with the wider world. The aim is to identify best practice in this field by looking at a number of different countries that have experienced conflict at different times during the past 15 or so years and how the sequencing of different ICT initiatives (e.g. infrastructure creation, lawmaking, creation of a regulatory agency etc) have aided nation-building.
4. *infoDev* will work with GICT and the IFC in studying the **digital switchover** (DSO) from analogue to digital television and the ‘digital dividend’ this releases in terms of opportunities for reallocating spectrum. Again, *infoDev*’s contribution will be in the form of one or more country case studies as well as substantive policy input in understanding the problems to be overcome in planning for DSO in developing country markets. This project is expected also to touch upon wider issues of spectrum management, in particular trends towards the use of license-exempt spectrum, cognitive radio and spectrum trading. The main output of this project will be a practical guide to the digital switchover for developing countries.
5. Finally, *infoDev* will commission research into **new and emerging regulatory trends** as a way of scoping out more complete studies in future years. In this respect, *infoDev* will act as a think-tank for the donor community, alerting them to new and challenging issues that may either facilitate or hinder growth in the ICT sector in future years. By funding cutting edge research into regulatory trends, *infoDev* is helping to transfer knowledge between developed and developing country environments as well as informing its wider programme of regulatory training. This research may also form the basis for future chapters of the IC4D2011 report.

Indicative Budget

Depending upon the level of funding and the interest among the donor community, the following indicative budget, in US\$, could be proposed for this activity during the period 2009-2011 (three years).

Item	Duration	Location	Cost
1. ICT Regulation Toolkit, maintenance, updates and enhancements	Ongoing since 2004	Global	US\$200 K per year = US\$600K
2. Tenth anniversary edition of the Telecommunications Regulatory Handbook	Start in 2009 for completion in 2010	Global	US\$ 80K
3. Role of ICTs in post-conflict reconstruction	2009-2011	Initial case study in Haiti plus other possible studies in Liberia and Cambodia, complemented by other studies financed by GICT	<i>infoDev</i> contribution US\$150 K
4. Digital Switchover	2009-2010	Case study of Brazil plus other input at regional and global levels, complemented by other studies financed by IFC	<i>infoDev</i> contribution US\$150K
5. New and emerging regulatory trends	2010-2011	Global	US\$200K
Total Cost	2009-2011	National, Regional and Global	US\$1'180K

Project principal partners

In line with *infoDev*'s existing regulatory work, the principal partners will be the World Bank (GICT) and ITU. This project will also involve close collaboration with regional regulatory associations and, for digital switchover, with IFC.

Key risks to implementation and sustainability

The key risk to this portion of *infoDev*'s work programme is a lack of donor funding, especially for maintenance and updates of the ICT Regulation Toolkit, which is ongoing work and perhaps less appealing than new projects. The danger is that the available material may become out of date or may fail to address current regulatory issues. To overcome this risk, most of the projects planned involve joint funding. It is also planned that new work – such as on new and emerging regulatory trends or the digital switchover – will supplement the existing regulatory products. It is important also to keep channels of communication with regulators open to ensure the work programme stays fresh and relevant. In this context, participation in events such as the annual Global Symposium for Regulators and similar meetings where *infoDev* work can be showcased is important.