**General Policy for the Telecommunications Sector in the State of the United Arab Emirates (2006-2010)**

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## 1 Introduction

This document describes the General Policy for the Telecommunication Sector (the "GTP") of in the State of the United Arab Emirates (the "Government"). The GTP will function as a catalyst towards accelerating the growth and development of the

telecommunication sector in its efforts to support the Government's goal of developing the country as the premier Information and Communication Technology ("ICT") hub in the region and beyond.

The Government recognizes that the provision of a world-class competitive telecommunication infrastructure is of critical importance to the economic development of the country. This sector is a key enabler for the other sectors of the economy and a critical catalyst for national progress. It forms the backbone of industries such as trade, financial services, technology-based services, tourism, media, education, oil, manufacturing, transportation and health services.

The policies contained herein will serve as guidelines to all parties involved in the telecommunications sector, including consumers, service providers, operators, investors and the Government.

## 2 Government Objectives

The key government objectives of relevance to the GTP are:

- To develop the non-oil sector of the economy including the areas of trade,

financial services, technology-based services, tourism, media, education, manufacturing, transportation and health services. To reinforce the utilization of advanced technology.

- To support and promote economic growth while maintaining economic and social stability.

- To increase the participation of UAE nationals in the economy.

- To catalyze the policies that lead to building a comprehensive strategy aimed at developing a diverse economic infrastructure.

## 3 The General Policies

In order to help achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the Government has outlined the following policies for the telecommunications sector:

### 3.1 Establish Policies and Regulatory Framework

The Government will establish a regulatory and policy framework that facilitates the development of the country's telecommunications and ICT infrastructure and services in order to meet national, regional and international objectives through:

1. Gradually introducing competition in the telecommunications sector to achieve

greater efficiency, ever increasing quality, diverse choices and availability of services.

2. Ensuring that such competition is sustainable, through providing an appropriate regulatory framework to protect the rights of the enterprises operating in this sector and to protect the rights of the consumers in the Telecommunications services.

3. Ensuring that all reasonable demands for telecommunications services are met and in particular, that ubiquitous and affordable access to basic telecommunications services is provided to all segments of society.

4. Transforming the economy through accelerated development of the national telecommunication and ICT infrastructure.

5. Managing scarce national resources such as but not limited to spectrum, numbering and rights of way in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner, having regard for the need to foster efficient use of such resources to enable sustainable competition.

6. Encouraging all segments of society to use the Internet to access and contribute to information, ideas and knowledge while promoting responsible use thereof in accordance with the social and moral values of the country.

7. Encouraging participation and investment by local and international companies in the development of the

telecommunications sector and the innovative applications of advanced and emerging technologies.

8. Ensuring that adequate protection is given to the rights and interests of all consumers of telecommunications services, including but not limited to data protection, privacy and resolution of complaints.

9. Encouraging the scarce individual highly skilled experts in the ICT sector.

10. Encouraging the convergence of the Telecommunications sector with other national sectors through establishing a fully integrated relationship on both vertical and horizontal levels.

11. Educating the society on the proper and responsible use of the different Telecommunication services.

### 3.2 Promote and Develop New Technologies

The Government will promote the use of new technologies in the UAE through:

1. Leading the Region with existing and future e-government initiatives

2. Facilitating the development of e-commerce and value-added services

utilizing an advanced telecommunications infrastructure.

3. Encouraging the development and deployment of infrastructure taking advantage of the convergence of information technology, media, and telecommunication.

### 3.3 Become the Regional ICT Hub

The Government will support the development of the UAE as a regional ICT and telecommunications hub by:

1. Encouraging the establishment and growth of competitive ICT based enterprises.

2. Encouraging the development of value-added and enhanced services that make use of broadband, wireless and other innovative technologies.

3. Ensuring a secure environment in telecommunication applications and usage, , including information security and network security, authentication, privacy and consumer protection by developing Policies and Regulatory Framework for this subject.

## 3.4 Develop the Country's Human Capital

The Government will facilitate the development of human capital in the telecommunications and ICT sector to meet the demands of the economy, serving both local and regional requirements by:

1. Investing in national capability development in order to improve the demand-supply of telecommunications and ICT national human resources and build national capabilities in emerging areas of growth in this sector.

2. Promoting the use of ICT in all stages of education, training and human resource development.

3. Encouraging content creators, publishers, producers, teachers, trainers, archivists, librarians and learners to play an active role in promoting ICT.

## 3.5 Encourage Research and Development

The Government will encourage research and development activities within an integrated complex, and establish relationships with international academic institutions.

## 4 Policy Reviews

The Government believes that it is important that its policies continue to be relevant in a rapidly changing and dynamic environment. The Supreme Committee for the Supervision of the Telecommunications Sector will monitor both local and global telecommunications sector trends in order to provide timely and relevant advice for the Government policy reviews. This is to ease facilitate the creation of opportunities and sound investment environment and to encourage making use of the expertise of other developed countries.