

MASIT – Macedonian Chamber of Commerce for Information and Communication Technologies

Development of Broadband and Next Generation Networks

Position Paper

Executive Summary

This document represents the view and position of MASIT in the area of Broadband networks and services and Next Generation Networks.

MASIT continuously follows the progress and the development of the technologies, investments and competition in the overall area of the electronic communications and pays special attention to the broadband as one of the key prerequisites for the convergence of the overall ICT industry. Therefore, particular interest and attention is addressed to the overall economic and regulatory environment related to the broadband.

The document follows the standards of MASIT for formulation and adoption of position papers and strategic documents, defined within the capacity building project supported by World Learning Project of USAID in the Republic of Macedonia.

For the purposes of this document, MASIT supported by USAID BEA engaged a consultant to prepare a study and undertake research to assess the implications of sound and consistent broadband policy in Macedonia. The paper “Broadband Policy in Macedonia – Next Generation Networks” was prepared with intention to:

- identify most important aspects of the current broadband policy in Macedonia,
- assess the existing stage of the development of the broadband services and networks through analysis of available key indicators,
- provide recommendations on long-term and short-term basis toward creation of sound and consistent broadband market in Macedonia, and
- suggest feasible solutions for future broadband policy in Macedonia and assess possible impact of the policy to ICT companies, business sector and the Government of Macedonia in general.

Following the outcomes of the study, as well as considering the other resources listed in the relevant research area, the EC Committee proposed, and the Steering Committee of MASIT adopted the Position Paper for Broadband and Next Generation Networks

Topic:

Broadband & NGN (Next generation network)

Description of the topic:

Improving of the economic and regulatory environment in order to motivate investments and competition in the area of Broadband networks and services and NGN and thereby increase the offer, use and affordability of the access to internet and e-services.

Background and concerns on the issue:

The usage of the Internet enables to the broad population and businesses significantly easier access to information, wide channel for offer and supply goods, opportunities for more efficient operations, etc.

Considering the outcomes of the overview of foreign countries best practices, it is evident that the development of the broadband environment is directly related with boosts of the economic progress.

The overall life becomes more and more dependent on access to Internet.

Broadband penetration as a main precondition for boosting the e-society.

Applicable research:

Broadband Policy in Macedonia – Next Generation Networks

National strategy for Information Society

National Broadband strategy

AEC's research on broad customer satisfaction

AEC's periodical and specific relevant market analysis reports

Cullen International and EU country progress reports

Various foreign strategies and other documents in relation to broadband

i2010 EU EC Strategy

Statistical office data

Our position is:

The level of the penetration of the broadband services is not at a satisfactory stage, so efforts must be made in order to rapidly increase the penetration and utilization.

The development of the broadband networks and services should be carried out through enabling and motivating investments in current and future widely recognized technologies, especially fiber optics networks and broadband wireless solutions such as WiMax, LTE, UMTS etc.

Sound, efficient and effective competition on the market is a key prerogative for securing that the market players will bring the best technologies and quality of services at the most affordable prices.

There are no existing methodologies and standards for assessment of the development of the broadband in Macedonia. We encourage the relevant administrative and regulatory bodies to adopt sound and modern methodology and indicators that will suite the needs for efficient and effective monitoring and management of the development of the broadband.

We recommend this should happen:

Improve the investment climate for broadband networks and e-society. In this relation the administrative bodies, particularly the Ministry of Transport and Communication, Ministry of Information Society, Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Finance shall follow the advises of the industry and consider all available means that will be motivating for investments in broadband networks.

Increase the competitiveness of the ICT market. In this way, the regulatory bodies, particularly the Agency for Electronic Communications and the Commission for Protection of the Competition must employ all the available means to prevent from anti competitive behavior and enable fair play and appropriate share of the revenues among the all market players.

Highly motivate and promote of introduction of e-society (e-content) in Macedonia. We expect that the Government, along with the other big consumers, shall tend to implement e-services to the highest possible extend in order to contribute to the appearance of critical demand. The EC operators shall make efforts to assist the citizens and businesses for wider acknowledgement of the benefits of the e-services for.

Raise awareness for the benefits of wide utilization of e-society services. Develop program for education of SME (Small and Medium Enterprises) about using broadband technologies and possibilities of e-commerce, e-business and other electronic interface applications. This might be achieved through various activities of the Government, NGOs, Operators, industry and media.

State/municipality support for Broadband access in rural and underdeveloped regions. In areas without critical demand and without viable commercial motivation for roll out of modern broadband networks, the state and the municipality administrations shall consider material support to the individuals and businesses in provision of opportunities for taking advantage of EC and broadband services.

Developing National security policy for using electronic communication networks. The security of the EC Networks is essential for the effective and efficient operations and therefore highest attention and awareness shall be paid. A National EC Security policy is expected deliver appropriate guidelines for all stakeholders.

Simplify and accelerate to the highest extend all the administrative procedures in reference with the rights for construction of EC networks. The Ministry of Transport and Communications must finally close the doors for any kind of unnecessary bureaucracy in the procedures of provision of appropriate documentation for construction of the electronic communications networks. Market players shall orient its efforts and resources to the creative activities in the development of the broadband and NGN and the administrative barriers for the execution of the investment plans shall be removed.

Expected outcomes:

CITIZENS

Citizens will have quicker, cheaper and more efficient execution of everyday activities and operations by increased utilizing connected to e-services

Citizens will gain quality and affordable access to broadband services

INDUSTRY

Broadening of the business opportunities

More efficient operation

Extend the footprint of its operations

GOVERNMENT

Improve social welfare

Increase the competitiveness and attractiveness for FDI

Improve the potential for increase of GDP

Self recognition