DRAFT SUBMISSION OF The Kingdom of Tonga **Broadband Priorities for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Master Plan** [30/10/2017] **Objective:** This form is sent to the representative of each country in order to prioritise activities and better align broadband connectivity gaps with solutions. All country submissions will be consolidated as per AP-IS Pillar and subregion to develop an implementation plan for 2018 and will be presented by the Secretariat during the First Session of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) Steering Committee, 1-2 November 2017, Dhaka, Bangladesh. A similar template is sent to partners to identify their planned activities. Please complete this form and submit to ESCAP (escap-ids@un.org) by **no later than 25 October 2017.**
(a). Background Information
(i). Government Ministry/Organization in charge of ICT connectivity: [Ministry of MEIDECC/ Department of Information and Technology]
(ii). National Broadband Policy: [Tonga National ICT Policy]
(iii). Completed/Current/planned fibre-optic broadband project: Tonga has established an 827-kilometer fibre optic cable system linking Tonga to Fiji via the Southern Cross Cable – the main trans-Pacific link between Australia and the United States. The Government of Tonga approved the extension of the cable system to the northern island groups of Vava'u and Ha'apai with the main objectives are to provide fast, reliable, economical and efficient communication system for the people in in the northern island groups.
(b). Challenges and Opportunities on promoting broadband connectivity: Within the scope of the AP-IS four pillars (1). Connectivity; (2). Internet Traffic & Network Management; (3). E-resilience; and (4). Broadband for all, ESCAP member countries and partners outlined seven strategic initiatives in the AP-IS Master Plan (http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/pre-ods/CICTSTI1_2E_rev1.pdf) to be implemented between 2016-2018 (please refer to attached chart of AP-IS 4 Pillars and AP-IS Strategic Initiatives).

The AP-IS seven strategic initiatives are as follows:

1. Identification, coordination, deployment, expansion and integration of the regional backbone networks at the cross-border intra- and interregional levels, in collaboration with member countries and subregional organizations;
2. Establish a sufficient number of Internet exchange points at the national and subregional levels and set out common principles on Internet traffic exchange to prevent Internet traffic tromboning, decrease transit costs and improve service quality
3. Regional social and economic studies;
4. Enhancing ICT infrastructure resilience in the Asia-Pacific region;
5. Policy and regulations for leveraging existing infrastructure, technology and inclusive broadband initiatives;
6. Capacity-building; and
7. Asia-Pacific information superhighway project funding mechanism based on public-private partnerships

(c). AP-IS 7 Strategic Initiatives Implementation Plan 2016-2018: priority challenges and proposed activities

In order to match country's sub-region's and region's priorities within the scope of the AP-IS seven strategic initiatives, please complete the matrix below accordingly. Please add a row as deemed necessary.

Priority Challenges	Focus Area	AP-IS Strategic Initiatives (1-7)	AP-IS Pillars (1-4)	Remarks
Priority Challenges:	(i) High Cost for International Internet Bandwidth (ii) Providing affordable broadband connectivity to all citizens (iii) Lack of ICT skill, therefore slow implementation of online services for citizens and businesses.	(i) AP-IS Strategic Initiative 1, 3, 5 (ii) AP-IS Strategic Initiative 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 (iii) AP-IS Strategic 4,7	(i) APIS Pillar 1, 2 (ii)AP-IS Pillar 1, 4 (iii) AP-IS Pillar 3, 4	

	(iv) Limited technical capacity on developing cyber security strategy.	(iv) AP-IS Strategic 1, 5.	AP-IS Pillar 2, 3, 4	
	(v) Slow Digital Transformation in Government and Businesses	(v) AP-IS Strategic 4, 5, 6, 7	AP-IS Pillar 1, 3	
Opportunities	(i) Coordinate the possibility of inviting major content plays to invest in establishing of a content distribution network (CDN) services to be local.			
	(ii) Increase utilization of our international Fibre connection with promoting new innovative and online services			
	(iii) Build a strong cybersecurity strategy to provide more assurance of security to the investors and stakeholders.			
	(iv) Establish a local IXP to help drive the internet cost down			
	(v) Improve local telecommunication infrastructure			
Proposed solutions/actions	(i) Discuss with major content providers the opportunity of hosting their content in a server in Tonga so not only it can be provide faster access to the citizen, but our neighbouring small island states of the pacific can also utilize the improve services with cheaper cost.			
	(ii) Establish more training centres in country for building capacity of Government and local ICT professionals			
	(iii) Build a strong cybersecurity strategy to provide more assurance of security to the investors and stakeholders.			
	(iv) Invite major players such as Microsoft to trial their Digital Transformation projects in Tonga.			

(d). Update to terrestrial/submarine fibre-optic cable projects: Based on the ESCAP/ITU interactive transmission map (access via link: http://www.unescap.org/our-work/ict-disaster-risk-reduction/asia-pacific-information-superhighway/asia-pacific-information-superhighway-maps), please check and list down if there is any recent fibre-optic cable project completed/planned for your country, which is not reflected in the interactive map. The input provided below will be used to update the interactive map accordingly.

    (i)   The map doesn't reflect any of the existing fibre in the small island states of the pacific such as the fibre that is already established from Fiji to Tonga.

(e). Any other suggestions/issues:

    (i)   In the Pacific, we are facing the issue of not enough traffic to justify the drop in the cost of Internet, so I'm suggesting that Tonga can be develop to host services that can be accessed by all of our small Island states of the Pacific region.