



National Information and Communications Technology Authority

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## **CONSULTATION PAPER**

# **Universal Access and Service (UAS) Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and Proposed 2023 UAS Projects**

*Issued on 6 October 2022*

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# **1. Introduction**

Pursuant to the requirements of Part V of the National Information and Communications Technology Act 2009 (the Act) the Universal Access and Service (UAS) regime, has been implemented by the NICTA to fulfil the UAS objectives of the Government as set out in the Act. The UAS regime primarily comprises of the UAS Fund which is managed by NICTA, the UAS Board and the UAS Secretariat within NICTA.

UAS has an important part to play in Government's overall digital transformation agenda. Developments in the UAS planning space including the draft UAS Policy of the government, the Digital Government Plan and other relevant laws and policies indicate the need for increased improved connectivity which in the recent past has been brought to the fore largely by the COVID 19 Pandemic.

To assist NICTA and the UAS Board to carry out their respective functions in Part VI of the Act, particularly relating to the implementation of UAS Projects, the UAS Board through NICTA, presents this draft UAS Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and the Proposed UAS Projects for 2023 to the operator licensees, relevant government agencies and other industry stakeholders. The plan provides a useful context delineating UAS objectives and a planning framework to assist the annual UAS projects process.

This Consultation document provides guidance and focuses attention on key areas of the plan, the proposed UAS Projects for 2023 and sets out the expected outcomes of this consultation.

## **2. UAS Strategic Plan 2023-2027**

The Strategic Plan provides the UAS context delineating the UAS objectives, and planning framework to assist the annual process of UAS Project identification and ranking.

Based on analysis over the five-year planning period, the plan takes into account factors relevant to the selection, costing and ranking of possible UAS Projects. In particular, the Strategic Plan recognises that prioritising on a year by year basis is not optimal, and that consideration needs to be given to requirements that can only be satisfied in stages from one year to the next.

The Strategic Plan identifies three (3) strategic Initiatives for implementation by the UAS Board through NICTA to achieve the UAS Objective as set out in the Act. The Initiatives provide the basis to derive programs and specific UAS Projects that could form part of the UAS implementation over the five-year period to achieve the Objectives of Part V of the Act. The Initiatives are briefly described below but detailed in the UAS Strategic Plan 2023-2022 annexed as "Attachment A" to this Consultation Paper.

### **2.1 UAS Initiatives**

#### **2.1.1 Broadband Initiative**

The purpose of the Broadband Internet Initiative is to facilitate the expansion of broadband network coverage throughout all unserved areas and populations of PNG, toward the goal of Universal Access and Service in broadband.

The objective of this Initiative is to achieve 100% of PNG's population covered by reliable advanced wireless mobile telecommunications network signals (at least 4G+ quality) as well as increased coverage of fixed broadband services.

### 2.1.2 Meaningful Connectivity Initiative

This initiative focuses on the demand side of ICT development objectives, to ensure that citizens, communities and businesses are able to gain the most benefits from the installation and availability of advanced broadband ICT networks and services. Different groups of users will find value in different types of ICT applications, functions, devices, and services, but there will in all cases be a wide scope of potential uses for citizens, businesses and government.

The purpose of this initiative is therefore to help develop a platform for the future, long term development of ICT utilization and opportunities across Papua New Guinea society. Projects under this initiative will support the development of meaningful applications and content, digital skills development, and seek to make devices including computers and smart mobile devices affordable to all citizens and businesses throughout the country.

### 2.1.3 Broadcasting Initiative

Broadcasting services over television and radio which will continue to be important means of increasing access to information for the populace remain a priority of UAS fund support. Programs under this initiative are aimed at the expanding free-to-air/view broadcasting network coverage particularly in rural areas. The initiative also seeks to promote local media/broadcast content of relevance to PNG's social and economic development.

## 2.2 Summary of Proposed Programs and Projects

UAS Initiative	Program	Projects
<b>Broadband Initiative</b>	Program 1 – Mobile Broadband	Greenfield 4G
		4G Upgrade
		Blackspot
	Program 2 – Fixed Broadband	Connect the Schools
		Connect the Medics
		Connect our Farmers
		MSME ICT Hubs
		Community Networks
		Local Government Offices

<b>Meaningful Connectivity Initiative</b>	Program 3 – Digital Literacy	Training Component for the Fixed Broadband Connectivity Project
		Public Awareness and Capacity Building to support Digital Government Plan 2023-2027 (DGP)
		Public Digital Skills Training Project
	Program 4 – ICT Applications and Content Development	Digital Government Applications and Content Projects
		Public Applications and Content Projects
	Program 5 – Affordable Smart Devices	Smart 4G Mobile Devices Projects
		Fixed Broadband Devices
		Set-top Boxes
<b>Broadcasting Initiative</b>	Program 6 – Radio Broadcasting	TV - Analog to Digital
	Program 7 – Television Broadcasting	Radio

## 2.3 Budget

The total indicative budget for all proposed Programs annually is set at K32 million as indicated in the Strategic Plan. The total indicative budget and allocations for specific UAS Projects under each Program are estimates for initial planning purposes and subject to ongoing review and updating by the UAS Board and NICTA.

## 3. Proposed UAS Projects for 2023

The proposed UAS Projects for 2023 have been identified based on the priorities of Government as set out in the ICT sector policies and plans of the Government including and primarily the draft UAS Strategic Plan 2023-2027. Details of the proposed projects are captured in the Proposed Projects document attached to this consultation paper as Attachment 'B'. The proposed projects are designed to cover priority areas of the Government's digital transformation agenda for PNG and contain a mix of ICT infrastructure and services, applications and content as well as digital literacy projects.

## 4. Consultation

The Act provides for NICTA to seek comments, suggestions and/or proposals from the industry and general public at large on projects that NICTA intends to implement. To this end, NICTA is inviting stakeholders, licensed operators and the general public to submit comments on the draft UAS Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and the Proposed UAS Projects for 2023.

Further, NICTA also invites proposals for potential UAS Projects not covered in the Strategic Plan for the consideration of the UAS Board and NICTA. In this connection NICTA has also prepared the proposal form which is attached as Attachment 'C' to this consultation paper.

Upon request, NICTA is available to meet with stakeholders including operators, Government departments and agencies to discuss this consultation paper.

Copies of all submissions received will be published on NICTA's Public Register. Additional procedural information is set out in the Guidelines on the submission of written comments to public consultations and public inquiries, which are available on NICTA's Public Register.

Deadline for submission of written comments is COB Friday, 04 November 2022.

## 5. Contact

Any enquiries relating to this consultation should be addressed to the following persons in the first instance;

Name: Mr. Veari Iru – Acting Director UAS Secretariat

Email: [viru@nicta.gov.pg](mailto:viru@nicta.gov.pg) or

Name: Mr. Warren Suti – Principal Engineer UAS Secretariat

Email: [wsuti@nicta.gov.pg](mailto:wsuti@nicta.gov.pg)

## 6. Attachments

Attachment 'A': Draft UAS Strategic Plan 2023-2027



UAS Strategic Plan  
2023-2027\_v6.docx

Attachment 'B': Proposed UAS Projects for 2023



Proposed 2023 UAS  
Projects.docx

Attachment 'C': Project Proposal Form



UAS Project  
Proposal Form.docx