

7 Aug 2015

Dear colleague

On behalf of the Alliance for Affordable Internet, I take this opportunity to thank you for drafting a very positive looking Telecom Master Plan, and for offering the multi-stakeholders an opportunity to comment. As stated in the 10th point below, we at A4AI feel that this consultation should be the beginning of a culture that describes the character of the ICT and telecom space in Myanmar where multi-stakeholder-based policy planning and implementation are carried out. The Myanmar Alliance for Affordable Internet looks to support the roll-out of the master plan's action lines by being a consultative ally that brings the multi-stakeholders together to pursue joint and collaborative action.

Kindly find our comments/suggestions appended below:

1. Although USAF is understandably one of the many strategies nations adopt for achieving universal access, the master plan could clearly state the strategy as one that would help Myanmar to achieve 100% access in her nation for if left alone, the service providers would hesitate covering unviable markets on their own.
2. The Master Plan could aim to focus on the need to invest in the ICT eco-system, especially in terms of creating content and services specific to the market, especially aimed at the people at the base of the pyramid. The aspect of innovation and innovative services riding on the network is an important one; and in doing so, the opportunity facing Myanmar is a range of actors becoming digital entrepreneurs in their own right. This aspect could be highlighted in the document at appropriate sections.
3. The emergence of Mobile Apps and the need for innovators to step in is to be discussed in the roadmap as well. The need to attract foreign investment in the apps market could be seen as the next goal. Myanmar should carefully avoid outflow of investments for creating innovative services, rather, these should be seen as opportunities to attract foreign investment (on and above what has already been raised in the telecom industry).
4. Since the theme, 'Connecting Myanmar' refers to universal access, there is an opportunity to make the intent of connecting all of Myanmar's geographical regions and its population. This aspect can be made explicitly.
5. The whole aspect of infrastructure sharing and the need to help see independent towercos and powercos emerge is to be highlighted in the report. The role of the government and its agencies in removing barriers to 'right of way' and creating a 'collaborative approach' to resource sharing such as spectrum are to be highlighted also.
6. There is an opportunity to explore if and how Myanmar should embrace dynamic and innovative spectrum management in both licenced and unlicensed domains and the same could be discussed in the roadmap.
7. Since there is mention about an 'Affordable internet taskforce' in the plan, some details regarding its background and the objectives could be provided in the master plan.

8. Aspects of Right to Information, Freedom of expression, right to privacy, data protection and data security could find some mention in the master plan.

9. The whole aspect of digital literacy and the role that could be played by public access centres in connecting communities through shared access is welcome; however, this aspect can be discussed in detail.

10. Finally, the need for this kind of consultation to continue on an ongoing basis is to be highlighted as well.

Warmest regards
B. Shadrach
On behalf of A4AI