



Government of Papua New Guinea

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National Information and  
Communications Technology Authority

# **CONSULTATION PAPER**

## **Proposed 2025 UAS Projects**

*Issued on 22 October 2024*

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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, National Information and Communications Technology Authority (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 2025 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 Projects and their indicative costing.

In undertaking its tasks, NICTA now presents the Proposed UAS Projects for 2025 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 Feedback Submissions

All written comments must be submitted via email only to [uas@nicta.gov.pg](mailto:uas@nicta.gov.pg).

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 22<sup>nd</sup> Friday, November 2024.

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 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, the Digital Government Plan and other relevant laws, policies and plans which recognise the need for increased and improved connectivity.

In 2022, NICTA developed, through a consultative process, 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 increased population covered by reliable advanced wireless mobile telecommunications network signals (at least 4G+ quality) as well as increased coverage of fixed broadband services in PNG.

#### **3.1.2 Broadcasting Initiative**

Television and radio broadcasting services will continue to be important means of increasing access to information for the people of PNG and they remain a priority for UAS fund support. Programs under this initiative are aimed at 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. 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 2025

The proposed UAS Projects for 2025 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 for 2025 are designed to cover two priority areas of the Government's digital transformation agenda, namely the Mobile Broadband and Radio Broadcasting.

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

UAS Initiative	Program	Projects	Numbers of Locations/Sites	Indicative Budget (K)
<b>Broadband Internet Initiative</b>	Mobile Broadband	Greenfield 4G	27	K 10.65 million
<b>Broadcasting Initiative</b>	Radio Broadcasting	Radio	7	K 1.75 million
<b>Partnership</b>	Meaningful Connectivity	Connect Institutions	8	K 1 million
<b>Total</b>				<b>K 13.4 million</b>

Mobile broadband is a crucial technology for Papua New Guinea (PNG), especially considering the country's unique demographic and geographical challenges, such as its sparse population and rugged terrain. The widespread adoption of mobile broadband can play a vital role in overcoming these barriers, offering more scalable and flexible solutions compared to fixed broadband infrastructure.

The long-term goal of achieving 100% broadband access across PNG, even in rural and remote areas, aligns with global trends in promoting digital inclusion. Mobile broadband's flexibility allows it to cover areas where constructing fixed infrastructure (such as fibre-optic cables) would be cost-prohibitive or physically challenging.

The mobile broadband projects for 2025, focusing on 27 new telecommunication towers, are well-placed to boost connectivity, particularly in West Sepik and Morobe Province. The alignment with the UAS 5-year strategic plan and the collaboration with the EU-STREIT program for Sepik will ensure targeted implementation that meets both developmental and agricultural needs. These towers will enable local farmers to access critical broadband services through established resource centers, improving agricultural productivity, market access, and overall rural development. This infrastructure will likely facilitate better communication, training, and access to information for farmers, helping them adopt modern techniques, access markets, and ultimately improve their livelihoods.

The proposed partnership between the Morobe Provincial Government (MPG) and NICTA for constructing 20 new towers is a strong collaborative effort aimed at closing the connectivity gap in the region. With MPG covering site acquisition and tower construction and NICTA contributing with the power and electronics, the proposed project demonstrates a significant commitment to improving telecommunications infrastructure. By allowing ICT service providers to share these towers, it encourages broader access to services and fosters competition, which can lead to better service delivery for residents in Morobe. This initiative will be key to addressing access gaps and promoting digital inclusivity.

The Radio Broadcasting project, with seven selected locations, aligns with the UAS 5-year strategic plan (2023-2027) and leverages current radio coverage analysis to target areas with the most significant need. By focusing on improving radio infrastructure, the project will enhance access to important information, news, and educational content, especially in regions where radio remains a primary source of communication. This initiative is essential for reaching remote communities and ensuring they stay connected and informed.

The Partnership program, which supports both local and international collaborations, is crucial for enhancing meaningful connectivity in Papua New Guinea. By focusing on capacity building through various projects, these partnerships help strengthen the country's telecommunications infrastructure and digital literacy. This approach not only promotes connectivity but also ensures sustainable growth by empowering local stakeholders with the skills and knowledge needed to manage and optimize the infrastructure effectively.

## 5. Budget Summary for 2025

The proposed budget of K13.4 million for the UAS Projects is well-distributed across a number of fields, with the majority allocated to the Mobile Broadband Initiative at K10.65 million. This reflects the priority placed on expanding mobile broadband infrastructure. The Radio Broadcasting Initiative receives K1.75 million, which will support the expansion of radio services in key locations. Finally, K1 million is allocated for the Partnership program, which emphasizes capacity building and collaboration with local and international partners to further advance connectivity and infrastructure in PNG.

The UAS Levy for 2025 will be calculated based on the project budget, industry revenues, and other funding sources, following the guidelines set in Section 100 of the NICT Act 2009. This ensures that the funds required for the Universal Access and Service (UAS) projects are generated in a sustainable manner, while aligning with industry contributions and financial resources. The levy plays a key role in funding initiatives that expand connectivity across Papua New Guinea, particularly in underserved areas.

## 6. Focus Areas of Consultation

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

- **Needs Assessment:** What are the current ICT needs and challenges in your area?
- **Project Feedback:**
- **Prioritization:** Which projects should be prioritized and why?
- **Additional Suggestions:** Do you have any other suggestions for improving ICT services in rural areas?

Focus Areas	Questions	Remarks
Needs assessment	What are the current ICT needs and challenges in your area?	NICTA seeks your views and comments to identify needs and challenges relating to ICT.
Project feedback	What are your views on the proposed ICT projects?  UAS Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobile Broadband</li> <li>- Fixed Broadband</li> <li>- Broadcasting services</li> <li>- Digital literacy training</li> <li>- Applications development</li> <li>- Content 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.
	What are your views on the proposed UAS projects budget for 2025?	NICTA seeks your views and comments on the proposed budgets for the projects for 2025 for NICTA's consideration.
Prioritisation	Which projects should be prioritised and why?	
Additional suggestions	Do you have any other suggestions for improving ICT services in rural areas?  Project area or site identification	NICTA seeks your views, comments and proposals on potential projects for NICTA and the UAS Board's consideration.
	Partnership Opportunities	NICTA encourages public and private organisations to submit comments and proposals on potential partnership opportunities with NICTA to help roll our digital infrastructure and services to rural areas.

## 7. Annexure

### 7.1 Proposed Project Site Lists

#### 7.1.1 List of Proposed Greenfield Project Sites

No	Propose Project Site	Target Population	Ward	LLG	District/Province	Latitude	Longitude
1	Kuare Rural	21474	Lapongo	Kuare	Kagua-Erave	-6.509427	144.012136
2	Kamano No. 2 Rura	15385	Evevinonta	Kamano N0.2	Kainantu	-6.371587	145.720919
3	Sumumini	2,245	Sumumini	Bewani/Wutung Onei Rural	Waramei Resource centre, Vanimo-Green, West Sepik	-3.0927	141.379071
4	Yiklau	1,777	Yiklau	East Wapei Rural	Maurom Resource centre, Aitape-Lumi, West Sepik	-3.672874	141.96979
5	Betianap	7,527	Betianap	Oksapmin Rural	Tekin/Divanap Resource centre, Telefomin, West Sepik	-5.214929	142.1759
6	Binare	2,897	Binare	Palmai Rural	Palmai Resource Center, Nuku, West Sepik	-3.564425	142.433184
7	Sumambum	3,562	Sumambum	Palmai Rural	Marakumba Resource Center, Nuku, West Sepik	-3.452526	142.523705
8	Kaipit Station	11,325	Sauruan	Umi/Atzera	Markham	-6.26671	146.26818

9	Nabak	3,076	Hobu	Nabak Rural	Nawae	-6.587912	147.033028
10	Kudjeru	5,022	Wisini	Wau Rural	Wau-Waria	-7.57685	146.855659
11	Salamaua Station	4,070	Laugui	Salamaua Rural	Huon	-7.025214	147.066748
12	Singawa station	3,966	Apo	Labuta Rural	Nawae	-6.706787	147.124982
13	Garam Primary School	23,400	Wafibampung	Umi/Atzera	Markham	-6.335947	146.312075
14	Gwang	16,666	Sintogora	Wain-Erap Rural	Nawae	-6.459921	146.65567
15	Kemen	7,645	Kemen	Nabak Rural	Nawae	-6.450097	146.921135
16	Bundun	3,986	Gurakor	Mumeng Rural	Bulolo	-6.850461	146.615474
17	Bokasu	4,292	Mangac	Yabim Mape Rural	Finschafen	-6.573312	147.618732
18	Edie Creek	5,715		Watut Rural	Bulolo	-7.379338	146.64851
19	Malangata	7,027		Mumeng Rural	Bulolo	-7.124334	146.602907
20	Menyamyamya	3,495	Yakwoi	Kome Rural	Menyamyamya	-7.121287	145.986243
21	Bulolo airstrip	22,390	Kebi	Watut Rural	Bulolo	-7.217411	146.653417
22	HIYEWINI	3,815	HIYEWINI	Kapao Rural	Menyamyamya	-7.434092	146.439809
23	POPOE	3,049	POPOE	Morobe Rural	Huon	-7.983722	147.614727
24	BAINDOANG	9,553	BAINDOANG	Nabak rural	Nawae	-6.347616	146.943368

25	ANTIR	1,558	ANTIR	Onga/Waffa Rural	Markham	-6.460687	146.199141
26	GITUKIA	3,108	GITUKIA	Sialum Rural	Tewae-Siassi	-6.068236	147.506177
27	KASANGARE	4,822	KASANGARE	Waria Rural	Wau-Waria	-7.785073	146.882475

### 7.1.2 List of Radio Broadcasting Services Proposed Project Sites

No	Propose Project Site
1	Arawa
2	Buka
3	Chimbu
4	Vanimu
5	Telefomin
6	Hela
7	Kiunga