

CONCEPT NOTE

PACIFIC ICT MINISTERIAL & OFFICIALS' MEETINGS 2015

17-19 June 2015, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

1 Context

Development of ICT in the Pacific has for some time been isolated and uncoordinated with agencies working in silos and with no clear cohesive architectural design that is cost efficient. Noting commitments made by Heads of State at the [Third UN Conference on Small Island Developing States](#) held in Samoa during 1-4 September 2014, particularly the **S.A.M.O.A Pathway**¹ where they reaffirmed commitments to sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Within the SAMOA Pathway, leaders recognized that the ability of the SIDS to sustain high levels of economic growth and job creation has been affected by the ongoing adverse impacts of the global economic crisis, declining foreign direct investment, trade imbalances, increased indebtedness, the lack of adequate transportation, energy and information and communications technology infrastructure networks, limited human and institutional capacity and the inability to integrate effectively into the global economy.

Leaders have also underscored the need to enhance the enabling environment at national and regional levels to attract more public and private investment in building and maintaining appropriate infrastructure such as ICT. Leaders also underscored the need to promote and enhance the use of ICT for, inter alia, education, the creation of employment, in particular youth employment and economic sustainability purposes in small island developing states.

Leaders also mentioned the need to establish national and regional ICT platforms and information dissemination hubs in countries to facilitate information exchange and cooperation building on existing platforms. Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to support the efforts to gain access to appropriate, reliable, affordable, modern and sound technologies and to increase connectivity and the use of ICT through improved infrastructure, training and national legislation, as well as public and private sector involvement.

It is also worthy to note the capacity development effort on ICT-enabled governance for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Pacific and the AIMS Region, which has been made by United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) since 2014. Starting with the customized research on e-government for promoting sustainable development in SIDS in the first half of 2014, UNPOG has thereby co-organized a series of capacity development events for SIDS in collaboration with DPADM and other institutions, such as capacity development workshop during 2014 UN Public Service Forum, Special Event titled *"ICT and E-Government in SIDS: Responding to the SAMOA Pathway Call for Action"* during the Sixty-ninth Session of the United Nations General Assembly in November 2014, the training workshop for SIDS in February 2015 in collaboration with National Information Society Agency (NIA) of the Republic of Korea, and the workshop on sustainable development and disaster risk management using e-government in March 2015. In particular, UNPOG has received strong requests from SIDS to develop e-government framework for SIDS during the

¹ Draft outcome document of the 3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States, <http://www.sids2014.org/content/documents/358A-CONF-223-5%20ENGLISH.pdf>

February Training Workshop, and has accordingly requested the support from NIA to develop the customized framework for SIDS. The customized e-government framework is expected to be developed and completed in late 2015 and subsequently UNPOG plans to organize the capacity development workshop for SIDS in late 2015 or early 2016 in order to support SIDS to effectively implement this customised framework.

Back in 2009, the Pacific Leaders at the Cairns [40th Pacific Islands Forum in 2009](#) called for the Pacific Regional Digital Strategy (2005-2010) to be reviewed and updated. In response to the request, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat ([PIFS](#)) in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community ([SPC](#)), commissioned a review of the Digital Strategy in early 2010 and drafted the 2010 Framework for Action on ICT for Development in the Pacific (FAIDP) for the years 2010-2015, which was later adopted at the [Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2011](#) held in Noumea, New Caledonia.

The 2010 FAIDP outlines seven themes for action aimed at effectively utilising ICT for sustainable development, governance, and improving the livelihood of Pacific communities. The FAIDP identified *targets* and various *milestones*. The FAIDP was intended to guide actions, inform policy direction, enhance funding decisions and support the implementation of national policies and plans.

The themes identified within the FAIDP are:

- Leadership, governance, coordination and partnerships
- ICT policy, legislation and regulatory frameworks
- ICT human capacity building
- ICT infrastructure and access
- International connectivity
- Cyber security and ICT applications
- Financing, monitoring and evaluation

The Review of the Framework was originally scheduled to take place in mid-2013, however due to the changing of the Chair of the CROP² Working Group for ICT from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to the University of the South Pacific (USP) in early 2013, there was a notable delay in conducting the Review of the Framework as appropriate human resources had to be hired to staff the Department that would oversee the process. This has taken almost a year from the date since the required time frame. Following the recruitment of appropriate staff around the end of June, 2014, the CROP Working Group meeting was convened to commence the Review process.

The Review of the FAIDP is being carried out by a Sub Working Group of the ICT CROP Working Group which is led by the Secretariat (currently the University of the South Pacific since it took over from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community as Chair of the Working Group). The approach which the Working Group used to review the FAIDP was to monitor and evaluate the progress of the Targets and Milestones that were defined under the 7 themes through desk research, consultations, surveys and empirical analysis and assessment based on certain identified indicators. The approach to evaluating this is both quantitative and qualitative.

² Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) is an inter-organisational consultative process which aims to prevent either overlaps, or gaps, appearing between the work-programmes of its various members. CROP membership includes, inter alia, PIFS, SPC, USP.

2 Justifications

The development of the Pacific Regional ICT Strategic Action Plan (PRISAP) that stems from the FAIDP is critical in designing stimuli and growth strategies as well as identifying stakeholders to take ownership of specifically defined action items. The Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2011 in Noumea endorsed the PRISAP concept in principle and requested for an implementation action plan. The formulation of the PRISAP could have been the perfect tool for monitoring and evaluating the development of ICT in the Pacific based on the targets and milestone defined under the 2010 FAIDP. However, PRISAP never materialized due to the difficulties in the transition of the functions of the ICT program from SPC to USP.

The review of the FAIDP in 2014 found that some of the challenges in the region since 2010 remain the same with lack of a cohesive development pathway which can be attributed to the lack of the PRISAP. The Review also found that the FAIDP has made some significant contribution to ICT development in the Pacific region with regards to national ICT policies formulation, Cybersecurity awareness and in assisting member countries in identifying potential service providers to improve connectivity in the region. ICT in Education has shown some very good indicators that it's making good progress in most of the countries in the region. There is not much progress noted by the Review in the e-Health sector and it is an important initiative that needs a careful assessment in the next Action Plan. The Review recognised the challenge to build a more industry ready ICT workforce to meet the countries and private sector needs. The most challenging aspect experienced during the Review was the absence of credible information related to ICT development in the region. The Review acknowledged the absence of proper mechanisms in the countries to collect, store and organize ICT statistic data making it extremely hard to retrieve information when needed. The Review recommends, based on credible information, the formulation and establishment of a regional initiative to establish a regional e-portal to collect and store ICT statistic data in the pacific region.

There are a number of initiatives defined under the 2010 FAIDP that the Review has identified as potential ICT development initiatives and recommends that these initiatives be considered, introduced and incorporated as part of the next Action Plan.

Provided that the FAIDP has come to an end of its term while the Pacific Regional ICT Strategic Action Plan (PRISAP) which was expected to be a practical implementation plan for the FAIDP has yet to be established, it is important for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to seriously consider a next Action Plan which will be more holistic and expansive consideration of the innovative and inclusive approach to all aspects of ICT and the engagement of multiple stakeholders and diverse functionalities. The next Action Plan should also reflect outcomes from, inter alia:

- The finalization of the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals
- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030³
- Samoa Pathway for Action derived from the Third UN Conference on Small Island Developing States, 2014
- The Brunei Darussalam Statement of the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministers on "Building Smart Digital Economy through ICT"⁴

³ The Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015, <http://www.wcdrr.org/home>

⁴ The Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting on "Building Smart Digital Economy through ICT", 2014, <http://www.apit.int/2014-ICTMM>

More importantly, provided that the 46th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting will be held from 7 to 11 September 2015 in Papua New Guinea, it is essential that the Leaders will be informed about the progress of the ICT development for development in the Pacific region including issues, challenges, and opportunities thereby making an informed decision on actions to be implemented in coming years. It is also important to note that any input to the Leaders' Meeting will need to be submitted to the CROP two months in advance (early July 2015) and in turn to the PIFS one month in advance (early August 2015) prior to the Leaders' Meeting.

With these connections, the University of the South Pacific (USP) as the Chair of CROP Working Group for ICT in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and with the kind host by the Government of Kingdom of Tonga, the Ministry of Communications in particular, are organising the [Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2015](#) to be held on 19 June 2015 at the Fa'onelua Convention Centre (FCC) in Nuku'alofa, Tonga. The Ministerial Meeting will be preceded by the [Pacific ICT Officials' Meeting](#) to be held from 17 to 18 June 2015 at the same venue. It is notably that the [8th APT Policy and Regulation for Pacific \(PRFP-8\)](#) will also be held at the same place during 15-17 June 2015.

The Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2015 will represent a unique opportunity for political and senior officials to review the progress of ICT development for development and results of the FAIDP in particular, to be informed about current issues, challenges and opportunities, as well as to afford them the opportunity to craft and design enabling mechanisms to catalyze the advancement of the proliferation of ICT in the region.

3 Objectives of the Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2015

The Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2015 is aimed to, *inter alia*:

- Review the progress of ICT development for development in the Pacific region at large;
- Inform key decision makers about results of the FAIDP Review including issues, challenges, opportunities, and suggestions;
- Prepare a draft of the Next Action Plan e.g. the Pacific Regional ICT Strategic Action Plan (PRISAP) for the years 2016-2020;
- Build and/or strengthen partnerships and cooperation among PICTs, countries outside the Pacific region, international and regional organisations.

4 Priority Areas for the Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2015

The Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2015 will focus on:

I. Results of the FAIDP Review (2014) which includes evaluations of the 7 thematic areas i.e.:

- Leadership, governance, coordination and partnerships
- ICT policy, legislation and regulatory frameworks
- ICT human capacity building
- ICT infrastructure and access
- International connectivity
- Cyber security and ICT applications

- Financing, monitoring and evaluation
- II. Draft of the Next Action Plan e.g. the Pacific Regional ICT Strategic Action Plan (PRISAP) for the years 2016-2020, which should aim at the following objectives:
- To foster regional and international coordination and cooperation, among PICTs and other stakeholders, on telecommunication/ICT development issues; and to ensure leadership and proper institutional arrangements at national and regional levels;
 - To identify funding opportunities and financing mechanisms from various sources including those of the governments; and put in place monitoring and evaluation framework for ICT development;
 - To create and maintain an enabling policy and regulatory environment, including the establishment and implementation of sustainable national policies, strategies and plans;
 - To maximize the utilization of appropriate new technologies, including broadband, in developing their telecommunication/ICT infrastructures and services and in designing and deploying resilient telecommunication/ICT network infrastructures
 - To enhance the deployment, security and safe and affordable use of ICT applications and services including government services towards mainstreaming telecommunications/ICTs in the broader economy and society;
 - To build and enhance human and institutional capacity in order to improve skills in the development and use of telecommunication/ICT networks and applications, and to foster digital inclusion for people with special needs, such as persons with disabilities;
 - To develop measures in responding to climate change and integrating telecommunications/ICTs in disaster management.

Provided the above objectives, thematic areas of focus for the Next Action Plan could be as the follows:

- (i) Leadership, Institutional arrangements, Whole-of-Government approach, and Regional and international cooperation and partnership frameworks
- (ii) Funding and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) frameworks
- (iii) Enabling and sustainable policy and regulatory environment
- (iv) ICT from the supply side – infrastructure and universal access
- (v) ICT from the demand side – ICT applications and services and Cybersecurity
- (vi) Human and institutional capacity building
- (vii) ICT for green and safer environment, and Disaster management

5 Expected Outputs and Outcome of the Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2015

It is expected that outputs of the Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2015 will include:

- a) Pacific ICT Ministers' Statements affirming the need to address prominent issues and challenges and recognition of the digital opportunities brought by ICT in the economies at large.
- b) Draft of the Next Action Plan e.g. Pacific Regional ICT Strategic Action Plan (PRISAP) for 2016-2020.

6 Dates and Venue

The Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting is scheduled to be held on **19th June 2015** the Fa'onelua Convention Centre (FCC) in Nuku'alofa, Tonga. The Meeting will be preceded by the ***Pacific ICT Officials' Meeting*** to be held on **17th (afternoon) and 18th June 2015**.

It is notably that the 8th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP-8) will also be held at the venue during 15th and 17th (morning) June 2015.

Mon 15 Jun	Tue 16 Jun	Wed 17 Jun	Thu 18 Jun	Fri 19 Jun
8 th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP-8)		Pacific ICT Officials' Meeting		Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting

8 Target Countries and Audience

Target countries to be participating in the both Pacific ICT Officials' Meeting and the Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting are administrations of the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) including Pacific Islands Forum membership, ITU membership, APT membership, and SPC membership.

No	Pacific Islands Forum Membership	State Members of ITU	State Members of APT	SPC Membership	USP Membership
1	Australia	Australia	Australia	Australia	
2	Cook Islands		Cook Islands**	Cook Islands	Cook Islands
3	Fiji	Fiji	Fiji	Fiji	Fiji
4				France	
5	Kiribati	Kiribati	Kiribati	Kiribati	Kiribati
6	Marshall Islands	Marshall Islands	Marshall Islands	Marshall Islands	Marshall Islands
7	Micronesia (FSM)	Micronesia (FSM)	Micronesia (FSM)	Micronesia (FSM)	
8	Nauru	Nauru	Nauru	Nauru	Nauru
9	New Zealand	New Zealand	New Zealand	New Zealand	
10	New Caledonia*			New Caledonia	
11	Niue		Niue**	Niue	Niue
12	Palau		Palau	Palau	
13	Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea	
14	Samoa	Samoa	Samoa	Samoa	Samoa
15	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands
16	Tokelau*			Tokelau	Tokelau
17	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga
18	Tuvalu	Tuvalu	Tuvalu	Tuvalu	Tuvalu

19				USA	
20	Vanuatu	Vanuatu	Vanuatu	Vanuatu	Vanuatu
21				Wallis and Futuna	

* Associate Member of the Forum

** Associate Member of the APT

Target participants also include private sector, industry, stakeholders and organisations dealing with ICT4D in the Pacific region.

9 Organisations and Partners

The both Pacific ICT Officials' Meeting and the Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting are hosted by the Government of Kingdom of Tonga, the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications in particular. The Meetings are facilitated by the University of the South Pacific (USP, as the Chair of the CROP Working Group for ICT), and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The Pacific ICT Officials' Meeting and the Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting are supported by the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), the Australian Government particularly the Department of Communications, the United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS).

The Meetings are open for partnerships and inviting governments, national, regional, and international organisations to actively participate and contribute towards achieving objectives of the Meetings.

10 Proposed Timeframe

No	Tasks	Date	Owner/Responsible Parties
1	Disseminate the invitation to administrations, partners, and stakeholders	No later than 24 April	USP / Tonga
2	Circulate the Concept Paper to relevant stakeholders	No later than 24 April	ITU
3	Stocktaking of telecom/ICT development projects/initiatives in the Pacific	April – 29 May	ITU/USP (with World Bank, ADB, PITA, governments, etc.)
4	Prepare a draft of the Next Action Plan e.g. Pacific Regional ICT Strategic Action Plan (PRISAP) for 2016-2020	April – 22 May	ITU/USP (with partners)
5	Collect feedbacks on the draft from various partners/stakeholders	25 May – 5 Jun	ITU/USP (with partners)
6	Pacific ICT Officials' Meeting	17-18 Jun	Tonga/USP/ITU

			(with partners)
7	Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting	19 Jun	Tonga/PIFS/USP (with ITU and partners)
8	Submit the draft of Ministerial Statements and the draft of the Next Pacific Action Plan 2016 – 2020 to CROP	Before 3 Jul	USP
9	Collect feedbacks from administrations of PICTs on the draft of Ministerial Statements and the draft of the Next Pacific Action Plan 2016 - 2020	22 Jun – 24 Jul	USP/ITU
10	Submit the final Ministerial Statements and the draft of the Next Pacific Action Plan 2016 – 2020 to PIFS	Before 7 Aug	USP
11	46 th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders’ Meeting	7-11 Sep	PIFS

11 Contact Persons

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ANNEX A
PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE PACIFIC ICT OFFICIALS' MEETING
 17-18 June 2015, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Wednesday 17 June 2015	
09:00 – 13:00	Registration
13:00 – 13:20	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome Remarks by ITU ▪ Welcome Remarks by USP ▪ Welcome Remarks by PIFS ▪ Opening Remarks by Government of Tonga
13:20 – 13:40	Presentation on results of the 2014 FAIDP Review By USP
13:40 – 15:40	Presentations by partners/stakeholders on ICT projects and initiatives in the Pacific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by ITU • Presentation by APT • Presentation by UNPOG • Presentation by APCICT
15:40 – 16:00	Tea Break
16:00 – 17:30	Presentations by partners/stakeholders on ICT projects and initiatives in the Pacific (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by World Bank • Presentation by PITA • Presentation by APNIC • Etc.

Thursday 18 June 2015

09:00 – 10:40	Presentations by Country Delegations on Progress of ICT Development for Development
10:40 – 11:00	Tea Break
11:00 – 12:40	Presentations by Country Delegations on Progress of ICT Development for Development (cont'd)
12:40 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 15:40	Review of the Draft of the Next Action Plan
15:40 – 16:00	Tea Break
16:00 – 17:00	Review of the Draft of the Next Action Plan (cont'd)
17:00 – 17:30	Summary and Closing

ANNEX B
PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE PACIFIC ICT MINISTERIAL MEETING
 19 June 2015, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Friday 19 June 2015	
08:00 – 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 09:30	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome Remarks by the Chair of CROP Working Group on ICT ▪ Welcome Remarks by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat ▪ Opening Remarks by Government of Tonga
09:30 – 10:00	Presentation on results of the 2014 FAIDP Review By the Chair of CROP Working Group on ICT
10:00 – 11:00	Presentation(s) on Progress of ICT Development for Development By Representative(s) of Pacific Island Countries and Territories
11:00 – 11:20	Tea Break
11:20 – 12:20	Presentation on Draft of the Next Action Plan By the Chair of CROP Working Group on ICT
12:20 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 16:00	Ministerial Interventions
16:00 – 16:20	Conclusion
16:20 – 16:40	Closing