

Migration to IMT-2000 in Developing countries

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Around 60 operators have already launched WCDMA services in the world and there are already around 20 million WCDMA customers on these networks. Similarly, around 20 operators have launched CDMA 2000 1X EvDO services and are having a total subscriber base of around 12 million. With the growth of IMT 2000 services both in WCDMA and CDMA 2000 1X EvDO, the cost of handset and equipment will come down. It is expected that in the year 2005 this growth may take place at a much faster pace. At this stage, the developing countries have to develop their strategy for introduction of IMT 2000 services. One argument could be that is it really necessary to develop a separate strategy for introduction of IMT 2000 services because like 2.5G (GPRS) or 2.75G (EDGE) services, the IMT 2000 services will also offer voice, data and video services. The difference could be in terms of data speed, quality and type of video services. The regulator and policy makers have to ensure that there is adequate competition in the market so that a wide variety of good quality services are available to the consumers at lowest possible prices. It is pertinent to provide a facilitating environment which ensures that benefits of technology are available to all. In case of adequate competition the introduction of IMT 2000 services should be completely decided by market forces and under these circumstances the role of regulator and policy maker becomes to ensure the availability of spectrum for introduction of these services. One of the main issue is whether entry of new operators should be considered at the time of introduction of IMT 2000 services irrespective of number of already existing mobile operators in the market. In developing countries it is necessary that mobile services should be available to the masses at the lowest possible tariffs. Spectrum being one of the vital inputs for providing mobile services the policy maker and the regulator should ensure that adequate spectrum is available to the mobile operators and spectrum charges should be as reasonable as possible. In countries where there is enough competition and the existing operates find it attractive, from market forces point of view to offer IMT 2000 services then they should be a straightway allocated IMT - 2000 spectrum.

This presentation will cover all these aspects taking examples from various countries.