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THE SCT AND THE IFT SIGN AGREEMENTS FOR A “SHARED NETWORK” IN THE 700 MHZ BAND

- The Shared Network will start operations by the end of 2018 and, together with the Backbone Network, will offer better conditions of quality, price and coverage in telecommunication services for all Mexicans.
- The IFT and the SCT signed framework and specific agreements formalizing their cooperation and establish the terms and activities for the development of the Backbone Network and the Shared Network.
- The agreements set forth the project schedules, which in the case of the Shared Network include a call for bids of a Public-Private Association responsible for deploying, operating and market wholesale services.

The Government of Mexico, through the Ministry of Communications and Transport (*Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes*, SCT) and the Federal Telecommunications Institute (*Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones*, IFT) signed framework and specific agreements to fulfill the Constitutional Mandate that the Shared Network starts operations no later than by 2018.

The Minister of the SCT, Gerardo Ruiz Esparza and the President Commissioner of the IFT, Gabriel Contreras Saldívar, signed the Framework Agreement of Inter-institutional Cooperation and the Specific Agreements for the projects: “Backbone Network” and “Shared Network” establishing the bases for the coordination between both institutions, as well as the applicable schedules for these two important projects.

Ruiz Esparza said that signing these agreements represents the first step of many others that will be undertaken by this agency to make a reality the access to information and communication technologies for the Mexican population. “If an immediate and significant benefit can have the Mexican society, is precisely this connectivity.”

With this, the Federal Executive and the IFT will achieve that the Shared Network commences operations by 2018, offering better services and a wider coverage in telecommunications to the Mexican population, with higher standards than the average of the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Regarding the Backbone Network, the Minister of Communications and Transports said the aim is to strengthen and expand the network of fiber optic Federal Electricity Commission to make it a highly available network that can meet the needs of the shared network services and other mobile operators.

On the Backbone Network project, the Minister emphasized that the Federal Executive will follow the regulations established by the IFT, under the guidelines that this autonomous agency may issue according to the provisions of the Constitutional Reform on Telecommunications.

He also explained that the Shared Network will be destined exclusively to market wholesale telecommunications capacity and services through concessionaires or trade companies. This project will foster the right of access to information and communication technologies, and particularly to telecommunications, including access to broadband Internet. To this end, the State will establish and promote effective competition conditions to provide such services.

The President Commissioner of the IFT pointed out that given a growing demand for connectivity which requires substantial investments in infrastructure and the use of such a scarce resource as the radio spectrum, the Constitution ordered the installation of a wholesale public shared network as a tool that will promote competition and access to broadband services.

The President Commissioner added that, as set forth in the Constitution, the coordination of all parties involved is necessary within their respective scopes to guarantee compliance with the constitutional mandates, and that therefore, the agreements signed today formalize such coordination by establishing activities and dates for compliance.

In his speech, the Undersecretary of Communications, José Ignacio Peralta, emphasized the relevance of this IFT Project and pointed out that the first result of this coordinated effort was the definition of “Model and Use” of the 700 MHz Band, a basis to appraise the spectrum, and a proposal included in the 2015 economic package sent by the Federal Executive to House of Representatives for its discussion and approval.

José Ignacio Peralta added that “with the launch of the Shared Network Project, the field tests in which six of the main telecommunication equipment manufacturers will take part in the same number of sites with different characteristics, we will have a real performance environment of the Network in different scenarios and under diverse requirements.” The Assistant Minister of Communications explained that these field tests will put the technology to the test under actual conditions, in terms of the methodology selected by the Ministry and the IFT.

The Shared Network of wholesale mobile services represents an investment of approximately \$10 billion U.S. Dollars over the next 10 years to be developed by a Public-Private Association. It will promote competition in the telecommunications area, widen coverage, increase penetration of services, and it will be in operation by 2018.

This event was also attended by the Commissioners of the IFT: María Elena Estavillo Flores, Adriana Sofía Labardini Inzunza, Mario Germán Fromow Rangel, Ernesto Estrada González and Luis Fernando Borjón Figueroa, as well as by Ricardo Márquez Blas, Head of the Public Security Information Unit of the National Security Commission, the Coordinator of the Information and Knowledge Society, Mónica Aspe Bernal, and officials of the Federal Electricity Commission.