



URCA

DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN

2026

STATEMENT OF RESULTS

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1. Introduction and General Comments

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) issued its Draft Annual Plan 2026 for consultation on 19 December 2025. The document outlined URCA's strategic outlook, organisational priorities, sector priorities, key performance indicators, and draft budget for 2026 across the Electronic Communications, Electricity, and Natural Gas sectors.

URCA received written submissions from the Bahamas Telecommunications Company Limited (BTC) and a joint response from Cable Bahamas Limited and Be Aliv Limited (CBL Group). Those submissions raised comments on strategic direction, the pace and sequencing of consultations, the transparency and proportionality of expenditure, the Frederick House refurbishment programme, website redevelopment, and several project-specific initiatives within the Electronic Communications Sector.

URCA notes that, although the electricity and natural gas sectors in The Bahamas have undergone significant development in recent years and the Draft Annual Plan 2026 includes major initiatives affecting both sectors, no responses were received from licensees in those sectors during the consultation period or at the stakeholder forum, notwithstanding that those licensees were notified of the Draft Annual Plan 2026 and afforded the opportunity to participate.

This Statement of Results addresses the principal issues raised by respondents and records URCA's responses in a format consistent with the 2025 Statement of Results. Failure on URCA's part to respond in this document to any comment made by any of the Respondents does not necessarily signify URCA's agreement in whole or in part with such comment, that URCA has not considered such comment, or that URCA considers the comment immaterial or without merit.

While not every individual comment or suggestion is addressed expressly in this Statement of Results, all submissions received were carefully reviewed and taken into account by URCA in finalising its position. URCA appreciates the time taken by respondents to provide detailed submissions and notes that a stakeholder forum was also held prior to the finalisation of this document to broaden engagement on the Draft Annual Plan and to obtain additional feedback from stakeholders.

2. Strategic Outlook for 2026

Leadership Transition and Institutional Capacity

BTC and CBL Group acknowledged URCA's expanding mandate and the need for capable leadership and internal capacity, while also stressing the importance of continuity, clarity of purpose, and sustained delivery. CBL Group also emphasised the need for meaningful execution of URCA's strategic commitments.

URCA's Response:

URCA acknowledges those comments. URCA remains focused on strengthening organisational capacity, improving leadership continuity, and ensuring that its broadened responsibilities are supported by the skills, systems, and institutional stability needed for effective regulation. URCA agrees that strategic ambition must be matched by implementation and measurable progress, and the 2026 Annual Plan is intended to support that outcome.

Supporting Major International Initiatives

BTC and CBL Group recognised the importance of URCA’s regional and international engagement but requested greater clarity regarding the tangible domestic value to be derived from those activities.

URCA’s Response:

URCA notes that international engagement forms part of its statutory and policy remit and is particularly important for a small island developing state whose regulatory environment must keep pace with global developments. In 2026, this work is especially significant because The Bahamas will host the World Telecommunication Policy Forum (WTPF) in Nassau and will also support a Bahamian campaign for the office of Deputy Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). URCA agrees that such participation should translate into domestic benefits and, accordingly, will continue to expand stakeholder briefings, knowledge-sharing, and practical application of international best practices to local regulation.

3. Key Priorities for 2026

BTC and CBL Group commented on the breadth and ambition of URCA’s 2026 work programme and highlighted the need for realistic sequencing, transparent consultation processes, and timely execution of carryover items and new initiatives.

URCA’s Response:

URCA acknowledges these concerns and agrees that careful sequencing and disciplined project management are necessary to deliver an ambitious programme effectively. URCA will continue to manage consultations in a manner that supports meaningful stakeholder participation and will seek, where practicable, to avoid unnecessary clustering of consultation activity. URCA further notes that several initiatives in the 2026 plan build on substantial work already undertaken in 2025 and are intended to move important projects toward completion rather than restart them.

URCA also notes stakeholder comments regarding the continued importance of timely digital transformation, improved stakeholder communications, and clearer reporting on implementation progress. Those matters remain central to URCA’s organisational priorities for 2026.

4. Key Performance Indicators for 2026

CBL Group raised concerns regarding the objectivity and usefulness of certain KPIs and recommended greater opportunity for licensee feedback in evaluating URCA's performance. BTC likewise sought transparency in performance measurement and in the relationship between expenditure and regulatory outcomes.

URCA's Response:

URCA recognises the importance of performance indicators that are credible, measurable, and connected to actual regulatory delivery. In 2026, URCA will continue refining its organisational performance framework so that it better captures regulatory effectiveness, timeliness, operational efficiency, and stakeholder-facing service quality. URCA also acknowledges the value of external feedback and will continue considering mechanisms by which stakeholder input may help inform performance assessment, without compromising URCA's independence or statutory responsibilities.

5. Budget for Fiscal Year 2026

BTC and CBL Group expressed concern about the increase in the draft 2026 budget, particularly in the Electronic Communications Sector, and requested greater transparency around one-off items, international activities, and the basis on which certain costs are recovered.

URCA's Response:

URCA acknowledges the financial concerns raised by respondents and remains committed to value for money, prudent planning, and responsible cost management. URCA notes, however, that several important features of the 2026 budget require context.

First, the increase in conferences, training, and travel is materially affected by The Bahamas' hosting of the World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum in Nassau in 2026. This is a major international event of direct relevance to the Electronic Communications Sector and to The Bahamas' broader digital policy objectives. The Government of The Bahamas has formally approved the hosting of the event, recognising its importance to national development and international engagement. The Government of The Bahamas has also approved financial support for a portion of the overall expenses of the event.

Second, expenditure connected to international travel and related activities also reflects The Bahamas' endorsement of its candidate for ITU Deputy Secretary-General. URCA considers that this initiative carries strategic national value for The Bahamas and the wider Caribbean. URCA further notes that support for this effort is being advanced not only through URCA's own allocations, but also through in-kind assistance from different government agencies of The Bahamas and support from international partners, such as the Caribbean Telecommunications Union, CANTO and CARICOM.

Third, URCA notes that parts of the 2026 budget reflect continued investment in institutional capability, regulatory fieldwork, and the strengthening of systems necessary for a modern multi-sector regulator. At the same time, URCA also notes the areas in which reductions have been achieved, including information technology, office services, and certain capital expenditures, reflecting efficiencies, completed infrastructure works, or the carrying forward of viable prior-year allocations.

URCA appreciates the calls for greater clarity on one-off versus recurring expenditures and will continue to improve the way that material budget drivers are explained in its annual planning and reporting documents.

6. Project-Specific Comments

Refurbishment and Optimisation of Frederick House

BTC commented that the Frederick House refurbishment appears to be a long-running project and requested clearer explanation of how this expenditure supports value for money for licensees. CBL Group also observed that the project appears to be nearing completion and noted the carrying forward of prior allocations for deferred items such as the elevator and generator.

URCA's Response:

URCA acknowledges these comments. The Frederick House project has been a significant multi-phase undertaking, and URCA agrees that transparency and value for money are important. URCA advises that the building is now approximately 90 percent complete and expects that 2026 will see the completion of phase two of the project. URCA also notes that, consistent with commitments made at the time of the building's purchase, it intends to secure suitable tenants for the upper floors, while retaining sufficient space to accommodate any additional regulatory responsibilities that may be assigned to URCA by the Government. URCA considers that completion of these works will produce near-term, medium-term, and long-term benefits for both licensees and URCA by improving operational readiness, reducing reliance on less efficient arrangements, supporting more modern service delivery, and strengthening URCA's overall capacity to regulate effectively. URCA also notes that the carrying forward of viable allocations from prior years has helped support cost efficiencies on deferred capital items.

Website Redevelopment and Digital Accessibility

BTC and CBL Group both raised concerns regarding the duration, usability, and reliability of the website redevelopment project, including the need for consultation documents and regulatory materials to be consistently available and easy to navigate.

URCA's Response:

URCA acknowledges these concerns and agrees that the website must serve licensees, consumers, and URCA itself in a more effective way. URCA has learned important lessons from the redevelopment process to date and is actively correcting these matters on an ongoing basis. URCA

remains determined to deliver a best-in-class platform that meets the modern needs of licensees and URCA, improves document availability and service functionality, and does so without representing an outsized budget expenditure. In 2026, the focus remains on completing a platform that is fit for purpose, reliable, service-oriented, and aligned with value-for-money principles.

International and Regional Engagement

BTC and CBL Group both emphasised the importance of ensuring that international and regional engagement delivers tangible local value and is communicated more clearly to stakeholders. In particular, stakeholders encouraged greater transparency around the outcomes of international participation, including more structured sharing of lessons learned, regulatory trends, and developments that may affect the domestic market.

URCA's Response:

URCA acknowledges the comments made by BTC and CBL Group and agrees that stakeholders should benefit more directly from the knowledge, relationships, and strategic opportunities arising from URCA's international and regional engagement. URCA will therefore continue to strengthen mechanisms for communicating relevant policy, regulatory, and technical developments emerging from such engagements, particularly where those developments may inform domestic consultations, regulatory priorities, or sectoral planning. URCA also encourages licensees, where appropriate, to join URCA in participating in strategic international conferences and meetings in order to help foster a stronger national culture of engagement on key sectoral and national development issues. URCA further points out that its international engagement in 2026 includes significant activity associated with The Bahamas hosting the World Telecommunication Policy Forum in Nassau and with the national campaign for the post of ITU Deputy Secretary-General, both of which are expected to yield strategic and reputational benefits for The Bahamas and the communications sector.

Regulatory Sandbox – Innovation Reef

BTC welcomed URCA's proposal to establish the Innovation Reef regulatory sandbox and encouraged transparency in participation criteria and implementation timelines. CBL Group also supported regulatory approaches that foster innovation, provided that such frameworks are applied fairly and with appropriate clarity.

URCA's Response:

URCA acknowledges the supportive comments of BTC and CBL Group in relation to innovation-enabling regulation. URCA agrees that the proposed regulatory sandbox should be transparent, fair, and capable of supporting informed longer-term regulatory development. Any framework for Innovation Reef will therefore be developed through URCA's ordinary statutory consultation process and in a manner consistent with the principles of transparency, fairness, and non-discrimination.

Licence-Exempt Spectrum and Forward-Looking Regulation

BTC supported greater clarity in relation to commercial operations in licence-exempt spectrum bands and urged URCA to maintain a forward-looking and technology-neutral posture. To the

extent applicable, CBL Group's response also reflected the broader importance of proportionate and future-oriented regulatory development that accommodates innovation and evolving technologies.

URCA's Response:

URCA acknowledges the comments received and agrees that regulatory treatment in this area must remain responsive to technological change and evolving market use cases. URCA will continue monitoring developments relating to Wi-Fi, IoT applications, and other emerging deployments, while ensuring that any framework developed remains proportionate, technology-neutral, and responsive to identifiable domestic market needs.

National Band Plan

BTC supported the development of the National Electronic Communications Band Plan and requested clarity on the methodology for band prioritisation. CBL Group's response similarly underscored the importance of regulatory certainty and transparent planning in areas that affect long-term investment and operational decision-making.

URCA's Response:

URCA acknowledges the comments of BTC and CBL Group. The National Electronic Communications Band Plan remains an important priority for regulatory certainty, spectrum efficiency, and long-term investment planning. Further details regarding URCA's proposed methodology, prioritisation approach, and implementation pathway will be provided through the relevant consultation and approval processes.

Regulatory Framework for Submarine Communications Cable Systems

BTC generally supported the development of a clearer framework for submarine communications cable infrastructure, while cautioning against overly prescriptive or disproportionate obligations that could impose unnecessary costs, particularly on legacy systems. Where applicable, CBL Group also stressed the importance of proportionate regulation and practical implementation.

URCA's Response:

URCA acknowledges the support expressed by stakeholders, as well as the concerns raised regarding proportionality and operational impact. URCA agrees that any proposed framework in this area must be proportionate, risk-based, and developed with due regard to practical operating realities, infrastructure resilience, public safety, and the cost implications for affected parties. These considerations will continue to inform the development of any such framework.

Disaster Management and Quality of Service

BTC requested that revised disaster management and quality of service rules reflect operational realities, especially within an archipelagic environment, and that compliance mechanisms remain realistic and technology neutral. CBL Group's response, where relevant, also pointed to the importance of practical implementation and balanced regulatory expectations.

URCA's Response:

URCA acknowledges the comments received and agrees that any updated requirements in relation

to disaster management and quality of service must be grounded in the practical realities of resilience, restoration, logistics, and network operations across The Bahamas. URCA will take these considerations into account in its review of the relevant regulations, with a view to ensuring that the resulting framework is proportionate, effective, and responsive to domestic conditions.

Universal Service

BTC and CBL Group both commented on the continued importance of modernising the universal service framework and ensuring clarity regarding governance, funding, and measurable outcomes.

URCA's Response:

URCA agrees that universal service remains an important priority and that the framework must reflect current market realities, technologies, and service expectations. URCA will continue the ongoing work in this area and will address matters of design, governance, and implementation through the appropriate consultation processes.

Electricity Reliability

BTC and CBL Group drew attention to the effect of electricity reliability on the performance and resilience of electronic communications networks, particularly in the Family Islands.

URCA's Response:

URCA acknowledges that electricity reliability directly affects communications resilience and service quality. URCA has engaged with licensees on these issues and will continue to consider them within the scope of its responsibilities across both the electronic communications and electricity sectors.

Revisions of the Communications Act

BTC suggested that the Communications Act, 2009 may require review in light of developments in the sector since its enactment.

URCA's Response:

URCA recognises the importance of ensuring that the legislative and regulatory framework for the Electronic Communications Sector remains fit for purpose and capable of supporting evolving technologies, market structures, and regulatory objectives. URCA will continue to take such matters into account within the scope of its statutory mandate and ongoing policy work.

7. Next Steps

URCA will finalise its consideration of stakeholder comments and will publish its Final Annual Plan 2026 together with its 2025 Annual Report by 30 April 2026.

URCA notes that, in addition to written responses received by 6 February 2026, a stakeholder forum was held on 27 February 2026 to broaden stakeholder engagement on the Draft Annual Plan and to obtain additional views on URCA's proposed priorities and budget.

URCA appreciates the engagement of BTC, CBL Group, and other stakeholders and looks forward to continued dialogue in support of effective regulation, prudent planning, and the sustainable development of The Bahamas' regulated utility sectors.