

Appendix 2 – Responses to ‘Policy Options for Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion – Phase II: Call for Public Input¹:

I. Summary of discussion at the IGF Intersessional work / National & Regional Initiatives at APriGF 2016 Taipei²

1. In Asia Pacific, there is no one-size-fits all solution on the issue of access. Issues of context, issues of cost are also important even in developed economies/countries across the region.
2. Cost also factor in last mile issues for developing countries. Although Pacific Islands governments realise the value of many newly established cable connections, many have not fully factored in the ongoing costs of ensuring that infrastructure and future maintenance, governance structures and human and other capacities match the potential of the connectivity.
3. Barriers are not just about access to the infrastructure. Discrimination and security considerations are also contributing factors.
4. Quality of access on a mobile device, as compared to access on a computer or laptop differs greatly. Combined efforts across all stakeholders are needed to make access available and meaningful in the Asia Pacific region where many access the internet for the first time on a mobile device.
5. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide significant focus areas for development in regions such as the Pacific and ICTs and internet connectivity could be a major contributor to this development. More research needs to be done to identify how appropriate technologies and internet connectivity can effectively contribute to the future-proofing of mitigation measures being introduced by local donor-funded projects.
6. Wide spread deployment of ICTs and internet in Eurasia has not ensured sound socioeconomic development for that region. The institutional environment in which ICT is deployed is important. Cooperation and coordination of public and private sectors to build contemporary institutions, and revise existing practices is needed to address current challenges.
7. The impact of trade agreements on connectivity and lives of marginalized groups must be considered by balancing human rights with development.
8. Greater involvement of governments in Internet governance fora and platforms is needed to address Internet governance issues and facilitate implementation of relevant policies at the national level.

¹ <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/documents/policy-options/799-2016-cenb-call-for-contributions-11-july-2016-2/file>

² <http://igf.asia/IGFIntersessional>

II. Public Comment Responses received on <http://comment.rigf.asia/>

Question	Input
<p>3. Are you aware of any specificities around connectivity at a local or regional level? (In other words, do you know of factors that impact connectivity in, for instance, rural areas but less so at an urban level? Or factors that affect connectivity at regional or larger scale, but not as noticeably at local or smaller scale?)</p>	<p>In Asia Pacific, majority of the connection is via mobile phone. There is a different quality of accessing meaningfully the Internet via laptop or PC versus via mobile phone. The early adopter countries –which have access to Internet way before others– started their connection via cable and PC. The quality of accessing Internet via mobile phone, certainly has more limited quality.</p> <p>It would be good to have specific intervention on how to make mobile access Internet better engaged with people.</p> <p>Technology is not working in vacuum, the same with Internet. It depends on many factors and how you connect is also important.</p> <p>Last mile issues for developing countries. For example, although Pacific Islands governments realise the value of many newly established cable connections, many have not fully factored in the ongoing costs of ensuring that infrastructure and future maintenance, governance structures and human and other capacities match the potential of the connectivity.</p>
<p>4. Data shows that the growth of Internet adoption is slowing down in some areas, especially as broadband services extend to more remote, less densely populated areas (facing challenges beyond affordability and availability). What are some of the barriers or limitations preventing people who do have Internet access from being enabled or empowered through such connectivity?</p>	<p>Internet adoption is increasing slowly in the Pacific mainly due to its lack of affordability. There are still island countries where monopoly Telecoms (and even some where there are multiple providers, e.g. Papua New Guinea) put the internet out of reach of those who need the access, but it is too expensive. Many Pacific users only have access to the internet at work, Private connections are unaffordable on their low local wages. The cost for businesses as well as for learning, information and other valuable uses is quite prohibitive.</p>
<p>6. How can connectivity contribute to reaching the new SDGs?</p>	<p>The SDGs provide significant focus areas for development in regions such as the Pacific and ICTs and internet connectivity could be a major contributor to this development. Unfortunately there is not enough research being done to identify how appropriate technologies and internet connectivity can effectively contribute to the future-proofing of mitigation measures being introduced by local donor-funded projects.</p>

<p>9. Do you know of examples of success stories that can illustrate how Internet access can help to address real-world problems (in either developed or developing countries)?</p>	<p>The use of ICTs in Chennai, India in 2015/2016 during the floods for rescue efforts and for relief work</p>
	<p>The Nepal Wireless Connectivity Project (WS#90)</p>
	<p>Internet Access has hugely changed my personal life and helped me change that of other women around me. The Women's Digital League was formed when I was fired from my teaching job because the private school I was working at would not give me maternity leave. Sitting at home with a simple dial up connection I found remote work. Earning my first \$2.5 writing an article for someone in the US gave me much-needed confidence in my abilities. It was a stepping stone to becoming financially empowered and independent; being recognized as the top most impactful entrepreneur in Pakistan; and in showing women they didn't have to accept status quo. With greater financial empowerment I have seen young women not settle for the first proposal that came for them as they were no longer a burden on their household; send siblings to school/college; have greater say in decisions at home; be more respected and therefore have a higher self-esteem.</p>