Consultation Paper on an Investment-Oriented Spectrum Management in Nigeria

Exploring an Incentive-Based Spectrum Investment Framework (IBSIF)

November, 2026

Consultation Guidance

This Consultation Paper is a preliminary engagement of key stakeholders before the activation of the rule-making process of the Commission under Section 71 of the Nigerian Communications Act 2003. The outcome of this Consultation Process will provide the clarity and consensus that will support reviews and recommendations that may be considered in to the development of the Framework. The Commission will take into account all comments and recommendations as part of its participatory approach to the attainment of the objectives of the Nigerian Communications Act 2003.

Content

Introduction… 4

Background..... 4

Expected Outcomes..... 5

Issues for Address 5

Consultation Process 5

Submission and Feedback Process 6

Conclusion..... 6

Schedule- Consultation Feedback and Comments Response Template

1. Introduction

Nigeria is a mobile-first economy. Mobile networks support financial transactions, commerce, education, public services and everyday communication, making reliable broadband increasingly important to households, businesses and national productivity. Continued growth in connectivity has been a major achievement, but it also places new demands on network capacity and quality.

Demand is rising much faster than in the recent past. Monthly mobile data consumption increased from approximately 518,000 terabytes in January 2023 to 1.66 million terabytes in July 2026—about 3.2 times the earlier level. Yet many communities remain poorly served, while customers in busy locations experience congestion and inconsistent service. As at April 2026, 5G population coverage was estimated at approximately 13%, illustrating the scope for further next-generation network expansion.

Meeting such rising demand requires sustained investment in new sites, radio capacity, fibre backhaul, reliable power, network modernisation and shared infrastructure. Investment needs differ across the country: some communities still lack meaningful broadband access, while many established service areas face congestion and variable performance. These challenges call for complementary measures that support both network expansion and improvements in existing services.

2. Background

Radiofrequency spectrum is a valuable public resource and an essential input for wireless communications. Its assignment supports Government revenue while enabling the provision of telecommunications services. As Nigeria's broadband requirements grow, there is merit in considering how spectrum management can also encourage investment outcomes that deliver enduring benefits to consumers and the wider economy.

The proposed Incentive-Based Spectrum Investment Framework (IBSIF) would provide a structured approach for linking appropriate spectrum-related incentives to additional, verifiable infrastructure investment. Depending on the relevant assignment and applicable legal requirements, such arrangements could encourage expanded coverage, greater capacity, improved service quality and stronger network resilience.

The proposed approach is to assess the value of any incentive alongside clearly defined investment commitments and the resulting public benefits. This requires credible evidence that investments are additional to existing obligations and normal commercial plans, together with safeguards for competition, spectrum efficiency and Government's fiscal interests.

3. Expected Outcomes

The principal objective is to extend meaningful broadband access to unserved and underserved communities. For this purpose, the distinction matters: unserved locations have no meaningful service, while underserved locations have service that falls below appropriate coverage, capacity or quality thresholds. Stakeholder input is sought on the data and criteria that should underpin these classifications.

The proposed approach would also address the experience of existing users. In areas where traffic growth is outpacing network capacity, investment in site densification, modernisation, fibre and supporting infrastructure can reduce congestion and improve reliability. Success should therefore be measured not only by additional sites or expenditure, but by demonstrable improvements in the services people receive.

The investment benefits could extend across the communications value chain. Tower companies, fibre providers, equipment suppliers and other infrastructure businesses may gain new deployment opportunities, while smaller and regional service providers could benefit from well-designed participation and wholesale arrangements. More dependable broadband would also support enterprises, digital services and employment. For Government, the relevant assessment includes both the value of spectrum and the longer-term economic and fiscal returns associated with additional productive investment.

4. Issues for Address

The consultation will primarily address issues bordering on the following:
4.1 Investment additionality and measurable results
4.2 Competition and fair participation
4.3 Spectrum value and public finances
4.4 Legal authority and accountability

5. Consultation Process

This Consultation process is for thirty (30) days from the date of its publication on the website of the Commission. The expected comments/feedbacks will guide the Commission in determining the specific areas for review and changes when it commences its rule making process as outlined by Section 71 of the Nigerian Communications Act 2003. The Process is open to licensees in the Nigerian Communications Sector, consumers, agencies of government, international agencies and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

6. Submission and Feedback Process

All feedbacks, comments and requests for clarification on this Consultation Paper should be sent on or before **November 30, 2026** via email to ibsif@ncc.gov.ng.

The feedback and comments can be contained in the Feedback and Comment Template in the Schedule to this Consultation Paper and additional comments and supporting documentations can be sent as attachments to the mail. The subject of the mail should contain the specific name of the Consultation Paper.

7. Conclusion

Nigeria's expanding digital economy requires both wider broadband access and consistently better network performance. IBSIF offers an opportunity to align spectrum policy more closely with these investment priorities, while preserving competition, accountability and public value. The Commission welcomes constructive, evidence-based contributions to shape a balanced approach that serves consumers, industry and the national economy.

Dated: 12th November, 2026

Dr. Aminu Maida
EVC/CEO
Nigerian Communications Commission

Schedule

Feedback & Comments Response Template

Please complete this form in full and return to https://forms.gle/tiCBoGY9jJL8oRLD7

Consultation Paper	
Name	
Mobile Number/Contact Number	
Representation (If on behalf of any Organisation or entity)	
Name of Organisation/Company/Licensee	
Nature of Industry/Business/Licence	
Website & Email Address	

Confidentiality & Restrictions	
Do you want all your comments/responses published?	
Do you want all your comments/responses kept confidential?	
Do you want some of your comments/responses kept confidential? Please specify below	
Please specify Questions to be kept Confidential	

1. Specific Responses

Issue for consideration	Remarks/Comments

Please complete this form in full and return to https://forms.gle/tiCBoGY9jJL8oRLD7