

# **CONSULTATION PAPER**

## **Proposed 2024 UAS Projects**

*Issued on 16 August 2023*

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## 1. Consultation

Pursuant to the provisions of Part V of the National Information and Communications Technology Act 2009 (the Act), particularly relating to the implementation of UAS Projects, NICTA commences this public consultation through the issue of this Consultation document to the operator licensees, relevant government agencies, other industry stakeholders and the general public. This Consultation document provides guidance and focuses attention on the proposed UAS Projects for 2024 and sets out the expected outcomes of this consultation.

Under Section 108(1) of the Act, NICTA is engaged amongst other tasks relating to the UAS Projects to:

- (i) receive from stakeholders' submissions on proposals for UAS Projects; and
- (ii) undertake public consultation, if NICTA considers it necessary or desirable, to identify UAS Project and their indicative costing.

In undertaking its tasks, NICTA now presents the Proposed UAS Projects for 2024 and seeks the comments and views of all stakeholders. NICTA also invites proposals for potential new project concepts with indicative costing as well as project sites/locations.

### 1.1 Submissions

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 Thursday, 6 September 2023.

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

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

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## **2. Background**

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 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 through the UAS Secretariat, with the oversight of the UAS Board.

UAS has an important part to play in the Government's overall digital transformation agenda as demonstrated in key government development policies and plans including the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) IV 2023-2027, UAS Policy, the Digital Government Plan and other relevant laws, policies and plans recognise the need for increased and improved connectivity.

In 2022, NICTA through a consultative process developed the UAS Strategic Plan 2023-2027 which provides a guiding framework for planning purposes and informs stakeholders by delineating the UAS approach, the scope of projects and estimate funding levels required to assist the annual UAS Projects process. It is designed to be flexible and adaptive to accommodate the prevailing technological, regulatory and policy environments.

## **3. UAS Strategy of the Government**

The UAS Strategy, which also fittingly aligns in terms of overall timelines (2023-2027) with the Government's MTDP IV, identifies three (3) UAS Initiatives for implementation by the UAS Board through NICTA namely (i) Broadband Initiative, (ii) Broadcasting Initiative and (iii) Meaningful Connectivity Initiative. These 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 UAS.

### **3.1 UAS Initiatives**

#### **3.1.1 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.

#### **3.1.2 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.

### 3.1.3 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.

## 4. Proposed UAS Projects for 2024

The proposed UAS Projects for 2024 have been identified based on the priorities of Government as set out in the ICT sector policies and plans of the Government including the recently released MTDP IV. 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.

The proposed projects and indicative budgets are tabulated below and include the following:

UAS Initiative	Program	Projects	Numbers of Locations/Sites	Indicative Budget (K)
Broadband Internet Initiative	Program 1 – Mobile Broadband	Greenfield 4G	19	20,000,000
		4G Upgrade	54	2,500,000
		Blackspot	TBD	1,000,000
	Program 2 – Fixed Broadband	Connect the Schools	4	1,400,000
		Connect the Medics	4	600,000
		Connect our Farmers	4	600,000
		MSME ICT Hubs	4	1,400,000
		Community Networks	1	350,000

		Local Government Offices	4	600,000
		Emergency Communications	4	1,000,000
<b>Broadcasting Initiative</b>	Program 3 – Radio Broadcasting	TV - Analog to Digital	3	1,400,000
	Program 4 – Television Broadcasting	Radio	3	1,200,000
<b>Meaningful Connectivity Initiative</b>	Program 5 – Digital Literacy	Training Component for the Fixed Broadband Connectivity Project	12	50,000
		Public Awareness and Capacity Building to support Digital Government Plan 2023-2027 (DGP)	4	75,000
		Public Digital Skills Training Project	5	75,000
	Program 6 – ICT Applications and Content Development	Digital Government Applications and Content Projects	1	100,000
		Public Applications and Content Projects	1	100,000

	Program 7 – Affordable Smart Devices	Smart 4G Mobile Devices Projects	TBD	200,000
		Fixed Broadband Devices	21	200,000
		Set-top Boxes	TBD	400,000

## 5. Budget Summary and UAS Levy for 2024

The proposed budget amount for the proposed UAS Projects is around K32 million with over K28 million budgeted for the Broadband Initiative Projects. The Broadcasting Initiatives and Meaningful Connectivity projects annually make up K2.6 million and K1.2 million respectively.

The budget for projects provides the basis for calculating the UAS Levy for 2024. The UAS Levy calculation takes into account the total cost of projects as determined through this consultation process, industry revenues and other funding sources as stipulated in the Section 100 of the National ICT Act 2009.

Program	Year 2023
<b>Broadband Projects</b>	29,450,000
<b>Broadcasting Projects</b>	2,600,000
<b>Meaningful Connectivity Projects</b>	1,200,000
	<b>33,250,000</b>

## 6. Focus Areas of Consultation

To facilitate a focused approach, NICTA encourages stakeholders to pay special heed to the following key aspects of UAS project development process which are highlighted below.

Focus Areas	
UAS Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobile Broadband</li> <li>- Fixed Broadband</li> <li>- Broadcasting services</li> <li>- Digital literacy</li> <li>- Content and Applications development</li> </ul>	NICTA seeks your views and comments on the scope and scale of UAS projects to improve the roll out of ICT infrastructure and services in rural PNG.

Budget and UAS Levy for 2024	NICTA seeks your views and comments on the proposed budgets for the projects and the UAS levy for 2024 for NICTA's consideration.
Project area or site identification	NICTA seeks your views, comments and proposals on potential project sites for NICTA and the UAS Board's consideration. Areas or locations in the country with no current coverage of mobile and broadcasting services will be considered priority.
Partnership Opportunities	NICTA encourages public and private organisations to submit comments and proposals on potential partnership opportunities with NICTA to help roll out digital infrastructure and services to rural areas.



## 7. Annexure

### 7.1 Proposed Project Site Lists

#### 7.1.1 List of Proposed Greenfield Project Sites

LLG	District	Province	Region	Unserved Population
Afore Rural	Ijivitari	Oro	Southern	37,991
Burum Kwat	Finschafen	Morobe	Momase	28,206
Duau Rural	Esaála	Milne Bay	Southern	38,165
Erave Rural	Kagua-Erave	Southern Highlands	Highlands	27,153
Gasmata Rural	Kandrian-Gloucester	West New Britain	Islands	19,619
Kaintiba Rural	Kerema	Gulf	Southern	36,990
Kandrian Inland Rural	Kandrian-Gloucester	West New Britain	Islands	19,503
Keram Rural	Angoram	East Sepik	Momase	27,838
Kovon	Middle Ramu	Madang	Momase	25,680
Louisiade Rural	Samarai-Murua	Milne Bay	Southern	35,848
Maramuni Rural	Wabag	Enga	Highlands	24,858
Naho Rawa Rural	Rai Coast	Madang	Momase	28,393
Oksapmin Rural	Telefomin	West Sepik	Momase	34,789
Paiela/Hewa Rural	Lagaip-Porgera	Enga	Highlands	23,629
Pobuma	Manus	Manus	Islands	16,834
Salt Rural	Karimui-Nomane	Chimbu	Highlands	23,573
Wapi-Yengis Rural	Kompam	Enga	Highlands	22,256
Wasu Rural	Tewae-Siassi	Morobe	Momase	27,867
Yus Rural	Kabwum	Morobe	Momase	25,983

### 7.1.2 List of Proposed Mobile Broadband Upgrade Sites

LLG	District	Province	Region	No. of Upgrade sites	Unserved Population
Afore Rural	Ijivitari	Oro	Southern	1	16,976
Duau Rural	Esa'ala	Milne Bay	Southern	2	16,094
West Ferguson Rural	Esa'ala	Milne Bay	Southern	2	15,001
Tamata Rural	Sohe	Oro	Southern	1	14,911
Oro Bay Rural	Ijivitari	Oro	Southern	2	14,375
Louisiade Rural	Samarai-Murua	Milne Bay	Southern	3	14,009
Yangkok Rural	Nuku	West Sepik	Momase	3	20,988
Rai Coast Rural	Rai Coast	Madang	Momase	2	20,807
Nanima Kariba	Menyamy	Morobe	Momase	3	19,776
West Aitape Rural	Aitape-Lumi	West Sepik	Momase	3	18,628
Deyamos Rural	Kabwum	Morobe	Momase	2	17,529
Namatanai Rural	Namatanai	New Ireland	Islands	3	16,175
Melkoi Rural	Pomio	East New Britain	Islands	2	12,954
Buin	South Bougainville	AROB	Islands	2	9,611
Pobuma	Manus	Manus	Islands	2	8,416
West Pomio/Mamusi Rural	Pomio	East New Britain	Islands	3	6,941
Awil/Pori Rural	Koroba-Kopiago	Hela	Highlands	1	25,762
Lake Kopiago Rural	Koroba-Kopiago	Hela	Highlands	3	21,636
Kompam Rural	Kompam	Enga	Highlands	5	20,480
Kagua Rural	Kagua-Erave	Southern Highlands	Highlands	1	17,399
Aiya Rural	Kagua-Erave	Southern Highlands	Highlands	2	17,267
Salt Rural	Karimui-Nomane	Chimbu	Highlands	1	11,786
Maramuni Rural	Wabag	Enga	Highlands	2	11,228
Baiyer Rural	Mul-Baiyer	Western Highlands	Highlands	2	10,848
Wapi-Yengis Rural	Kompam	Enga	Highlands	2	9,304
Nomane Rural	Karimui-Nomane	Chimbu	Highlands	2	8,270
Dunantina Rural	Henganofi	Eastern Highlands	Highlands	1	8,153
Siane Rural	Chuave	Chimbu	Highlands	2	6,628
Tagali Rural	Tari-Pori	Hela	Highlands	1	6,140

Nembi Plateau Rural	Nipa-Kutubu	Southern Highlands	Highlands	1	5,826
Erave Rural	Kagua-Erave	Southern Highlands	Highlands	2	5,420

### 7.1.3 List of Broadcasting Services Proposed Project Sites

	<b>TV</b>	<b>Radio</b>
<b>Project locations</b>	Kimbe	Kavieng
	AROB	Hela
	Manus	Enga