

1 Executive Summary

With the rapid evolution of the ICT sector in the last years, the requirements of residential and businesses for modern telecommunication services have increased considerably. Modern telecommunications services are an integral and beneficial element in the life of the local community and in the national economy. Advanced telecommunications services are seen as pre-requisites for attracting and retaining long-term tenants. The infrastructure for such services must be already planned at the very early stage of the design phase of a building to guarantee a future proof approach.

The Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) is keen to constantly develop the telecom sector in the United Arab Emirates to allow fair competition between the licensees by ensuring that telecommunication infrastructure is suitable to cater for their requirements in new domestic and business developments and buildings and to foster new competition to ensure innovative and state of the art services for end-users. Therefore, TRA took the decision to introduce a common and neutral standard for in-building design infrastructure for the rollout of FTTx networks in new buildings/areas ("Greenfield") for the benefit of all stakeholder groups. This shall not only promote competition on the infrastructure level but also give the user the freedom of choice between operators, guarantee reasonable investment costs for developers by setting reasonable specifications and clear processes for municipalities and government. Moreover, this initiative will support and promote the deployment of fibre networks as key infrastructure in the ICT sector.

Based on the status quo assessment of the situation in the UAE and an international benchmark study performed to take a closer look on common approaches and best practices on an international level as well as the different needs and expectations of all stakeholders the following manual was developed.

A common framework in the manual ensures a future proof approach with regard to in-building design of telecoms networks for FTTx deployment. The provision of more detailed planning guidelines guarantee a high quality network operated by the two licensees of today but in addition taking the appearance of a further licensee into account. With this it fosters competition by a neutral, common approach supported and justified by international best practices, tailored to the needs of the UAE.

To ensure a proper application of the manual from the beginning of a development a so called "No Objection Certificate" – NOC admission and a corresponding process is defined. In this process the focus lies on the early design stage of any new building, villa, and warehouse development in the UAE. Based on the construction drawings the professional implementation of the in-building design manual will be assessed and the NOC issued. This forms the basis to obtain a building permission for the project (covering the part of the telecom infrastructure).

In a second step, after a development is realized, clear processes for testing and acceptance of the infrastructure come in. This as well is reflected on a general level in this document.