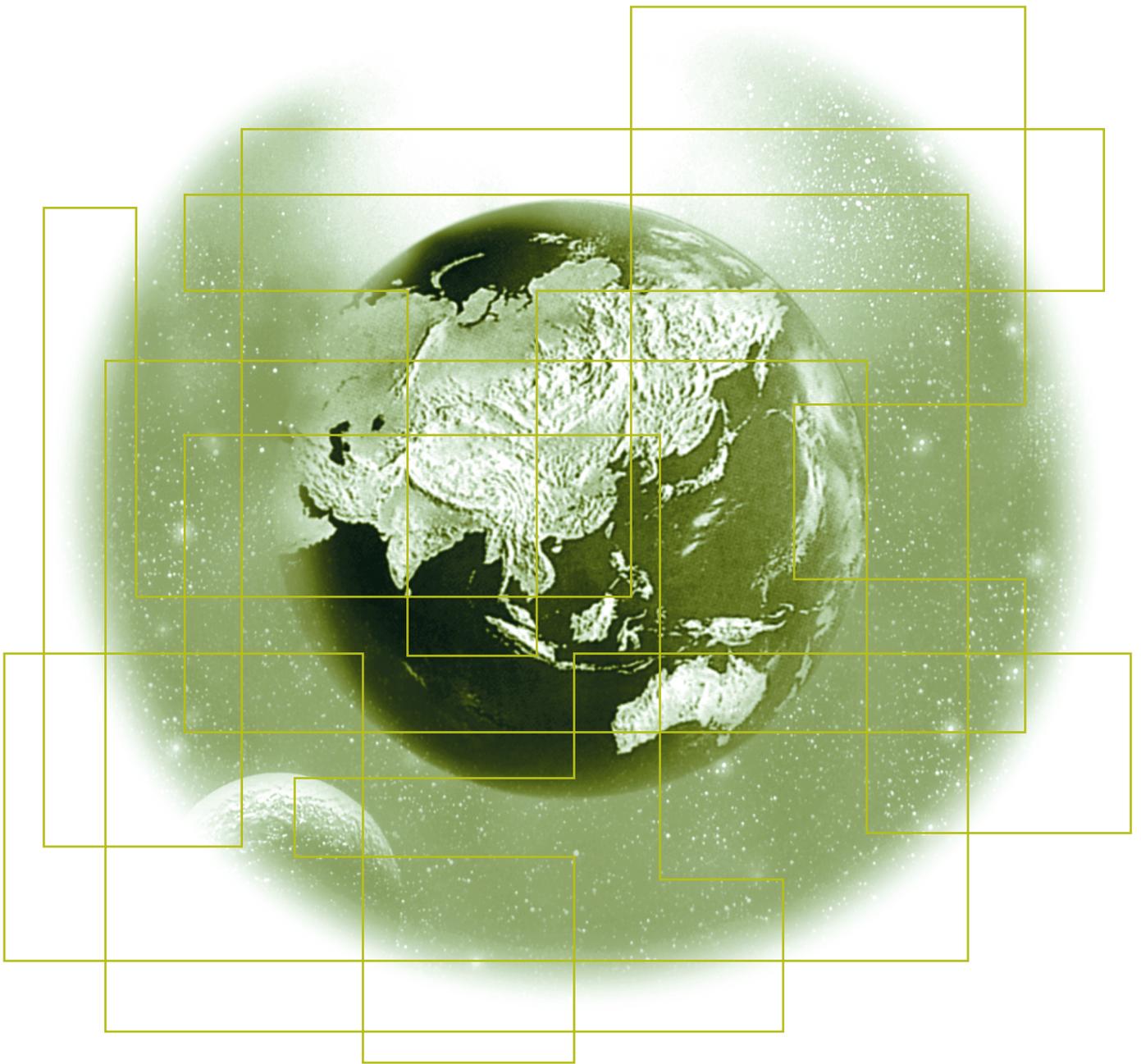


Infocomm 21

Singapore **Where the Digital Future Is**



To develop Singapore into a vibrant and dynamic global Infocomm Capital
with a thriving and prosperous e-Economy and a pervasive
and infocomm-savvy e-Society.

SINGAPORE WHERE THE DIGITAL FUTURE IS

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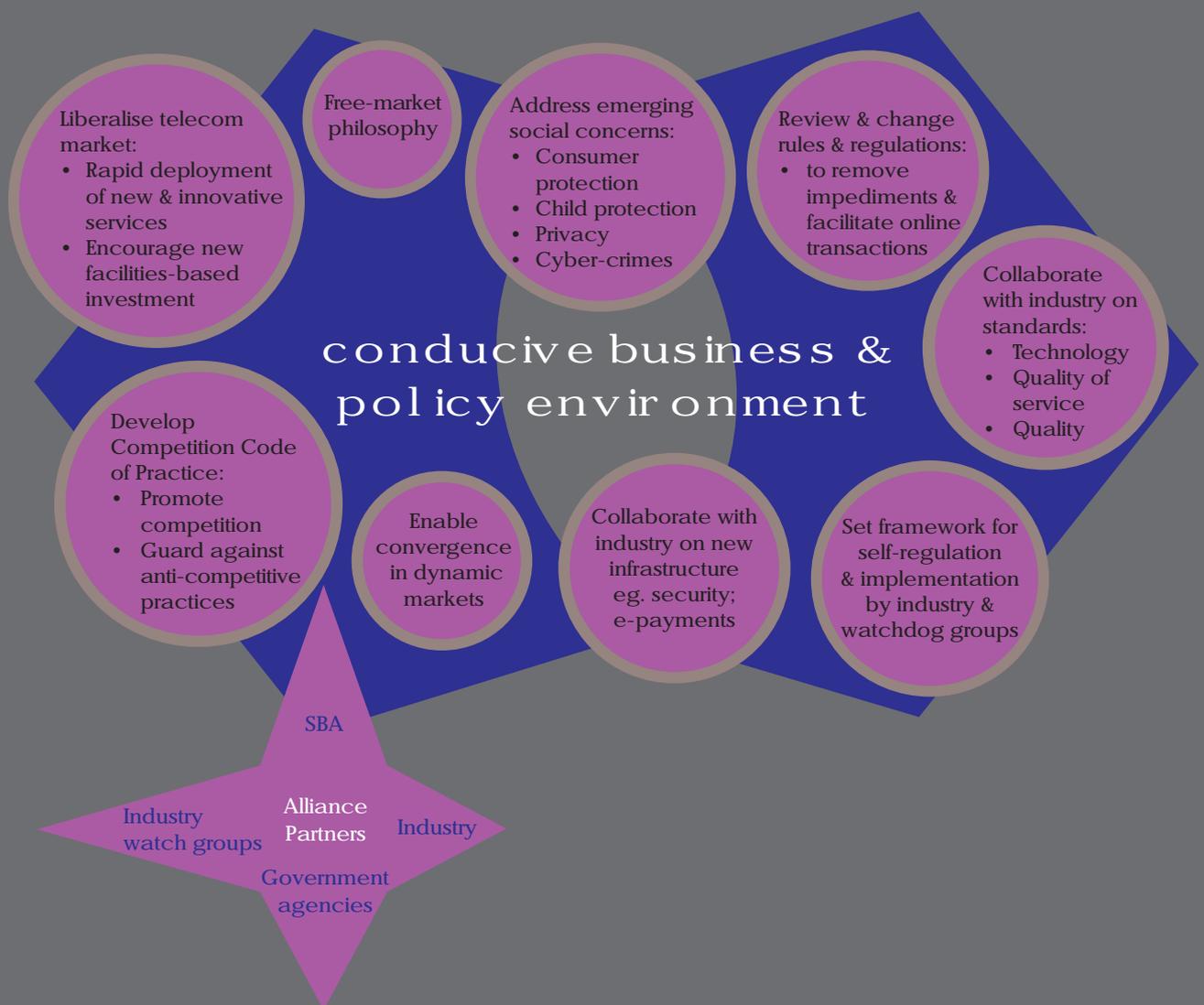
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CONDUCTIVE BUSINESS AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT



CONDUCTIVE BUSINESS AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT

A conducive policy framework for business is a prerequisite for industries and businesses to take risks, compete, innovate and grow. As a core philosophy, the Government will encourage free markets and competition, and focus on removing obstacles to rapid business incubation and operation. At the same time, it needs to consider emerging issues, to ensure that larger national and social objectives are not undermined, and that consumer interests are protected.

Free and open telecommunications market to encourage competition

The liberalisation of the telecommunications market in Singapore reflects the Government's fundamental philosophy that competition and free markets are the keys to innovation and economic efficiency. In licensing, the Government will rely on market signals rather than regulation as the basis for resource allocation.

Clear and transparent regulatory framework for sustainable competition

Telecoms requires on-going regulation to enable competition to develop. To help foster fair, effective and sustainable competition, and to encourage the rapid deployment of innovative products and services, IDA has implemented a new "Code of Practice for Competition in the Provision of Telecommunications Services". This will facilitate the rapid entry of new operators into the market while ensuring that facilities-based operators have incentives to invest and expand their networks. It also discourages anti-competitive behaviour and establishes a framework for service offerings, market interactions and arrangements for interconnection and access, including broadband. The Government's philosophy is that while stronger regulations may be required in the transition to competition and free markets, the Government's regulations will have sunset clauses and specific regulations will be reviewed for termination when competition can take their place.

Regulatory policies to encourage businesses in emerging markets to develop quickly

The Government aims to be proactive in putting in place policies and legislative frameworks to accelerate the growth of e-commerce. It will review the Electronic Transactions Act (ETA), enacted two years ago, to update it. The Government will also look into expanding legislation to cover a wider range of transactions, including negotiable instruments and documents of title.

The Government is also developing policy on convergence. The telecommunications, broadcasting and media industries have been regulated separately and according to separate principles. The rapid convergence of digitalisation, technology and the marketplace is challenging this 'vertical', sector-specific, regulatory model. IDA is working with other regulatory agencies to accommodate the evolving industry structure, including the licensing and competition frameworks.

Revised regulations to foster the development of new and innovative infocomm-related businesses and services

Many existing laws and regulations, designed for an earlier era, may not be relevant or applicable to the New Economy. The Government will review, amend or update these laws to ensure that they do not impede the development of new and innovative infocomm-related businesses and services, discourage the development of online content, or hinder access to capital or talent. For instance, Singapore has lifted import controls on cryptography products. The Auctioneers' Act was amended to allow online e-auction sites to function without

an auctioneer's licence. The Government is implementing new Internet content hosting rules to distinguish content owners from those who host content on behalf of others. This latter group, 'content hosters', will be treated as conduit providers and will be exempt from legal liability for client-owned content over which they have no editorial control.

Protection of consumers' interests, welfare and rights

Consumer protection and consumer interest issues are emerging with the new Internet paradigm. These will need to be studied. Areas of focus include:

- Education and awareness so that customers understand their rights and liabilities;
- Unfair advertising practices, especially those designed to discredit competitors, or mislead or confuse consumers. The advertising watchdog body is expected to play a lead role in this area;
- Protecting children from undesirable Internet content and online predators. A Parents' Advisory Group on Internet (PAGi) has been set up to examine these issues;
- Personal data privacy. A study is in progress to determine the most appropriate regulatory approach in this area.

The Government will also closely monitor international developments in these and other areas.





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The INFOCOMM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE (IDA) is a dynamic organisation with an integrated perspective to developing, promoting and regulating info-communications in Singapore. In the fast-changing and converging spheres of telecommunications, information and media technologies, IDA will be the catalyst for change and growth in Singapore's evolution into a vibrant and dynamic global Infocomm Capital.