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The evolution of broadband policy and regulation in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

The liberalization of the telecommunications sector in South Africa has brought about vast improvement in the take-up and use of mobile telephony, however the opposite can be said of broadband penetration. As recently as 2012, there has been some degree of stagnation in fixed telephony and broadband access. This research report explores the evolution of broadband policy and regulation over the past decade, 2003-2012. Several themes from international trends are used, as guidelines of what an integrated, efficient broadband policy should address what governance and policy leadership is necessary for driving broadband policy initiatives across all spheres of government. The study proposes a conceptual framework that informs the analysis in comparing and contrasting the national broadband policy and plans, as well as provincial and local government's policies and plans against desirable characteristics, such coordinated planning and implementation of broadband across government. The research analyses the current state of the country's national broadband policy and plans across the three spheres of government. The analysis considers the contextual differences between the trends studied and the local data collected in the formal research phase, for the benefit of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the South African broadband plans. The conclusion focuses on the incentive structure needed to extend the development of the broadband ecosystem in terms of infrastructure, services, applications and user involvement in the country.

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