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Embracing solutions focusing on long term benefits, including for a much wider number of entities in society and the economy, encompassing a larger set of investors with different aims and objectives may create an opportunity for the telecom sector to reinvigorate its role and find new fields of activity and growth.
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--- *Posted by Detlef Eckert, DG INFSO, Director for Policy coordination & Strategy*

Economic growth, productivity, employment, competiveness: these words have been increasingly used in the past few years to point out some of the areas where action is urgently needed. While an all-encompassing solution is not at hand, we do believe that a better connected Europe via high speed broadband has the capacity to positively and simultaneously affect these areas, triggering a stimulus effect which will benefit European economy as a whole.

However, difficult financial and economic situation, the absence of an immediate competitive pressure among alternative providers, levelling-out ARPUs and the lack of a short term business case in particular for certain geographic areas are raising the stakes for traditional investors in broadband and next generation access networks.

Embracing solutions focusing on long term benefits, including for a much wider number of entities in society and the economy, encompassing a larger set of investors with different aims and objectives may create an opportunity for the telecom sector to reinvigorate its role and find new fields of activity and growth.

We should also consider that the most promising, albeit challenging, developments concern the wider ICT industry in fields such as cloud computing, internet of things, the massive developments in social networks and peer to peer communication. All this seems to indicate that a solution to the problem of investment in high speed infrastructure lies in investment models that take a long term perspective, exploit synergies and balance the interest between the telecom sector and those of a much wider set of social and economic actors.

Given this context, we would like to learn your views [3], but not necessarily exclusively focusing on:

- Who are the potential investors today and tomorrow?
- What aims should these investors pursue?
- Are there (new) investment models that can balance the interest of these different players?
- Which models deliver best in terms of economic development, social change and innovation?

Some of these questions are being answered in a number of the ongoing projects, including few

experimenting with new investment models across Europe. The challenge is to identify which model fits any given situation, which benefits it delivers and to whom. The task of a policy maker would be that to create the appropriate regulatory context that facilitates investment in those models that deliver best on the objectives set by the Digital Agenda for Europe [4] within the larger context of the Europe 2020 Strategy [5].

To stimulate this online discussion, you will find descriptions of the commercial, regulatory and financial features of concrete projects in a dedicated space in the Digital Agenda Assembly discussion forum [3]. Additional models and projects can be posted to enrich the on-line discussion even further. The outcome of this discussion will be presented in the afternoon session of the workshop dedicated to "High Speed Connections" [6] at the Digital Agenda Assembly 2012.

Looking forward to your inputs online [3] and to a lively and fruitful discussion on- & off-line.

Tags:

broadband [7]
Connected Europe [8]
High Speed Connections [9]

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Links
[1] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/users/editor
[2] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/blog_home
[3] http://daa.ec.europa.eu/group/2/content
[4] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/daa/index_en.htm
[5] http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm
[6] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/events/cf/daa2012/item-display.cfm?id=8276
[7] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/tags/broadband
[8] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/tags/connected-europe
[9] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/tags/high-speed-connections