

# NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK (NBN) POLICIES

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY LEADING TO RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MENA REGION

*An independent report for the FTTH Council MENA by Ventura Team LLP*

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VenturaTeam 



## FORWARD AND INTRODUCTION BY FTTH COUNCIL MENA

The concept of a national broadband network (NBN) has been developed by governments around the world who are continuously examining the status of their infrastructure, assessing the sector and deciding whether existing networks need to be modernised or extended. This process of examination has given rise to the concept of an open fibre broadband network stimulated by government.

As part of its Regulatory and Policy Committee's mission, the FTTH Council MENA is committed to strengthening its cooperation with policy makers, governments and regulators in the region in order to positively influence relevant NBN policy development and have a positive impact on broadband deployment in general, and FTTH rollout in particular.

The FTTH Council MENA commissioned this report from Ventura Team to survey the current status of NBN policies in the MENA region in order to identify the most effective generic approach to help policy makers, governments and regulators make the right decisions in the matter of NBN policy and accelerate the FTTH deployment.

This report includes information, updates and generic recommendations that reflect the views and experience of the expert consultants. The best practice will clearly vary depending on the local circumstances in each country. This report is specifically tailored to NBN/FTTH deployment policy and structured in several sections representing the findings of the study and leading to several suggestions and recommendations:

- Study and analysis of the actual status of NBN/FTTH in 16 countries of the MENA region
- Observations regarding MENA approaches to NBN
- Identification of 9 key dimensions for NBN policy
- Comparison of the MENA status vs. the 9 dimensions
- Suggestions/recommendations on each of the 9 key dimension

The Executive Summary briefly describes the key findings before getting into the full details of each section. It is recommended to use the summary for a quick overview and for public communication.

We believe it is worth to focus on the execution of NBN plans in each country due to the general circumstances in the region that are rapidly changing from business and political perspectives. This will definitely help the acceleration of FTTH deployment in the MENA region.

**To receive the full report please contact:**

Christine Beylouni - Director General - FTTH Council MENA

[info@ftthcouncilmena.org](mailto:info@ftthcouncilmena.org)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### MENA NBN Status

In the body of the report we survey the current status of NBN policy across the region. Approaches vary greatly which is to be expected given the immense diversity in terms of infrastructure, political situation and economic development across MENA.

Formative	Emerging	Implementation	Achieved
Discussions about NBN policy are at an early stage without yet reaching a conclusion or have stalled.	There is a desire for ubiquitous high speed broadband and policy is developing in parallel with initial investments.	The general strategy is mature and the focus is now on implementation.	The NBN goal of ubiquitous high-speed broadband has been achieved.
Egypt Iraq Iran	Lebanon  Jordan Morocco Bahrain ----->	Oman Qatar (redefined Nov. 2014 )	
<b>No Policy (Market Lead) or Informal</b>			
Either there is a) an informal NBN policy directing State controlled operators to invest or b) there has not yet been a serious discussion about NBN policy, or c) the decision is to rely entirely on market activity.			
Algeria Kuwait Libya	Palestine Tunisia	Saudi Arabia	UAE

Table 1 National Broadband Initiatives - Status in autumn 2014

### Pragmatism v Idealism

In this report we recommend the ideal position on each of nine key dimensions of any NBN policy. Clearly, these are our generic recommendations and the best policy in any particular country will vary depending on local circumstances. Nonetheless, we believe that moving as far as possible towards our generic idea on each dimension will bring benefits to any particular NBN.

We recognise that some of the recommendations here may seem rather idealistic. Some may appear unnecessary or overly ambitious and for others - where the situation locally may be very unstable - they may simply be unattainable. We accept and fully agree that achieving some practical progress in the real world is infinitely preferable to prolonged delay in pursuit of an unachievable ideal. These recommendations and the logic supporting them are designed to help policy makers and others involved in NBN. They should at least foster debate. The merit of each recommendation should be tested for your own situation and adapted accordingly.

## Recommendations

We identified nine key dimensions of an NBN policy and for each we recommend a position on the spectrum of possible measures. These are summarised in the table below.

Policy Dimension	Essence of Recommendation
Geography: Competitive v Complementary	Complementary is more efficient
Copper Switch Off / Incumbent Migration	Should be guaranteed
Consistency of Regulation with NBN (esp. pricing)	Aim for high consistency but need not be perfect
Execute via Incumbent or New NBN Organisation(s)	New focussed organisation preferable
Single v Multiple NBN Companies	Multiple companies to reduce execution risk
Clear, accountable, stable Governance of NBN	Essential for any endeavour
Degree of Structural Separation	High degree of separation likely more effective
Government v Private Finance	Signifiant private finance adds discipline
USO or other Ongoing Contractual Revenues	Universal service should be modernised to fit NBN

Finally, we compared the average of MENA practice to our recommended positions. The result of this comparison is shown by the chart below.

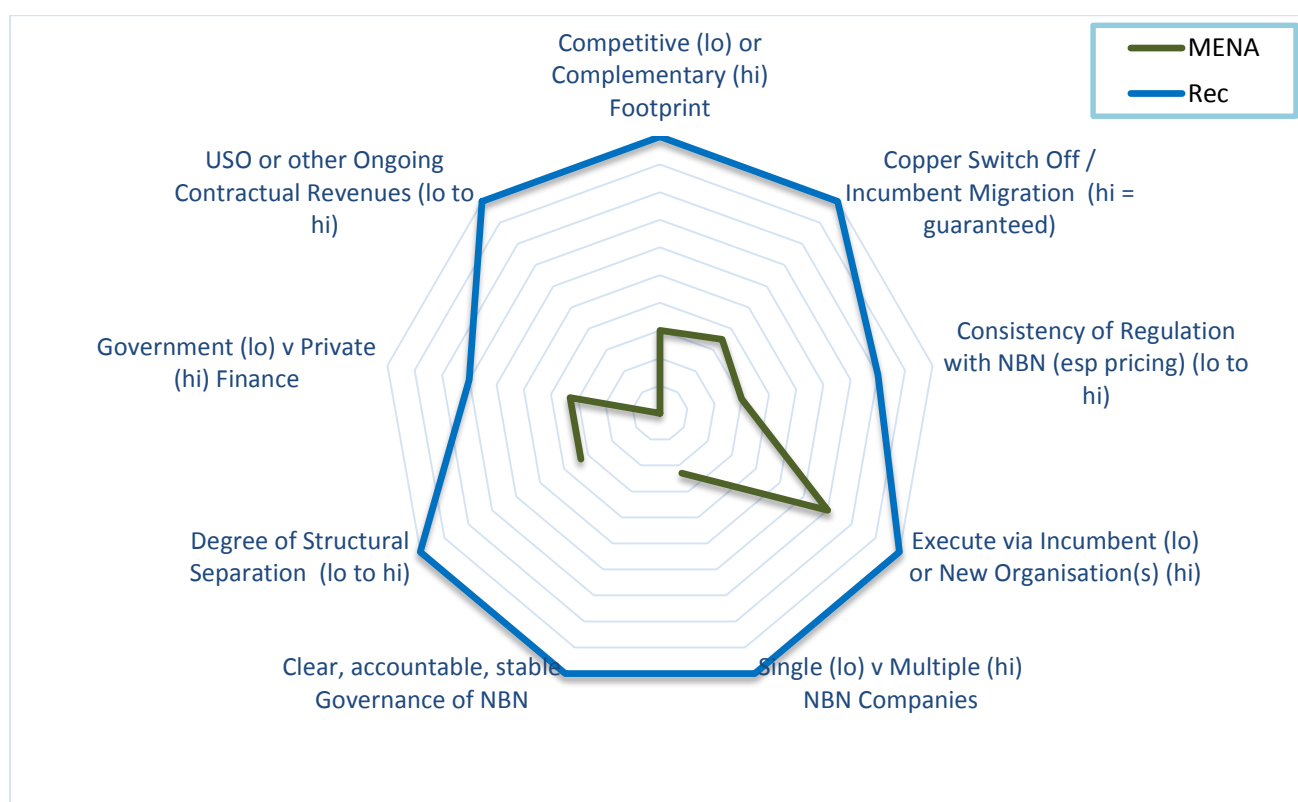


Figure 5 Comparison of the average MENA policy with our recommendations on the nine key dimensions

As is clear from the diagram, we feel that the general practice of NBN policy in the region could be improved, although it is not the case that in any particular country the optimal policy should or could match our ideal on each of all the nine dimensions.



# CONTENTS

Forward and Introduction by FTTH Council MENA.....	1
Executive Summary.....	2
1 Why NBNs? .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
1.1 Definition of an NBN .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
1.2 Fibre is the Most Common Choice of Infrastructure Type .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
1.3 Early Examples of NBNs.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2 Overview of MENA Region Developments .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.1 Stages in NBN Policy Development and Implementation.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.2 Individual Country “Status Updates” .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.3 Observations Regarding MENA Approaches to NBN .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.3.1 Competitive v Complementary Footprint? .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.3.2 Explicit Copper Switch-off / Incumbent Migration? .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.3.3 Consistency of Regulation with NBN .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.3.4 Degree of Structural Separation .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.3.5 Execute via the Incumbent(s) or Create a New Organisation(s)?	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.3.6 Single National Company or Multiple Regional Delivery Companies?	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.3.7 Clear, Accountable, Stable Governance of NBN .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.3.8 Government Financed or Privately Financed?.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.3.9 USO or Other Ongoing Contractual Revenues.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3 Recommended Policy Model .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1 Competitive v Complementary Footprint .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2 Copper Switch Off / Incumbent Migration .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.3 Consistency of Regulation with NBN.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.4 Degree of Structural Separation .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.5 Execute via Incumbent v Create One (or More) New Organisation(s)	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.6 Single National or Multiple Regional NBN Companies?.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.7 Clear, Accountable, Stable Governance of NBN .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.8 Government Finance v Private Finance .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.9 USO or Other Ongoing Contractual Revenues .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>



## GLOSSARY



<b>FTTH</b>	Fibre to the Home. An access network utilising only optical fibre to connect the home (or other type of premise).
<b>FTTP</b>	Fibre to the Premise – a more generic and in some ways for NBN more correct term than FTTH.
<b>Incumbent</b>	The long established national fixed telephone company. Depending on the country, this organisation may still have a monopoly or protected position.
<b>ISP</b>	Internet Service Provider. A company that connects a customer over the NBN to the global Internet.
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa.
<b>NBN</b>	National Broadband Network: a ubiquitous (or at least very extensive) open (fibre) broadband network stimulated by government.
<b>NBNCo(s)</b>	Abbreviation for NBN Company (or companies) – the organisation(s) responsible for delivering and operating the NBN itself.
<b>PPP</b>	Public Private Partnership: a financing structure for social / public service oriented projects. See section 2.3.8.
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates.
<b>USF</b>	Universal Service Fund: a funding mechanism to make good one or more operators that bear the cost of serving uneconomic areas or customers under the USO.
<b>USO</b>	Universal Service Obligation: an obligation placed on one or more telecom operators (or indeed the NBN) to provide service everywhere in a national territory including to uneconomic areas and perhaps also uneconomic types of customer (i.e. those that spend very little but need access in case of emergency).

