STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY
FOR 2018-2020

INTRODUCTION

The Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) is the most prominent intergovernmental organization in the Asia-Pacific Region focusing on telecommunications/ICTs. In accordance with its objective as outlined in its Constitution, APT fosters the development of telecommunication services and information infrastructure throughout the Asia-Pacific Region, particularly focusing on less developed areas.

APT assists its Members in realizing the commitments made by Ministers during the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting on "Building Smart Digital Economy through ICT" held in 2014, Brunei Darussalam: to collectively work towards building a smart digital economy through ICT and address emerging challenges by fostering collaboration and cooperation.

APT also plays a vital role in providing its Members expertise and assistance in achieving policy and regulatory goals, affordable national broadband access, environmental settings to foster investment and innovation, effective harnessing of the benefits of emerging technologies and capacity building.

APT has also authored technical reports, guidelines and recommendations in the areas of radio-communication, spectrum harmonization and standardization. Further, APT serves as an avenue in providing a strong platform for collaboration and cooperation among its Members, including assistance to members in crafting regional views for a collective submission to international fora, especially ITU conferences.

This Strategic Plan, adopted at the 14th Session of the General Assembly will serve as the guideline for APT's activities for the period 2018 – 2020.

In collaboration with its members, this Strategic Plan outlines the overall objectives and targets of APT to achieve the identified priorities of its members as well as establishing mechanisms to fulfil the objectives and to deliver the expected outcomes in next three-year period.

Moreover, this Strategic Plan is drafted with the intent of strengthening APT's capacity to identify, address and respond to the needs of its membership and to build and leverage strategic partnerships with relevant organizations and entities. It plays a vital role in positioning APT to succeed in fulfilling its mission in one of the world's most diverse regions considering the rapidly evolving telecommunications/ ICT environment.

It must be emphasized that Telecommunications/ICTs, including affordable, reliable, resilient, and robust broadband connectivity, are essential in facilitating economic growth, prosperity and development. These factors can foster investment, innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as give the government the ability to implement its policy, such as e-government systems, which improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

In fact, the WSIS+10 reaffirmed the crosscutting contribution of ICTs in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nation recognizes that "The spread of information and communication technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies". Thus, ICTs will act as a major catalyst in achieving the 17 identified SDGs, which gives an opportunity for APT and its members to work together to leverage the benefits of ICT.

While some countries in the Asia-Pacific have made major strides in ICT development, the significant digital divide in the region remains a key challenge. The gap between developed and developing countries in broadband access continues to widen. Although, mobile broadband

subscriptions in the region have shown enormous growth particularly in emerging economies, adoption rates are far greater in developed countries. In the Asia-Pacific Region, 58.1 percent of the population are yet to be connected to the Internet.

The Asia-Pacific is also one of the most vulnerable regions to catastrophic natural disasters and extreme weather events. APT will continue to assist its members to harness ICTs to respond the challenges of disaster management in preparedness and recovery.

The rapid changes in telecommunications/ICTs including the disruptive effects of new technologies and business models provide challenges and opportunities for APT and policy makers and regulators in its members. The Internet of Things and M2M communication will trigger innovation across industry sectors and services, bringing efficiencies and benefits to citizens. Enabling the development of Smart Cities is an example. It will also increase the demand for spectrum, interoperability, IPv6 and appropriate security, numbering and consumer protection frameworks. Mobile broadband enabled applications, for example digital financial services, raise a similar range of issues.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overarching objective for the APT is to support and assist its membership to realize the positive benefits of ICTs and cope with the challenges of rapidly evolving ICT environments.

To achieve this objective, the APT will focus its work within the following Strategic Pillars, which reflect the priority areas established in the Brunei Darussalam Statement:

    a. **Connectivity**: Developing the digital Infrastructure;

    b. **Innovation**: Enabling conducive environments and harnessing the benefits of new technologies;

    c. **Trust**: Promoting security and resilience through ICT;

    d. **Capacity Building**: Promoting inclusiveness and enhancing expertise; and

    e. **Partnership**: Solidifying strategic cooperation with stakeholders.

The Strategic Pillars provide focus and clarity for the APT and the Action Plan and Implementation Mechanisms set out in this Strategic Plan for each Strategic Pillar will assist to plan relevant work and guide their activities and monitor progress.

STRATEGIC PILLARS AND ACTION PLANS

a. CONNECTIVITY: Developing the Digital Infrastructure
Taking into account the need to reduce the digital divide within the Asia-Pacific region, APT shall assist members to increase broadband penetration with an emphasis on reaching unserved and underserved populations focusing on affordability and quality of service and on improving speed, cost of service and coverage. APT shall also assist members with improving spectrum management practices to mitigate digital infrastructure constraints relating to the use of this scarce resource.

Objective *a.1: To increase access to broadband connectivity with an emphasis on unserved and under-served populations*

a.1.1   Assist members to develop or update national broadband plans, emphasizing the importance of the development of fair, predictable and transparent policy and regulatory environments that promote investment, productivity, competition and consumer safeguards;

a.1.2   Encourage members to improve and facilitate seamless international broadband connectivity, including terrestrial and submarine cables and satellite connections;

a.1.3   Work with members to develop and promote high-speed, affordable and sustainable broadband networks, taking into account that both quality fixed and mobile broadband networks are crucial in the region;

a.1.4   Assist members in introducing and promoting Internet exchange points (IXPs) and in deploying and transitioning to IPv6-based networks;

a.1.5   Support members in deploying suitable technologies to maximize the benefits of universal service funds in the areas of access and backhaul broadband networks and source of power supply in bringing telecommunications/ICTs to unserved and underserved populations; and

a.1.6   Share best practices, legislation and initiatives relevant to increasing broadband connectivity among members.

Objective *a.2: To improve practices in managing scarce resources for delivering connectivity*

a.2.1   Assist members in ensuring adequate spectrum is available to support deployment of wireless applications and leverage frequencies made available as a result of the digital switch-over and promote additional spectrum available for 4G (IMT-Advanced) and early allocation of harmonized spectrum bands for 5G (IMT-2020);

a.2.2   Assist members in development/update of colocation and infrastructure/spectrum sharing policies/regulations and innovative business models that support efficient and cost-effective deployment of digital infrastructure;

a.2.3   Provide support to members in undertaking spectrum management assessment, developing master plans and implementing action plans for further development of spectrum management infrastructure, procedures and tools;

a.2.4   Encourage close collaboration among members in implementing spectrum management practices, including harmonization, in keeping with global and regional best practices to promote the efficient utilization of spectrum for innovative usage and trials to further encourage innovation and competition; and

a.2.5   Assists members in their digital switch-over migration plans and processes, including the recovery of spectrum.

Expected outcomes:

✓ *a1* - Increased penetration of broadband with improved quality of service/experience in the region; and

✓ *a2* - Improved spectrum management practices.

b. INNOVATION: Enabling conducive environments and harnessing the benefits of new technologies
APT will continue its efforts to foster the development and adoption of the latest innovative telecommunication/ICT. Further, APT will work with all members to develop policy and regulatory environments that enable them to effectively harness the benefits of telecommunication/ICT innovation. APT will also foster telecommunication/ICT innovation, which will be a critical enabler in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Objective b.1: **To foster the development and adoption of the new ICTs**

b.1.1 Provide a platform for discussing and sharing new and emerging technologies to support the growth of the digital economy;

b.1.2 Support members to develop and deploy new and emerging radiocommunication technologies and services, including IMT-2020;

b.1.3 Enhance regional cooperation in the development and implementation of harmonized standards for innovative telecommunication/ICT applications and services; and

b.1.4 Assist members to develop and implement new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs including but not limited to the areas of standards, enabling policies and regulations, deployment and best practices.

Objective b.2: **To promote conducive environments for innovation and value creation in ICT**

b.2.1 Support members in developing national policy and regulatory frameworks that support upscale ICT centric innovative technologies and services;

b.2.2 Promote ICT investment and entrepreneurship in innovative use of ICT particularly, for Start-Ups and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs);

b.2.3 Encourage members to promote the development of ICT applications and content in local languages and contexts to facilitate active participation by citizens; and

b.2.4 Promote the availability and use of open data, encourage big data application development and promote the benefits of free flow of knowledge and information in developing ICT applications.

Objective b.3: To enhance the use of ICT as an enabler for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals 2030

b.3.1 Support members in developing national policy and regulatory frameworks to enhance the use of ICT as an enabler in high-potential sectors such as education, health, agriculture, governance, energy, environment, finance and commerce;

b.3.2 Provide assistance to members in the development of ICT-enabled services and applications including smart cities by providing policy and regulatory guidelines, technical assistance and recommendations, and best practices; and

b.3.3 Identify and share best practices, legislation and initiatives to support adoption and use of ICT.

Expected outcomes:

✓ *b1* - Increased quality of reports, recommendations, regional views and proposals, and other publications developed by APT work programmes;

✓ *b2* - Policy and regulatory environments that support innovation and value creation in ICT; and

✓ *b3* - Policy and regulatory regimes that support the growth of other sectors using ICTs to achieve the SDGs.

c. **TRUST: Promoting Security and Resilience through ICT**
Recognizing the vulnerability of members to malicious cyber activities and natural disasters, APT shall assist them to develop and maintain secure, trusted and resilient ICT network services, as well as to address challenges related to disaster preparedness, risk reduction and mitigation.

Objective c.1: **To develop and maintain secure, trusted and resilient ICT networks and services**

c.1.1   Assist members to develop appropriate policies and strategies for cybersecurity, including critical information infrastructure protection such as terrestrial and submarine cable;

c.1.2   Support members in establishing and building capacity to operate national/regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) and Computer Security Incident Response Team(CSIRT);

c.1.3   Provide a platform to share best practices, policies, legislative frameworks and national initiatives to address secure, trusted and resilient ICT networks and services;

c.1.4   Strengthen institutional cooperation and collaboration among the key actors and stakeholders for enhancing awareness of issues relating to developing and maintaining secure, trusted and resilience ICT networks and services; and

c.1.5   Strengthen cyber incident emergency response collaboration and information sharing

Objective c.2: To address challenges related to disaster preparedness, risk reduction and mitigation

c.2.1   Assist members to develop national emergency telecommunication/ICT strategies;

c.2.2   Provide support to members that are prone to natural disasters in establishing ICT-based solutions to assist with disaster preparedness, risk reduction and response, including wireless and satellite-based technologies;

c.2.3   Support members to use communication technologies for broadband public protection and disaster relief (PPDR);

c.2.4   Share information and experiences on data collection and analysis, early warning systems, business recovery and network reconstruction incorporating disaster-resilient features; and

c.2.5   Strengthen collaboration and cooperation among key institutions, players and stakeholders to mitigate and manage risk in disaster management.

Expected outcomes:

✓ *c1* - Improved trust and confidence in adoption and take up of key emerging technologies, and implementation of effective policies that support ICT promotion and address ICT security threats; and

✓ *c2* - Increased use of ICT based solutions and collaboration among members in addressing challenges related to disaster preparedness, risk reduction, mitigation and recovery.

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d. CAPACITY BUILDING: Promoting inclusiveness and enhancing expertise

A highly skilled ICT workforce and appropriate institutional capacity are indispensable for sustainable ICT uptake, as well as bridging the digital divide. APT shall continue its efforts to strengthen the human and institutional capacity of its members, particularly developing and least developed countries. Further, APT should work with its members to enrich the basic ICT skills of the citizens to leverage the benefits of ICTs.

Objective d.1: To continue the development of ICT capacity building initiative, by assisting members, particularly developing and least developed countries, in enhancing and strengthening their human and institutional capacity

d.1.1   Assist members to strengthen the development and enhancement of their human and institutional capacity - commonly recognized basic and advanced ICT skills - and keep abreast of the latest trends in order to address challenges in ICTs;

d.1.2   Enhance capacity building initiatives by exploring appropriate modalities to better meet the specific needs of members;

d.1.3   Continue to provide assistance to members through expert missions and ICT projects to address their specific needs; and

d.1.4   Provide a platform to promote collaboration amongst ICT experts, researchers, academia, engineers and technical experts through collaborative research, ICT projects, exchange of experiences and knowledge sharing.

Objective d.2: To continue the development of ICT skills of the citizens to achieve digital inclusion including children, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities

d.2.1   Support members in developing policies and initiatives to facilitate the spread of basic ICT skills and digital literacy for their citizens; and

d.2.2   Assist members to develop and implement strategies to make ICT more accessible affordable and usable for people with special needs, including children, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Expected outcomes:

✓ *d1* - Strengthened capacity and skills of human and institutions in the region; and
✓ *d2* - Enhanced digital literacy and skills of citizens to benefit from the ICTs.

e. PARTNERSHIP: Solidifying strategic cooperation with stakeholders
Being the most prominent inter-governmental telecommunication organization in the Asia-Pacific region, APT should take the lead role in shaping the development agenda and consolidating regional views on ICT issues. In order to enrich its work and enhance its profile, APT needs to strengthen engagement with potential stakeholders as well as related international, regional and multilateral organizations and funding bodies.

Objective e.1: To take the lead role in shaping the development agenda and consolidating regional views on ICT issues

e.1.1 Continue to provide members with opportunities to develop agendas of interest to members and to consolidate regional views in preparation for ITU Conferences, Assemblies and meetings; and

e.1.2 Explore the possibility of consolidating regional views on topical issues as they arise.

Objective e.2: To facilitate engagement by interested parties, such as industry, research institutions, academia, the technical community, consulting firms and policy makers and regulators in other sectors using ICT so as to build and leverage strategic partnerships to assist in addressing the needs of APT's membership

e.2.1 Encourage members to support and provide opportunities for industry to share its perspectives on ICT services and technologies and to develop harmonized and coordinated views;

e.2.2 Build cooperative relationships with research institutions, academia, the technical community and consulting firms and solicit their contributions to the work of APT; and

e.2.3 Provide an open consultative platform for policy makers and regulators in both ICT and other related sectors to address the issue of ICT convergence.

Objective e.3: To increase exchanges and collaboration with the related international, regional and multilateral organizations as well as funding bodies to enhance cooperation for ICT development

e.3.1 Maximize synergies, harness resources and minimize duplication of work through opportunities for cooperation with relevant international, regional and multilateral organizations; and

e.3.2 Strengthen cooperation with multilateral development organizations such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, etc. through joint ICT projects.

Expected outcomes:

✓ *e1* - Greater recognition of APT in the global arena;
✓ *e2* - Increased engagement with stakeholders; and
✓ *e3* - Increased mobilization of resources of partner organizations.

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

Key Performance Indicators

The expected outcomes above demonstrate how the APT will monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2020. The following additional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be monitored and reported to the General Assembly and Management meetings of the APT:

- (KPI-1) Penetration rate of broadband in the region;
- (KPI-2) Number of reports, recommendations, regional views and proposals and other publications developed by APT work programmes;
- (KPI-3) number of collaborations or contributions made by stakeholders to APT; and
- (KPI-4) Number of participants at the events and training courses of APT

Reporting System

The implementation status of the APT Strategic Plan for 2018 – 2020 will be reported to each session of Management Committee for review and guidance. The final report on the implementation of the Plan will be provided to the next session of the General Assembly. The implementation status report will be comprised of actions undertaken by APT Work Programmes and their outcomes in comparison to each action plan stated in the Strategic Plan. It will also include achievements against the key performance indicators outlined above.

STATEMENT OF IMPACTS

This Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for the APT to successfully achieve the objectives outlined in its five strategic pillars and harnesses the APT's strengths, responds to the complexity and speed of change in telecommunication/ICT, and identifies the greatest challenges and opportunities facing its members and the measures that it will take to assist in addressing them. It also strategically positions the APT to enhance its effectiveness and global impact.

The APT Strategic Plan has been developed transparently in close collaboration with APT members. This has been achieved through the Correspondence Group on the Strategic Plan and in consulting with and inviting contributions from members. Its implementation will also feature strong accountability and transparency mechanisms with a process of regular monitoring, evaluation and review. This will allow it to remain flexible in responding to emerging issues and challenges.

The Implementation Mechanism for the plan includes key performance indicators and ensures that the APT's financial and human resources are aligned with the strategic goals and objectives and reflect a commitment to continuous improvement.

While the Plan focuses on the next three years, it will have longer term impact, including contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Agenda Goals 2030 in the Asia Pacific region and setting the APT up for long-term success.

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