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FACT SHEET

Enhancement of Governance and Enabling Environment in the ICT
sector in the Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, and Indian Ocean Region
(EGEE-ICT)

1. About the Programme

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat and the European Union (EU) have signed a Grant contribution agreement for the Enhancement of Governance and Enabling Environment in the ICT sector (EGEE-ICT) in the Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean region (EA-SA-IO). The EGEE-ICT is a four (4) year programme that aims at supporting the effective review and/or development of various regional policy and regulatory framework in a harmonized manner that will contribute to enhancing competition, improved access to cost effective and secure ICT services.

The programme will be implemented in five Regional Economic Communities namely COMESA, East African Community (EAC), Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). COMESA as the lead REC will implement the programme on behalf of other Partner RECs in the EA-SA-IO region.

2. Programme Rationale

In the EA-SA-IO region mobile telephony penetration has increased as a result of both private and public sector investments in infrastructure, internet penetration is also rapidly growing. The socio-economic benefits of accessing and using ICTs, in particular the internet, are rising rapidly as essential information and services, both in the public and private sectors, continue to move online.

Despite these positive developments, many people in the region are still not connected to ICT services, especially the internet, and the cost of access is prohibitive in most cases.

Major challenges inhibiting the improved access to cost effective ICTs in the region are as follows:

- The existence of vertically integrated dominant operators providing both the infrastructure and services;
- Uneven and fragmented implementation of policy and regulatory frameworks across the region to promote competitive markets. Development and adoption of regional policies and regulations vary greatly among member states; and
- Limited resources or lack of expertise to implement harmonized policies, laws, and institutions.

To resolve these bottlenecks, there is a need to have effective policy interventions to help realize competitive regional and international broadband connectivity. Thus, the Programme will leverage available opportunities to

- Enhance the capacities of public and private sector institutions and the civil society to develop, implement and monitor harmonized ICT policies and regulations;
- Develop model policy and regulatory frameworks that enhance cross-border interconnection, competition, trade facilitation, e-commerce as well as gender perspectives in regional ICT markets;
- Develop policies to enhance licensing (separation of infrastructure and service market segments) and improve universal access to communications services; and
- Developing/reviewing policy and regulatory frameworks for cross-border broadband interconnections and open access to submarine cable landing stations.

3. Stakeholders

Though the key stakeholders and beneficiaries are government ministries and regulators, there is a need to involve all stakeholders in the policy formulation and implementation. The goal here is to create an opportunity where all major key stakeholders can cooperate and coordinate the implementation of policy and regulatory reform by sharing experiences, practices and lessons learnt. The key stakeholders will primarily be the following:

- Ministries responsible for ICT in the EA-SA-IO Member States;
- ICT Regulators in the EA-SA-IO Member States;
- EA-SA-IO Regional Economic Communities (COMESA, EAC, IGAD, IOC and SADC), which are responsible for programme implementation, with COMESA as the Lead REC; and
- The regional association of ICT regulators and operators, namely Association of Regulators of Information and Communications for Eastern and Southern Africa (ARICEA), East African Communications Organization (EACO), Communications Regulatory Authorities of Southern Africa (CRASA), Southern Africa Telecommunications Association (SATA) and Southern Africa Postal Operators Association (SAPOA)



Other stakeholders include:

- Licensed network operators and service providers
- Corporate and individual consumers of ICT services
- Civil society organizations, particularly consumer organizations

4. Programme Objectives

The Overall Objective: is to deepen regional integration and growth of the ICT sector in EA-SA-IO Region.

Specific objectives

- 1) Regionally coordinated public and private sector ICT policy development;
- 2) Enhanced policy and regulatory environment for competitive markets and gender sensitive ICT markets; and
- 3) Improved infrastructure connectivity and access to ICT

5. Expected Results of the EGEE-ICT Programme

The program integrates three key result areas which will be implemented with sub result areas as follows:

Result 1:

Regionally coordinated public and private sector ICT policy development

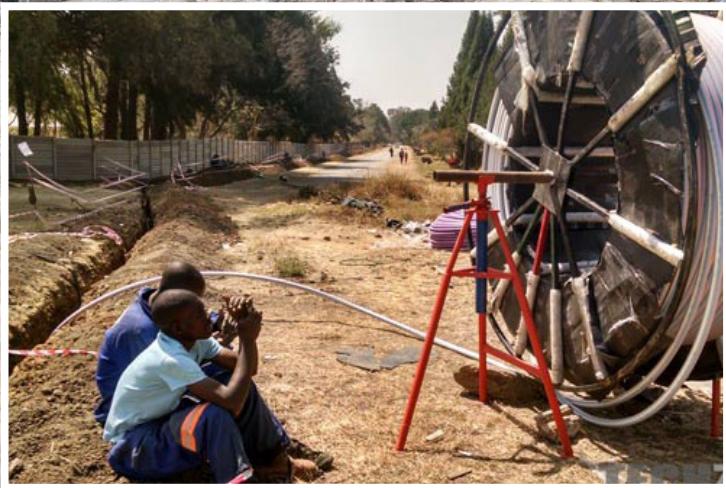
Regional institutions for ICT policy making and implementation exist, notably the RECs and the associations of ICT regulators and operators. However, there's need to establish a strong framework for cooperation and consensus building, to enhance the capacities of the regional ICT associations, and to build a system for monitoring and evaluating regional ICT policy development and implementation.

Result 2:

Enhanced policy and regulatory environment for competitive markets and gender sensitive ICT markets.

Development and implementation of harmonized ICT policies and regulations facilitates cross-border interconnections, strengthens pan-regional competition and competitive tariffs, expedites deployment of safe and reliable ICT services, promotes e-commerce, and integrates gender perspectives in regional ICT development.





Result 3:

Improved infrastructure connectivity and access to ICT

Addressing the digital divide requires greater investment in ICT infrastructure, mechanisms for sharing infrastructure and enhanced utilization of infrastructure and services. The programme will support the drafting of requisite model policy and regulatory frameworks and subsequent transposition by national authorities.

6. Other:

Development Partnership

In December 2020, the European Union (EU), under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) signed a Contribution Agreement with COMESA to finance the programme.

Implementation Period: January 2021 to November 2024

Funding Amount: Euro 8 million



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