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**The 21st APT Policy and Regulatory Forum (PRF-21)**

Virtual/Online Meeting, 19 - 21 July 2021

**CONCEPT NOTE**

**1. Background/Context**

The Policy and Regulatory Forum (PRF) has served as a platform for high level officials to share and exchange valuable views and experience on issues which are to our common concern, with the aim of achieving a more harmonized regulatory environment in the region. It is also a platform for the high level industry representatives to bring issues of their concerns to the attention of the regulators. For over two decades, the APT PRF has been underlining the important role of the APT in shaping key Telecommunication/ICT policies in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Strategic Plan of the APT for 2021-2023 provides guidelines for the activities of the APT. This year is the first year of the implementation period which aims to accelerate the digital transformation of the economy and society in the Asia-Pacific region by realizing the benefits of Telecommunication/ICT and coping with the challenges of rapidly evolving Telecommunication/ICT environments.

Aligned with the Strategic Plan, PRF has focused its work on the five Strategic Pillars, i.e., Connectivity, Innovation, Trust and Safety, Inclusion and Capacity Building, and Collaboration and Partnership.

The 44th Session of the Management Committee of the APT approved to organize the 21st APT Policy and Regulatory Forum (PRF-21) in 2021. Due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s PRF will be organized virtually.

Despite the vaccination rollout around the world, the COVID-19 still exerts detrimental impacts on global economies. Telecommunication/ICT has proven to be a key instrument in handling and combatting the pandemic. This can be seen by the acceleration of the Telecommunication/ ICT usage to enable other sectors. Therefore, the right Telecommunication/ICT policy and regulation together with proper economic measures are essential to continue driving economic engine and foster the recovery from COVID-19.

In the special session of PRF-21, Ministers/Vice Ministers from APT Member Administrations will share insights, experiences, lessons learned, policies being implemented in their countries with regard to combat COVID-19 pandemic and digital transformation which is an objective of the Singapore Statement adopted by the ICT Ministers of APT.

As an enabler for the coming digital society, PRF-21 will also focus on 5G in terms of connectivity which is one of the APT Strategic Plan’s pillars. One of the important aspects to deploy 5G is spectrum allocation and licensing regime. There are a number of key issues and challenges that the regulators are facing in this regard. In the special roundtable session, the Head of the Regulators will share their experiences as well as engage in dialogue to identify the challenging issues and how to enhance cooperation between regulators/policymakers to smoothen the deployment of 5G in Asia-Pacific region. In addition, PRF-21 will also arrange a business dialogue session providing a platform for industry representatives to share their views on the strategies to accelerate 5G deployment. This will offer an opportunity to discuss the challenges facing by the industry and how to best address those issues through policy and regulatory approach.

In addition, the forum features thematic sessions on ‘Development and Status of OTTs’ and ‘Driving Innovation in Digital Economy’. There will be keynote speeches on ‘[Key issues and challenges in allocation and licensing of spectrum for 5G](file:///C:\23ca191844924ea4a671b8f27cce6a7a)’ and ‘Innovation Ecosystem: how can you and your organization be innovative under the COVID-19 challenges’.

Lastly, following the discussion at the previous PRFs, PRF-21 would form an Ad-Hoc Group to review the Working Methods of the PRF and discuss the establishment of inter-sessionary electronic Working Group including its Terms of Reference. The inter-sessionary electronic Working Group will work on ICT policy and regulatory issues, which will be decided by the Plenary, in order to generate tangible deliverables from the PRF.

As suggested at the PRF-19 in 2019, there would be a back-to-back workshop (as an APT Web Dialogue) on 21 July from 13:00 to 14:00 (Bangkok time) after PRF-21 is closed.

**2. Objectives**

APT PRF provides an opportunity to share and address the key issues and concerns of APT Members as well as to facilitate intra-regional collaboration on policy and regulatory issues as required. Industry leaders and other key stakeholders also share their views on major issues that are currently facing by the sector.

The specific objectives for PRF-21 are to:

* Share experience to combat Covid-19 pandemic and how to stimulate digital transformation through this experience.
* Provide a platform for regulators to share experiences on challenging issues of 5G deployment.
* Provide a platform for industry to discuss and share information on the strategies to accelerate 5G deployment and the desirable policy and regulation that help facilitate the strategies.
* Enhance knowledge and exchange views in policy and regulatory environment in the field of innovation and OTT, inlcluding relevant ecosystem and the policy and regulatory approach towards innovation.
* Revise the Working Methods as appropriate and formulate an inter-sessionary electronic Working Group with its Terms of Reference.

**3. Expected outcomes**

This time, the meeting will be conducted as a virtual meeting due to the COVID-19. The provisional agenda and tentative programme of the PRF-21 are enclosed herewith and annexed to the concept note (See Annex A and B for more information).

Specific outcomes include but not limited to:

* Lessons on how to combat Covid-19 pandemic and how to stimulate digital transformation though this experience.
* Enhanced understanding for policymakers and regulators on the best practices of regulatory and licensing framework for 5G deployment.
* Better understanding of business perspectives on 5G, inclusing the associated challenges in deployeing 5G, and the desirable policy and regulation to address those challenges.
* Deepen the insights on innovation ecosystem and OTT, and policy and regulatory approach towards innovation.

**4. Timing**

The virtual meeting of the PRF-21 will be a 3-day event from 19 to 21 July 2021. The meeting will be organized via Zoom meeting platform from 10:30 AM – 14:45 PM (GMT+7). The third day sessions of PRF-21 will be finished by 12:45 PM (GMT+7) and followed by a back-to-back workshop (APT Web Dialogue).

**5. Participation**

All APT Members, Associate Members, Affiliate Members, International/Regional Organizations, and eligible non-members can participate in the PRF-21.

**6. Contact Information**

For any further information about PRF-21, please contact to:

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**Annex A**

**The 21st APT Policy and Regulatory Forum (PRF-21)**

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

1. Opening
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Election of Chairman of PRF
4. Outcomes of the [15th Session of the General Assembly](https://www.apt.int/2020-GA15) of the APT and the 44th Session of the Management Committee of the APT Relevant to PRF
5. Review of the Working Methods of PRF
6. Ministerial Session: “Combat COVID-19 Pandemic and Digital Transformation”
7. Regulators’ Roundtable: “Road to 5G – Challenges and Best Practices”
8. Updates on Sub-Regional Issues on Policy and Regulations
9. Business Dialogue: Conducive Policy and Regulatory Framework for 5G
10. Thematic Sessions:
    * Development and Status of OTTs
    * Driving Innovation in Digital Economy
11. Consideration of the Output Documents
12. Election of Vice-Chairmen of PRF
13. Way Forward
14. Date and Venue for PRF-22
15. Any Other Matters
16. Closing

**Annex B**

**The 21st APT Policy and Regulatory Forum (PRF-21)**

**Tentative Programme**

| TIME  (Bangkok) | PROGRAMME |
| --- | --- |
| **Day – 1** | **Monday, 19 July 2021** |
| 10:30 – 10:45  (UTC+7) | **Opening**   * Welcome Remarks by Mr. Masanori Kondo, Secretary General of APT * Opening Remarks by Mr. Wangay Dorji, Chairman of PRF   (Group Photograph) |
| 10:45 – 11:15  (UTC+7) | **Session 1**: **Plenary**   * Adoption of the Agenda * Election of Chairman of PRF * Outcomes of the [15th Session of the General Assembly](https://www.apt.int/2020-GA15) of the APT and the 44th Session of the Management Committee of the APT Relevant to PRF * Review of the Working Methods of PRF |
| 11:15 – 11:30  (UTC+7) | Coffee / Tea Break |
| 11:30 – 12:45  (UTC+7) | **Session 2 (Ministerial Session): “Combat COVID-19 Pandemic and Digital Transformation”**  *COVID-19 still casts shadow over global economy. With the lingering crisis impacting the whole world at unprecedented level, it calls for strong collaboraton and partnership across sectors at all levels to address the challenges.*  *The use of telecommunication and ICTs during the COVID-19 pandemic are examples of opportunities of digital transsformation. Effective policy and regulatory framework are required to restore growth and drive digital transformation, by ensuring connectivity, facilitating the adoption of digital technologies at all levels, and building digital skills, etc.*  *How do we leverage the strength of ICT and collaborate with other sectors and other countries as a region to combating this pandemic and beyond?*  *The session will invite Ministers/Vice Ministers from APT Member Administrations to* *share insights, experiences, lessons learned, policies being implemented in their countries, etc. with regard to combat COVID-19 pandemic and digital transformation which is an objective of the Singapore Statement adopted by the ICT Ministers of APT.*  ***Topics:***   * What are the significant experiences and lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic? * From the experiences of combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, what are the challenges, opportunities and impacts of digital transformation?   ***Speakers:***   * Honorable Ministers/Vice Ministers from Member Administrations |
| 12:45 – 13:00  (UTC+7) | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 13:00 – 14:15  (UTC+7) | **Session 3 (Regulators’ Roundtable): “Road to 5G – Challenges and Best Practices”**  *The Roundtable will invite the Head of the Regulators from APT Member Administrations. The Head of the Regulators will share their experiences as well as engage in dialogue to identify the challenging issues and how to enhance cooperation between regulators/policymakers to smoothen the deployment of 5G in Asia-Pacific region. The issues will include the policy and regulatory framework including roadmap for the deployment of 5G.*  ***Moderator: (tbd)***  ***Topics:***   * What are the significant aspects of policy and regulatory framework? * What are the issues faced in 5G spectrum pricing? * What are issues faced in 5G spectrum allocation? * What are the roadmap for 5G deployment? * What are the policies for building the ecosystem? * What are the measures taken for improving the QoS? * Q&A   ***Speakers:***   * Honorable Head of the Regulators from Member Administrations |
| 14:15 – 14:45  (UTC+7) | **Session 4: Updates on Sub-Regional Issues on Policy and Regulations**  *In this session, Vice Chairmen of the PRF from each sub-region will provide update of sub-regional issues on policy and regulation.*  ***Speakers:***   * Vice Chairmen of PRF |
| **Day – 2** | **Tuesday, 20 July 2021** |
| 10:30 – 10:50  (UTC+7) | **Session 5: Keynote Speech**   * [Key issues and challenges in allocation and licensing of spectrum for 5G](file:///C:\23ca191844924ea4a671b8f27cce6a7a) |
| 10:50 – 11:50  (UTC+7) | **Session 6 (Business Dialogue): Conducive Policy and Regulatory Framework for 5G**  *The panel session provides a platform for high level industry representatives to share their views on the challenging issues (including but not limited to spectrum pricing, spectrum allocation, taxation, deployment, ecosystem) of policy and regulatory framework for 5G in Asia-Pacific region. The session will also discuss the strategies to accelerate 5G deployment and the desirable policy and regulation that help facilitate the strategies. The discussion in this session will be a valuable input to the consideration of policy maker and regulator on the situation in the market from the industry perspectives.*  ***Moderator: (tbd)***  ***Topics:***   * What are the key challenges of policy and regulatory framework? * What are the challenges of 5G spectrum pricing? * What are the challenges of 5G spectrum allocation? * What are the challenges of building the ecosystem? * What are the challenges in 5G deployment ? * What will be the desirable policy and regulatory frmaework to address these challenges? * Q&A   ***Speakers:***   * Industry Representatives |
| 11:50 – 12:00  (UTC+7) | Coffee / Tea Break |
| 12:00 – 13:15  (UTC+7) | **Session 7: Development and Status of OTTs**  *Riding on ICT bitpipe as vertical applications and services, OTT is no stranger to digital ecosystem. They provide myriads of services to users transparently and without heavy CAPEX investment while relying on underlying ICT infrastructures. This changing ICT landscape has created imbalance in revenue and cost structure. It also raises some issues such as investment incentive and fair competition.*  *What are the current status and the development of OTT?*  *What will be the win-win solution in this ICT changing landscape? What are the role of policy and regulation in providing level playing fields for all while keeping innovation, service quality, and network quality level for the benefit of consumers?*  ***Moderator: (tbd)***  ***Topics:***   * Current status and the development of OTT : Challenges and Opportunities * Win-Win Model for OTT and Network Provider * Policy and Regulation aspect towards OTT * Q&A   ***Speakers:***   * Member Administrations * Industry Representatives |
| 13:15 – 13:25  (UTC+7) | Coffee / Tea Break |
| 13:25 – 13:45  (UTC+7) | **Session 8: Keynote Speech**  Innovation Ecosystem: how can you and your organization be innovative under the COVID-19 challenges? |
| 13:45 – 14:45  (UTC+7) | **Session 9: Driving Innovation in Digital Economy**  *Innovation is the key instrument to help the economy to leapfrog its development. Right policy and regulation that promotes innovation should provide level playing fields for players, facilitates market entry and encourage innovative new comers, drives innovation process to transform business, and creates sustainable and innovative ICT ecosystem.*  *To ensure that all players continue to invest, innovate, and enhance product and services for the benefit of consumer in this digital age, policy makers and regulators have to take proper approach toward the innovation while considering personal rights.*  *Also, well functioning competitive market should be maintained and any anti-competition practice from market dominant hindering innovative new comers shall be properly managed to build friendly environment in innovative ICT ecosystem.*  *These aspects of innovation will be discussed in this session.*  ***Moderator: (tbd)***  ***Topics:***   * Policy and regulation promoting innovative ICT ecosystem * Competition policy in innovative ICT ecosystem * Balancing service innovation with personal rights * Q&A   ***Speakers***:   * Member Administrations * Industry Representatives |
| **Day – 3** | **Wednesday, 21 July 2021** |
| 10:30 – 11:45  (UTC+7) | **Session 10: Ad-Hoc Group Discussion**   * Working Methods of the PRF * Estabishment and Terms of Reference of Intersessionary Electronic Working Group * Topics for Intersessionary Electronic Working Group |
| 11:45 – 12:00  (UTC+7) | Coffee / Tea Break |
| 12:00 – 12:30  (UTC+7) | **Session 11: Plenary**   * Consideration of the Output Documents * Election of Vice-Chairmen of PRF * Way Forward * Date and Venue for PRF-22 * Any other matters |
| 12:30 – 12:40  (UTC+7) | **Closing**   * Remarks by Secretary General of the APT * Remarks and Closing by Chairman of PRF |
|  | **Back-to-back workshop (APT Web Dialogue)** |
| 13:00 – 14:00  (UTC+7) | Topic: TBC |