

Statement of Government Policy
with respect to the establishment of a
**National Broadband Network for the Kingdom of
Bahrain**

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In accordance with the Economic Vision 2030 and the supporting National Economic Strategy 2009 – 2014's (NES 2009 – 2014) initiative 1.5.1.2

“High bandwidth and reliable networks are increasingly needed by businesses, and are necessary to attract many types of investment. The Government is committed to continuing recent market liberalization efforts supported by appropriate market regulation thereby ensuring availability, reliability, diversity and affordability of internet connectivity and international telecommunications infrastructure. More specifically actions to encourage the deployment of the high capacity fiber-optic networks include: removing unnecessary barriers to the deployment of networks; facilitating access to existing infrastructure; and reducing costs via shared works. If necessary, market forces may be supplemented by appropriate public policy initiatives that fully support and do not hinder the operation of fair and effective competition.”

The Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain has taken the decision to make available on an open access basis, on fair and reasonable prices, capacity on the fibre-optic network of the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA) utilising those fibres that are in excess of the direct needs to the EWA (the “Network”) in order to increase Government effectiveness and assist in accelerating economic diversification into non-oil sectors such as healthcare, education and banking.

The Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain has decided that Bahrain Internet Exchange (BIX) shall be the organisation responsible for overseeing all operational aspects of the Network. Once operational the Network shall be operated on a non-discriminatory open access basis and the charges for services

provided over the Network shall be uniform and non-discriminatory as well as fair and reasonable.

As such, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA); BIX; EWA; and other relevant planning authorities are required to work in collaboration at all stages of the Network's establishment to implement, in accordance with the provisions of the Economic Vision 2030, the NES 2009 – 2014, Telecommunications Law and relevant regulations issued by TRA, without undue delay this policy to commercialise the Network as a strategic national asset.

TRA, in accordance with its duties ascribed under the Telecommunications Law, is required to inform all licensed operators seeking to develop infrastructure within the Kingdom of Bahrain of the Government's decision with respect to the future plans for the Network and ensure that, in approving wayleave applications for companies seeking to make infrastructure investment decisions, these plans for the Network are taken into consideration.

TRA, and where appropriate in coordination with other relevant authorities, shall put in place the necessary regulatory framework to ensure that the network is deployed with appropriate levels of security befitting that of a strategic national asset.



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