

Monday 25th November 2024

Mr. Gulo-Vui

Chief Executive Officer
National Information and Technology Authority
Punaha Ict Haus
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National Capital District

Delivered by Hand and Email: kgulovui@nicta.gov.pg

Dear Mr. Gulo-Vui,

Subject: NICTA PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON UAS PROJECTS 2025

We thank NICTA for giving us the opportunity to provide our views on NICTA's Proposed 2025 UAS Projects consultation paper.

Telikom notes the contents of the consultation paper: Proposed 2025 UAS Projects. Our brief comments are presented herein:

Focus Area 1: Needs Assessment

– What are the current ICT needs and challenges in your area?

Telikom continues to maintain the view that provision of rural ICT remains to be seriously challenging not only in building up the network infrastructure but also in providing services in a sustainable manner over the infrastructure including affording the cost of sustaining operations.

Affordability is a need not only for the customer but is a concern for the operator. While customers expect ICT services to be affordable, the operators find it challenging to afford the cost of expanding the network and maintaining the services particularly in commercially non-viable sections of the market. Ongoing and challenging cost issues such vandalism and lack of reliable power supply continue to affect affordability of costs of maintenance directly. Landowner issues also pose another challenge and add to the cost of maintenance. What is NICTA and the UAS Board doing to address these concerns with the other government stakeholders responsible for these service sectors?

Focus Area 2: Project Feedback

- What are your views on the proposed ICT projects?

Telikom supports the proposal by NICTA for the locations chosen in Morobe and Eastern Highlands Provinces, as indicated in the consultation paper.

Telikom also considers that 27 Greenfield 4G sites seem too many hence raises the project cost. We request that the number of these 4G sites be reduced to below 20 sites.

Telikom notes that the Morobe Provincial Government will be executing the site acquisition and tower construction. Telikom therefore requests NICTA to clarify what the cost implications are; including if there is a cost limit per site.

- What are your views on the proposed UAS Budget for 2025?

Telikom cannot comment on the reasonableness of the Budget 2025 at this juncture

Focus Area 3 – Prioritization

- Which projects should be prioritized and why?

Telikom considers that network expansion projects are priority. However, usage of these services is also important in order for the networks and operations to be used and sustained. User development through awareness and training could therefore be prioritized as well. More community user connectivity projects for schools and villages could be initiated with communities, government and other organizations who share the stakes in ICT development in rural areas.

Telikom requests that prior to deciding on the UAS projects for 2025, one to one in-person consultation be held with major operators and licensees to further discuss any other details.

In concluding, Telikom appreciates the continued efforts of NICTA and the UAS Board in ensuring the government's universal access policies are implemented. The challenges faced by operators in expanding and maintaining the network and services in remote rural areas of the country require ongoing collaboration by all stakeholders in order for benefits to be enjoyed sustainably by all.

Yours sincerely,
TELIKOM LIMITED



Amos Tepi
Chief Executive Officer

