

REGULATORY SYSTEMS IN FRAGILE OR CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES

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Fragile and conflict affected states, including many in Africa, face unique challenges developing their infrastructure once a peace has been achieved. Often overlooked is the development of a legal framework and regulatory system that enables the development of sustainable water, energy, and telecommunications systems. Regulatory systems are heavily dependent on the legal and political context in which they operate and there is not a single “best practice” regulatory solution that is suitable for all contexts.

Recognizing this, the Public Utility Research Center (PURC) at the University of Florida partnered with the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility (PPIAF) at the World Bank to embark on a new initiative called “Launching or Revitalizing Regulatory Systems” since early 2015. This PPIAF-led initiative aims to support the development of sustainable regulatory systems and improve the delivery of infrastructure services by building regulators’ capacity to design and implement regulatory functions. The program has a particular focus on

low-income, fragile and conflict-affected countries, as well as other countries with under-developed regulatory systems.

The project aimed to expand the content of the Body of Knowledge on Infrastructure Regulation (BoKIR), a comprehensive online resource for utility regulatory professionals, policy makers, and academics. The expansion includes an overview of how regulatory systems can be built in fragile situations, self-diagnostic tools, a literature review, FAQs, and an annotated reading list. Attendees of the bi-annual PURC/World Bank International Training Program on Utility Regulation and Strategy and other PURC training programs chose topics for the FAQs, which included discussion on dealing with political interference, stakeholder engagement, key performance indicators, and pricing.

The online self-assessment tool and maturity taxonomy identify economic, political and regulatory characteristics of regulatory systems in various stages of development. The self-assessment tool, composed of 30 multiple choice questions, intends to help users identify their current state of infrastructure performance and regulatory functions. With its results, users can identify the characteristics of their current state and find additional resources on the maturity taxonomy which helps them classify their maturity level.

PURC faculty served as the primary content experts for this project. They conducted a comprehensive literature review in collaboration with the PPIAF staff and an international advisory group, and made presentations to the World Bank.

The project is currently nearing completion and a dedicated portal has been created on the BoKIR site to help users navigate through the newly added materials. The BoKIR site contains summaries of regulatory literature, tutorials, and more than 500 downloadable references for regulatory reform and performance

improvements in infrastructure industries. The online glossary has been translated from English into 10 different languages including French, Russian, Portuguese, Chinese and Arabic.

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