

Nigerian government urged to review national broadband plan

The Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) and telecommunication operators have called on the government to review the National Broadband Plan, which expired in December 2018. The National Broadband Plan 2013-2018 had penetration targets for both fixed and mobile broadband.



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Nigeria succeeded in achieving the 30% broadband penetration rate by December 2018 that had been in the 2013 plan. Having attained the feat, industry stakeholders are insisting that there is need for a review of the broadband plan, in order to set new and higher target for the industry.

The chairman of the Association of Licensed Telecoms Operators of Nigeria (ALTON) Gbenga Adebayo, said the review is necessary to enable the government to tackle the growing demand for broadband access. For Nigeria to be fully digitised in 2019, Adebayo said, the government must raise broadband penetration to 50% at year-end and to 80% by 2020, when 5G roll-out is expected.

In a statement, the NCC stated: “Finally, Nigeria cannot rest on its oars. It is important that the National Broadband Plan, which, incidentally expired last year 2018 be reviewed. As the Broadband Commission’s report noted, several countries are reworking their broadband targets to set performance indices in more targeted terms such as speed of service offered and percentage of coverage, penetration and accessibility to specific groups.

“It is important that Nigeria embrace this. The country may also need to re-examine its definition of “Broadband” and move from the current speed rate of 1.5/mbps to something more aggressive. It is tempting to simply suggest that Nigeria adopt speed limits set by other more developed economies. But that would be rather shallow. Speed and other targets need to be set in accordance with local conditions, and the earlier this is done, the better for Nigeria.”

The federal government in 2013 had issued the National Broadband Plan (2013-2018), which sets penetration targets for both fixed and mobile broadband throughout Nigeria but the country narrowly attained and surpassed the 30% broadband target.

One of the many targets set by the document, the most prominent one was the projection that Nigeria must reach 30% broadband penetration by December 2018, which was achieved last year.

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