

INEC Declaration on Open Networks



The INEC Declaration on Open Networks aims to forge a framework of reference as to create the best possible conditions for the best possible development of open broadband networks, providing the greatest access for the greatest number of residents and other end-users in the signatory-communities. This declaration defines this access as to mean the availability of advanced information-technology based facilities that enable the provisioning of information, knowledge, commerce, education, healthcare, security, mobility and socio-economic empowerment. In order to achieve this aim, the signatories to this declaration explicitly endorse the following principles:

1. Communities deserve to have open, high bandwidth infrastructures which are operator-neutral and able to satisfy current demand as well as meet the requirements of the future in terms of both the quantity and quality of information exchange. Open, operator-neutral networks are believed to be the best way to ensure societal needs are met today and in the future. Open broadband infrastructures serve three basic aims for communities:
 - a. To enhance the quality of life by facilitating the greatest possible access for the greatest number of residents
 - b. To create the best possible climate for macro-economic growth
 - c. To create the best possible climate for innovation and research
2. It belongs to the core responsibility of government to ensure the development, evolution, maintenance and functioning of communication infrastructures thus simultaneously ensuring the fairest possible market conditions for any service provider to freely compete over the infrastructure. In this way, only an open communication infrastructure lies in the public domain through ownership or regulations or both, and the retail service delivery remain exclusively in the free market.
3. Infrastructures should be ‘open’, meaning they are wholly open for any market entity to provide its services on a totally equal basis, free to compete with any other market entity. This is deemed to result in a situation whereby entities providing an identical service will be provided with identical conditions with regard to market access. The open nature of such infrastructures extends to:
 - a. Technology: the infrastructure must be compatible with other networks, whereas the technical protocols have been made available or known to all;
 - b. Functionality: there should be no barriers or limitations in the connectivity between one end-user and another
 - c. Finance: the costs of infrastructure usage should be non-discriminatory and stimulate fair competition
 - d. Organization: all providers shall have equal opportunities to offer their services to their clients or prospective clients
4. The necessity for the modern infrastructures to be open is that the infrastructure is to be available for all, regardless who or what uses it. This allows for both physical connectivity and ubiquitous advanced

applications. It allows for the essential pervasive connectivity to physical locations such as houses, buildings, public open spaces, vehicles, public information centers, hospitals, public safety facilities and other entities or institutes relevant to the public domain. This extensive physical connectivity will enable not only internet access, but new and advanced voice, video, and data applications that will enhance the quality of life and support the economic vitality of the community.

5. An open broadband infrastructure can be owned by a public entity or a public-private partnership or by one or more private entities. The role of governments as described under article three is to ensure the deployment and functioning of open broadband networks. This aim can be achieved by means of full or partial public ownership of the infrastructure or by dedicated laws and regulations guaranteeing the open nature of a privately-owned infrastructures.
6. The infrastructure should be designed to allow for future information exchange demands, both in quality and in quantity. Therefore, the infrastructures should be able to carry symmetric 'broadband' connectivity which allows for symmetric high resolution video communications as well as other high grade symmetric data exchange. Although actual broadband delivery is left to operators, the design and nature of the infrastructure should in no way prove prohibitive to carrying unlimited symmetric broadband exchange.
7. Broadband, by today's standards, is understood to cover bandwidths of 100 megabit per second on a symmetric basis – and more.
8. The infrastructure should be forged by means of independent of technology or proprietary products. Any technology that allows for the greatest access for the greatest number is acceptable as long as it is open for all and future-ready, carrying information over a symmetric bandwidth as described in this declaration.
9. The signatories call on all public and private stakeholders to embrace the principles outlined in this declaration and to pursue investments and forge the appropriate conditions as for all to enjoy the social and economic benefits that flow from the impacts of open telecommunication infrastructures.
10. The signatories present this declaration as an initiative by member communities of the International Network of E-Communities (INEC) and as an invitation to other communities to embrace and co-sign.

Signed,