

20th EDITION OF GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM FOR REGULATORS RESPONDS TO CHALLENGES OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE WAKE OF GLOBAL CRISES AND BEYOND

NEW GSR-20 BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES HIGHLIGHT KEY ROLE OF REGULATORS AND POLICY-MAKERS IN “BUILDING BACK BETTER”



Promoting an adaptive, resilient and collaborative regulatory system is key to “building back better” and advancing digital transformation for all, according to participants at ITU’s 20th edition of the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR-20), held virtually from 1 to 3 September.

Regulatory authorities that gathered at GSR-20 agree that in the wake of COVID-19 digital regulation can boost the readiness of digital markets to face unexpected events and emergencies and deliver up to the expectations despite the odds. Accordingly, they have adopted GSR-20 Best Practice Guidelines: The gold standard for regulation to respond to the challenges of digital transformation in the aftermath of global crises and beyond.

"This crisis has demonstrated that information and communication technology is a unifying thread that runs through all aspects of our societies and economies, and our approach to ICT investments must recognize and embrace this reality," said ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao. "At stake is the ability of regulators and policy-makers everywhere to unlock investment to support growth, jobs and innovation – but also to save lives and demonstrate their value added in this increasingly connected world."

National economies and citizens have been relying increasingly on digital infrastructure during COVID-19. The current crisis and the probability of new global emergencies means that regulators will need to switch to regulatory frameworks that are adaptive, collaborative, outcomes-based and technology neutral.

The GSR-20 Best Practice Guidelines emphasize the need for coordination among all stakeholders, integrating sustainability into regulatory frameworks, maximizing benefits while reducing harms of digital technologies, striving for transparency and trust throughout the regulatory process, an evidence-based approach, and frequent revision of regulatory frameworks to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

"The GSR-20 Best Practice Guidelines cast a framework for progressive regulatory patterns and policy while charting the way ahead for industry and regulators. We have identified concrete steps to pursue regulatory reform towards achieving thriving, inclusive digital markets," said GSR-20 Chair Dan Sjoblom. "As the pace of digital transformation accelerates, developing an effective regulatory approach is more vital than ever. In the face of new global emergencies, governments and regulators need to consider holistic, cross-sectoral, and, to the extent possible, multi-national regulatory and policy approaches."

The GSR-20 Best Practice Guidelines propose the following reforms:

Agile framework for competition in digital markets: Regulators should support innovation and new business and licensing models that facilitate affordable access to and investment in health, enterprise, and educational services on digital platforms.

Codes of conduct (voluntary or enforceable): Regulators should guide digital platforms and support them throughout the process of creating codes, their implementation and enforcement in important areas, such as online content moderation on digital platforms, addressing misinformation and online news quality, and child online protection. Media and digital literacy and awareness efforts should likewise be central to navigating the challenges around services that are enabled by the digital transformation.

Upgrading national emergency plans: Creation and implementation of effective emergency plans enables better preparedness and decision-making during crises. Such plans are key to anticipating future unexpected events and their negative impacts and they should focus on both urban and rural areas through a multi-technology approach. Bilateral, regional and international cooperation should ensure business and public service continuity and underpin national recovery efforts.

Spectrum reform: Spectrum managers need to be able to respond timely, making spectrum available for wireless applications when and where they are needed, and as easily as possible, giving spectrum users and innovators flexibility to provide services that will deliver the greatest benefits. Ensuring that sufficient unlicensed spectrum is available drives innovation and investment in a range of technologies that can complement and support networks and expand broadband access at low cost. Spectrum reform should also be focused on ensuring that access to broadband service is provided affordably to those areas and populations that have been traditionally unserved or underserved.

At the same time, regulators recognize that there is no single, comprehensive blueprint for best practice and that regulatory patterns for the connected digital economy will be rooted in local circumstances while addressing regional and global challenges, especially now while the world is striving to build back better with digital technologies across the board.

"In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, the work of regulators and policy-makers is critical," said Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director of ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau. "Our ICT policy and regulatory frameworks will need to be fit-for-purpose. They will need to be up-to-date, flexible, incentive-based and market-driven to support digital transformation across sectors, and across geographical regions. In short, they will need to leverage the power of digital platforms and infrastructures to build the resilience we need to protect us against future global emergencies."

This year's GSR programme kicked off on 30 June 2020 with a leadership debate "Resilient and secure digital connectivity for all: COVID-19 Recovery and lessons learned for better preparedness and response". The event was followed by Regional Regulatory Roundtable Discussions for the Europe, CIS, Arab States, Africa and Asia-Pacific regions.



(📡) Livestreams | Spotlight on ITU

- Connecting Humanity Study**
1 SEP 2020, 14:25 - 14:35 CEST
- Economic Expert Roundtable Outcome**
2 SEP 2020, 12:50 - 13:00 CEST
- Global ICT Regulatory Outlook & ICT Regulatory Tracker**
2 SEP 2020, 14:20 - 14:30 CEST
- Digital Regulation Handbook**
2 SEP 2020, 16:00 - 16:10 CEST
- REG4COVID**
3 SEP 2020, 14:10 - 14:20 CEST

itu.int/GSR20

Ahead of the 20th Edition of the ITU's Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR-20) the USTTI and ITU will team up to provide regulatory officials with a behind the scenes look at the work taking place to prepare for the deployment and usage of emerging technologies. During the webinar sessions on August 27 and August 28, subject matter experts will provide regulators with information on the Technological Underpinnings of Emerging Technologies and the Spectrum planning that is taking place to enable these new services.

August 27

Spectrum Planning for Emerging Technologies

As the competing demands for spectrum access intensify, Ronald Repasi, the Acting Chief of the United States Federal Communications Commission's (FCC), Office of Engineering and Technology will talk about work the FCC has been doing in pursuing both exclusive use and shared spectrum allocations among various services and technologies. The training will also walk through several examples to highlight the FCC's continued pursuit of greater spectrum access for all types of services and technologies.

Additionally, information will be shared on Dynamic Spectrum Sharing technology and how it opens the door for operators to seamlessly transition from 4G to 5G networks. Speakers will discuss how this technology functions and how it can speed the path for operators to move from 4G to 5G.

August 28

Technological Underpinnings of Emerging Technologies

Get a "behind the scenes" view of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), and the Edge. This session will discuss artificial intelligence from hardware to software capabilities and real-world applications across multiple usage scenarios, as well as provide an overview of IoT and the Edge. We will explore the latest technologies and standards underpinning this landscape and how they interact with key policy and regulatory trends.

GSR-20 also featured the Regional Regulatory Associations meeting and the Industry Advisory Group for Development Issues and Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officer's meeting (IAGDI-CRO) on 31 August, and the Heads of Regulators Executive Roundtable on 1 September.

The core sessions in September included a series of lightning sessions presenting the Global Network Resiliency Platform (REG4COVID); the new Digital Regulation Handbook and online platform, a collaborative effort between ITU and the World Bank; the outcome report of the Economic Experts Roundtable; and the Global ICT Regulatory Outlook and ICT Regulatory Tracker.

ITUWebinars

20TH GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM
FOR REGULATORS

USTTI ITU

Behind the scenes look at emerging technologies

27 & 28 August
14:00 - 16:30 PM CEST

Join us online!
itu.int/go/USTTI-ITU-training



Global ICT Regulatory Outlook. The flood of digital change continues full spate – and digital transformation, while a reality for some, remains distant for many. A period of hope and aspiration buoyed by smartphones and increasingly accessible broadband has now darkened somewhat as misuse of profiling, data commercialization and harmful online behaviours have increasingly come to light, sparking considerable public debate. While markets are still driven by optimism about all that is digital, key players right across society are increasingly perceiving the role of regulation as central in restoring the full potential of ICT to deliver fully on its promise.

In the first edition of the Global ICT Regulatory Outlook in 2017, we explored the evolution of ICT regulatory trends over the preceding decade. We set out the ITU concept of five ‘generations’ of ICT regulation – now widely shared – analysing prime evidence and charting possible ways forward.

The second edition (2018) dived deep into the current trends defining regulation in the transition to the digital economy, and also focused on the strong correlation between ICT regulation and the take-up of ICT. It provided insight, inspiration and informed analysis designed to help address the challenges ahead – and paved the way for the first Benchmark for collaborative, fifth generation regulation presented in detail in Chapter 1 of this 2020 edition.

In this year’s 2020 edition, we share unique, focused research and offer both evidence and practical advice to support regulators embarked on their journey to fifth generation collaborative regulation. The Benchmark of Fifth Generation Collaborative Regulation (G5 Benchmark), based on GSR19 Best Practice Guidelines together with the ICT Regulatory Tracker, serves as a compass for regulators on their journey of digital transformation, helping establish roadmaps towards regulatory excellence and a thriving digital economy.

Importantly, this year we revisit golden rules for inclusive digital markets based on a wealth of ITU data from 193 countries over more than a decade. Our research and analysis confirm that good regulation makes a difference – and provides the key to unlocking meaningful, inclusive connectivity across countries at different levels of development and national income. Working with those updated golden rules, we offer a regulatory recipe for accelerated take-up of fixed and mobile broadband markets.

Regulatory Associations Meeting 2020: The role of Regional and International Organizations and collaboration at regional level in a post-COVID World to address the challenges of Building Back Better

This year the Regulatory Associations (RA) Meeting will take place virtually on 31 August 2020 from 13h00 PM until 16h00 PM CEST during the 20th Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR-20). The RA meeting will be chaired by Mr Michel van Bellinghen, incoming BEREC Chairman. The Regulatory Associations Meeting at GSR-20 provides a unique platform for Regulatory Associations to share experiences and knowledge, to discuss how they can collaborate, and to identify means to build back better in a post-COVID digital ecosystem, and bring affordable, safe, secure and trusted connectivity and online access and use to people in their respective regions.

The topic for discussion this year will focus on the role of regional and international organizations and collaboration at regional level in a post-COVID World to address the challenges of Building Back Better. In addition, regional regulatory associations will also be able to share on their activities since last GSR-19.

ITUWebinars 20TH GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM FOR REGULATORS

GSR-20 Regulatory Associations Meeting

The role of regional and international organizations and collaboration at regional level in a post-COVID World to address the challenges of Building Back Better.

31 August 2020
13:00 - 16:00 CEST

Join us online!
itu.int/go/GSR20-AFR-ARB

20TH EDITION 2020 ITUGSR ITU