

Universal Service Fund: CEO's note

It is with great satisfaction that I look at the thriving entity that Universal Service Fund Co. is today, especially when I compare it with the day I joined three years ago as its first employee, when my first tasks were hiring of a professional staff and refurbishing/furnishing of office in the HBL tower!

Today USF is known in the telecom industry not only for its successes in facilitating rapid development of ICT in

the unserved areas but also for its professionalism, transparency and low-key but focused approach towards attainment of targets set by the Government.

At USF the first emphasis is on strict adherence to Rules - USF Rules, Public Procurement Regulatory Authority Rules or any other rules of the country. At the same time USF always tries to facilitate its partners (mainly licensed telecom operators) as much as the rules permit.

When it was felt that the operators were facing problems that required substantial changes in the bid conditions, discussions were held with them, first individually at various levels and then collectively in Open Forums. It was always after such consultations that changes were made, gotten approved by the Board and implemented.

Then it is the fairness and transparency. All information about USF bidding documents, procurement notices, job vacancies, appointments of consultants/auditors, draft contracts, even bid-evaluation summaries are placed on the website.

There might be (must be) some other public sector organisations that are more transparent than USF, however USF continues to look for one so that USF could benchmark itself against the best practices.

USF is aggressively working all over the country providing telephony in areas where people have to walk kilometers to make a single phone call, laying optic fiber cables (present day's information motorways) to each and every unserved Tehsil of the country, taking broadband to smaller cities and towns and finally to villages through Telecenters.

All this would not have been possible without the assistance of a very supportive Board of Directors, the Regulator (PTA), the Ministry of IT and last but not least a very professional and dedicated team. The credit of whatever success USF has had so far goes entirely to them.



Parvez Iftikhar, CEO, USF