Supplementary Written Evidence Submitted by
Telecom Infra Project
(UKT0028)

Subject: 24 June appearance at the Science and Technology Committee

At my appearance on 24 June at the Science and Technology Committee, you asked me which governments are providing funding for new telecommunications technologies.

I did not have the details immediately to hand, so I wanted to follow up with you to let you know of international government support for broadening the supply chain of telecommunications vendors that we are aware of, as well as some recent developments we are tracking and taking part in:

- Here in the **United Kingdom**, our members are engaging with various projects the £200 million 5G Testbeds & Trials programme, run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, have announced.[1] We are also interested by the potential for a UK research agency modelled on the US Advanced Research Projects Agency to accelerate Open RAN and disaggregation projects here.

- In the **European Union**, the Commission's proposal for a Recovery Plan for Europe earmarks €15 billion[2] from the 2021-27 multiannual financial framework in guarantees for promoting European innovation in strategic digital

---

[1] A summary can be found here: HM Government, 5G Testbeds and Trials programme website (retrieved July 2020), located at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/5g-testbeds-and-trials-programme
[2] European Commission, Communication relating to an EU budget powering a recovery for Europe (May 2020), available from: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/about_the_european_commission/eu_budget/1_en_annexe_autre_acte_part1_v11.pdf

infrastructure. Although it is unclear what allocation of these will be made toward telecommunications innovation at this stage, we anticipate it will be a significant accelerator for our EU-based membership. In addition, the 5G Public Private Partnership leveraged some €700 million of the EU's research budget to create a seven-year programme of research.[3]

- The **German federal government** is to prioritise investment in telecommunications capability in its €50 billion[4] Package for the Future with an aim to take a lead in 6G and subsequent generations. As part of this, there will be €2bn specifically for Open RAN.

- In the **United States**, Congress is considering a bill (the "Warner Bill") that would earmark some $75 million to support telecommunications infrastructure innovation, including in OpenRAN. A version of this has passed the Senate but awaits passage in the House of Representatives.

- The **Made in China 2025** plan would allow Chinese-based firms to take advantage of around €390 billion[5] in loans, grants and other financing in a wide range of technologies, with next-generation telecommunications a clear priority for the Chinese government.

- In the **Republic of Korea**, the 5G Forum project and the Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning allocated around $1.5 billion USD to assist 5G deployment and innovation.[6]

As we noted in our submission, we have been encouraged by the UK's initial approach to fostering the development of open, disaggregated technologies, but believe more can be done. I was pleased to note the committee's interest in the need to introduce systemic change to the UK telecommunications market and in the potential of

---

[3] 5G Public-Private Partnership, available from: https://5g-ppp.eu/about-us/.
[4] German Federal Ministry of Finance, "Emerging from the crisis with full strength", available from: https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/EN/Standardartikel/Topics/Public-Finances/Articles/2020-06-04-fiscal-package.html
[5] Nadir Preziosi et al. "China: Challenges and Prospects from an Industrial and Innovation Powerhouse", (Publications Office of the European Union 2019) https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/china-challenges-and-prospects-industrial-and-innovation-powerhouse
[6] 7th Quarterly Report of the European Union 5G Observatory (April 2020): http://5gobservatory.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/90013-5G-Observatory-Quarterly-report-7-updated-16-04-2020.pdf

disaggregation to make this happen. The organisation I lead is convinced that today's environment, where mobile networks are built by just a few suppliers, must change.

The current landscape means upgrade cycles are lengthier than they need to be as consumers – particularly in rural areas – are left waiting years on big vendors' technology timelines for world-leading connectivity. Disaggregation means we can do it differently and the imperative for better connectivity means we must.

With policymaker support, companies across the UK can take the lead in creating an ecosystem of disaggregated networks. By supporting initiatives such as OpenRAN, we can create a plethora of interoperable components, each representing its own market and each able to be swapped out to respond to technological progress or address security concerns. Public-private partnerships can afford accelerated network flexibility as well as providing important insights as to which elements of innovation provide the greatest opportunity for growth and leadership in all UK nations.

In pursuing this, policymakers can also foster a new generation of specialised vendors and embed the country's companies as digital leaders.

In closing, I wanted to repeat the offer of making the Telecom Infra Project available to your office and the Science and Technology Committee as the inquiry progresses on all aspects of telecommunications infrastructure disaggregation, including Open RAN.

Yours sincerely,

Attilio Zani, Executive Director, Telecom Infra Project

(8 July 2020)