

South Sudan School of Internet Governance (SS-SIG) 2026

- ❖ **Theme:** Shaping the Future of the Internet in South Sudan
- ❖ **Organized by:** ISOC South Sudan Chapter in collaboration with the SS-IGF Secretariat
- ❖ **Policy brief topic:** Bridging the Digital Divide through infrastructure investment in South Sudan
- ❖ **Session facilitator:** Mr. Ruben Semmy, Telecom Consultant
- ❖ **SIG Training dates:** 20th – 22nd May 2026
- ❖ **Venue :** Scinius Hub

Discussion topics

1. What are the main barriers to internet expansion in South Sudan?
2. What policy incentives can encourage infrastructure investment?

Executive Summary

South Sudan continues to face a significant digital divide due to inadequate internet infrastructure, high connectivity costs, limited rural network coverage, dependence on international transit through neighboring countries, and insufficient investment in digital infrastructure. These challenges limit access to education, healthcare, e-commerce, digital government services, and economic opportunities, particularly for rural communities.

During the SS-SIG 2026 session on Internet Infrastructure, fellows and the facilitator agreed that expanding affordable and reliable internet access requires coordinated action from government, regulators, the private sector, civil society, and development partners. Strategic investments in national fibre backbone infrastructure, Internet Exchange Points (IXPs), community networks, and enabling regulatory policies can significantly reduce internet costs and improve service quality.

The discussion recommends introducing investment-friendly policies, encouraging infrastructure sharing, expanding universal access initiatives, supporting community networks, strengthening public-private partnerships, and accelerating deployment of national digital infrastructure to ensure inclusive digital transformation.

Discussion Highlights

a) Key barriers to Internet expansion

1. Facilitator:

South Sudan remains heavily dependent on fibre connections from neighbouring countries because it has no direct submarine cable landing. This contributes to high bandwidth costs and unreliable connectivity.

Prepared by: Richard Mawa Michael, IGF/SIG Rapporteur

To access online visit: www.internetociety.org.ss or www.ssigf.org.ss

2. Fellows identified the following barriers:

- ✓ Limited national fibre backbone infrastructure.
- ✓ Low private sector investment due to financial and security risks.
- ✓ Limited electricity supply outside major towns.
- ✓ Low rural population coverage.
- ✓ Weak local internet infrastructure, including the absence of a national Internet Exchange Point (IXP).
- ✓ Limited digital skills and low supply of digital skills trainings in underserved communities.

b. Policy Incentives to Encourage Infrastructure Investment

1. Facilitator:

Government policies should reduce investment risks while encouraging competition and collaboration.

2. Recommendations from Fellows:

- ✓ Promote infrastructure sharing among telecom operators.
- ✓ Expand the Universal Service and Access Fund to underserved areas.
- ✓ Support community networks to reach rural and remote communities.
- ✓ Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for fibre deployment.
- ✓ Accelerate establishment of a national Internet Exchange Point (IXP).
- ✓ Encourage local hosting of digital content and cloud services.
- ✓ Prioritize investment in digital infrastructure within national development plans.

❖ Key Policy Recommendations

- ✓ Invest in national fibre backbone connectivity across all states.
- ✓ Operationalize a neutral and sustainable national IXP.
- ✓ Provide incentives for investment in underserved regions.
- ✓ Strengthen collaboration between government, regulators, telecom operators, academia, civil society, and development partners.
- ✓ Support digital literacy programmes to increase meaningful internet use.

❖ Conclusion:

Bridging South Sudan's digital divide requires more than expanding infrastructure rather it demands enabling policies that attract investment, encourage innovation, and promote inclusive access. By adopting investment-friendly regulations and supporting collaborative infrastructure development, South Sudan can build a resilient, affordable, and inclusive digital ecosystem that accelerates national development and advances the vision of universal and meaningful internet access.

Prepared by: Richard Mawa Michael_IGF/SIG Rapporteur

To access online visit: www.internetsociety.org.ss or www.ssigf.org.ss