

**15th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP-15)**

Port Vila, Vanuatu (Hybrid), 30 August - 1 September 2022

**CONCEPT NOTE**

1. **Background/Context**

Most of the Pacific countries share challenges and opportunities and its unique characteristics with sparsely populated islands and expansive areas consisting of many remote islands. The common challenges that the Pacific countries are sharing include international connectivity, disaster management and climate change, etc. Since the policy and regulatory issues for telecommunication and ICT development faced by the Pacific countries are unique, they need their own platform to discuss the issues.

The APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP) is a subregional platform to serve the purpose and it has become a premium event to address common challenges in Telecommunication and ICT Development issues of the Pacific countries. The 45th Session of the Management Committee of the APT approved to organize the 15th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for the Pacific (PRFP-15) in 2022.

In line with the APT's Strategic Plan for 2021-2023, PRFP-15 will focus on various relevant topics which are particularly important to the Pacific countries. Sharing knowledge, experience and best practices through PRFP-15 will contribute to the work of policymaking, design of regulations and feasible collaboration among relevant stakeholders. PRFP-15 will also provide new insights and awareness that are key to driving digital transformation of economy and society in this rapidly evolving telecommunication/ICT ecosystem.

In this context, PRFP-15 will provide a roundtable session onUpdates of Policy and Regulation in the Pacific, various thematic sessions, and a closed session for the policy makers and regulators in the Pacific countries.

In the special roundtable session of PRFP-15, Ministers/Head of Regulators from APT Members will update policy and regulation issues in their countries and share insights, experiences, lessons learned, policies being implemented with regard to telecommunication and ICTs.

Also, the forum features various thematic sessions on ‘Digital transformation: from fighting against pandemic to thriving in the post-pandemic world’, ‘Broadband connectivity for the Pacific countries’, ‘Cybersecurity: Regulatory approaches for more trusted internet’, ‘Emerging technologies: Policy Implications and Impacts on Digital transformation’, ‘Quality of Service of mobile voice and data connection’, ‘Improving Digital skills in Pacific in a rapid changing ICT environment’, and ‘Improving Disaster management in the Pacific’.

In addition, the PRFP-15 can provide a closed session for policymakers and regulators, so candid views and information on sensitive ICT issues in the Pacific can be freely exchanged and discussed.

1. **Objectives**

The specific objectives for PRFP-15 are to:

* Update and discuss policy and regulation trends of the Pacific countries
* Discuss Digital Transformation initiatives taken or can be taken by Members to fight against pandemic and to prepare post-COVID-19 era.
* Share the information on the latest broadband connectivity issue in the Pacific region including its policy and regulatory aspect.
* Discuss regulatory approaches for more trusted internet to prevent illegal contents and disinformation on the internet
* Update on the current status and development of emerging technologies and share policy and regulatory implications
* Discuss the technical aspect and policy/regulatory aspects to address the challenges and way forward regarding QoS in the context of telecommunication services.
* Discuss on the challenges to improve Digital skills in Pacific Island countries, and lessons learned from the initiatives for improving Digital skills
* Update on disaster management technology and project, share the experience of Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation, and Recovery Process through ICT and discuss policy and regulation relevant to disaster management
* Have a closed session among policy makers and regulators in Pacific countries to share and discuss other ICT issues of common concern to the Pacific.

1. **Expected outcomes**

The meeting will be conducted as a hybrid meeting. The provisional agenda and tentative programme of the PRFP-15 are enclosed herewith and annexed to the concept note (See Annex A and B for more information).

Specific outcomes include but not limited to:

* Identified key policy and regulatory concerns of Member countries in the Pacific.
* Enhanced awareness of policymakers and regulators on the latest issues in telecommunication and ICTs
* Enhanced knowledge on various topics of thematic sessions on Digital transformation, Connectivity, Cybersecurity, Emerging Technologies, QoS, Digital skills, and Disaster Management.
* Identified challenges of the policy makers and regulators on various topics of thematic sessions on Digital transformation, Connectivity, Cybersecurity, Emerging Technologies, QoS, Digital skills, and Disaster Management.
* Explore possible solutions and cooperation on various topics of thematic sessions on Digital transformation, Connectivity, Cybersecurity, Emerging Technologies, QoS, Digital skills, and Disaster Management.
* Closed discussion among policymakers and regulators for in-depth understanding on sensitive topics.

1. **Timing**

The hybrid meeting of the PRFP-15 will be a 3-day event from 30 August to 1 September 2022. The meeting will be organised in person at Vanuatu and via Zoom meeting platform from 9:00 AM – 17:00 PM (UTC+11). The third day sessions of PRFP-15 will be finished by 15:15 hrs (UTC+11).

1. **Participation**

All APT Members, Associate Members, Affiliate Members, International/Regional Organizations, and eligible non-members can participate in the PRFP-15.

Online participants will be provided with Zoom meeting link, meeting ID and password. Online participants shall logon to meeting URL at the designated time and date. In order to have proper audio experience during the meeting, participants should be equipped with headset containing speakers and microphone. Please follow the guidelines in attending online meeting provided in an Introduction to APT Zoom meeting document.

1. **Contact persons:**

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| --- | --- |
| **APT Secretariat** | **Local Secretariat** |
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**Annex A**

**15th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP-15)**

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

1. Opening
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Outcomes of the 45th Session of the Management Committee of the APT relevant to PRFP
4. Working Methods of PRFP
5. Roundtable onUpdates of Policy and Regulation in the Pacific
6. Thematic Sessions:
   1. Digital transformation: from fighting against pandemic to thriving in the post-pandemic world
   2. Broadband connectivity for the Pacific countries
   3. Cybersecurity: Regulatory approaches for more trusted internet
   4. Emerging technologies: Policy Implications and Impacts on Digital transformation
   5. Quality of Service of mobile voice and data connection
   6. Improving Digital skills in Pacific in a rapid changing ICT environment
   7. Improving Disaster management in the Pacific
7. Closed Session for Policymakers and Regulators
8. Date and Venue for PRFP-16
9. Any other matters
10. Closing

**Annex B**

**15th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP-15)**

Port Vila, Vanuatu (hybrid), 30 August - 1 September 2022

**Tentative Programme**

| TIME | PROGRAMME |
| --- | --- |
| **Day – 1**  (UTC+11) | **Tuesday, 30 August 2022** |
| 08:30 - 09:30 | **Registration** |
| 09:30 – 10:00 | **Opening**   * Welcome Remarks – Mr. Masanori Kondo, Secretary General, APT * Opening Remarks – Mr. John Jack, Chairman of PRFP * Inaugural Address – (TBD) * Presentation of token of appreciation   (Group Photograph) |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | **Session 1** ***– Plenary***   * Adoption of Agenda * Outcomes of the 45th Session of the Management Committee of the APT relevant to PRFP * Review of the Working Methods of PRFP |
| 11:00 - 12:15 | **Session 2 :** ***(Ministers and Regulators Session)* *Roundtable on Updates of Policy and Regulation in the Pacific***  *In many sectors, the rapid development of telecommunication and ICTs has provided opportunities and challenges to the ICT policymakers and regulators at the same time. Effective cross sectoral policy and regulatory framework will accelerate the development of ICT services and industry, which will in turn contribute to socio-economic growth, innovation and better delivery of public services.*  *This Roundtable session will invite Ministers or Regulators in the Pacific to share insights, experiences, lessons learned, initiatives taken with regard to telecommunication and ICTs policy and regulation in their countries.*  ***Moderator: (tbd)***  ***Topics:***   * Recent Development and Achievement of Policy and Regulation in the Pacific * Emerging Challenges in Policy and Regulation * Insights, experiences, lessons learned, initiatives taken with regard to telecommunication and ICTs policy and regulation   ***Panelists:***   * Honorable Ministers * Heads of ICT Regulators |
| 12:15 – 14:00 | Lunch Break |
| 14:00 – 15:15 | **Session 3 *: Digital Transformation : from fighting against pandemic to thriving in the post-pandemic world***  *COVID-19 still casts shadow over Pacific region. Recently, the COVID-19 infection has increased sharply across Pacific Island countries contrary to other areas of the world. The use of telecommunication and ICTs during the COVID-19 pandemic are examples of opportunities of digital transformation. During the pandemic, many countries use telecommunication and ICTs for maintaining social connections, providing needed services, and virtual education, etc.*  *Moving to the post-pandemic world, this experience of success accelerates the digital transformation across all sectors of our society. The impact of pandemic strengthens the demand for contactless online services. The demand for faster and more convenient one stop service has greatly increased the need for data sharing among government agencies and even with private companies. Moreover, a rapid development of AI/Big data technologies urges government and private companies to provide individualized/customized services.*  *This session will share insights, experiences, lessons learned, policies being implemented with regard to combat COVID-19 pandemic and accelerating digital transformation which is needed in post-pandemic world.*  ***Moderator: (tbd)***  ***Topics :***   * Use cases of telecommunication and ICTs to fight against pandemic * Lessons learned and policy insights with regard to combating pandemic * How to innovate digital government in the age of pandemic and AI/Big Data? * Success stories of initiatives for public data sharing between government agencies and to the public   ***Speakers:***   * Member Administrations * International Organizations * Industry Representatives |
| 15:15 – 15:30 | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 15:30 – 16:45 | **Session 4 :** ***Broadband Connectivity for the Pacific countries***  *Large areas of Pacific countries are still underserved or unserved in terms of connectivity. Broadband connectivity is the key to the development in the Pacific. Broadband connectivity is being built through fiber optics, international submarine and terrestrial cables, satellites, mobile and fixed networks, etc. There are various aspects in advancing broadband networks in order to build inclusive telecommunication/ICT infrastructures.*  *This session will discuss on the challenges to improve Broadband connectivity in Pacific Island countries, and updates from the initiatives for improving connectivity. The session also shares the best practices, challenges and opportunities regarding Universal Service Funds.*  ***Moderator: (tbd)***  ***Topics:***   * Updates on ICT policy and regulation on Broadband Connectivity * Recent updates on Submarine cable projects in the Pacific region * Information sharing about various satellite technologies; Medium Earth Orbit (MEO), Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Satellites Communications, Geosynchronous Earth Orbit (GEO), etc. * Challenges and opportunities from the Universal Service Funds initiative   ***Speakers:***   * Member Administrations * International Organizations * Industry Representatives |
| **Day - 2** | **Wednesday, 31 August 2022** |
| 9:00 - 10:15 | **Session 5 : Cybersecurity: Regulatory approaches for more trusted internet**  *The rapid and widespread development of online services has been at the heart of the digital changes that impact our lives. Especially, online platforms have created significant benefits for consumers and innovation, and helped global market become more efficient. While there is a broad consensus on the benefits of this transformation, the problems arising have numerous consequences for our society and economy.*  *For more trusted internet, a core concern is the trade and exchange of illegal goods, services and content online. Online services are also being misused by manipulative algorithmic systems to amplify the spread of disinformation, and for other harmful purposes. These challenges and the way platforms address them have a significant impact on fundamental rights online. So, many countries such as EU, US, Japan, Korea, etc. are trying to regulate platforms.*  *This session will discuss recent global trends to ensure more trusted Internet by regulating global online platforms and share ideas on its impact/prospect with regard to the rights of all users of internet services.*  ***Moderator: (tbd)***  ***Topics :***   * What are the impacts/prospect of the new Digital Services Act by EU? * What are the impacts/prospect of recent platform regulation by US, Korea, Japan, etc.? * Initiatives to be taken to ensure more trusted internet in the age of powerful online platform   ***Speakers:***   * Member Administrations * Industry Representatives |
| 10:15 – 10:45 | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 10:45 - 12:00 | **Session 6 :** ***Emerging technologies: Policy Implications and Impacts on digital transformation***  *New and emerging technologies are growing at an unprecedented pace which are affecting existing policy and regulation frameworks. As a result of such a dynamic ecosystem, government and regulators are facing difficulties towards designing and addressing challenges to cope with technological progress and its impact.*  *The session will address the challenges and approaches of the policy makers and regulators in terms of emerging technologies and will recommend a possible way forward.*  ***Moderator: (tbd)***  ***Topics:***   * Sharing information and recent trends on emerging technologies such as AI/Big data, Block chain, Digital twin, etc. * How emerging technologies affect policy and regulation framework * Sharing challenges, experiences, and best practices with regard to the emerging technologies   ***Speakers:***   * Member Administrations * Industry Representatives |
| 12:00 – 14:00 | Lunch Break |
| 14:00 – 15:15 | **Session 7 :**   ***Quality of Service of mobile voice and data connection***  *One of the key factors of telecommunication services is Quality of Service (QoS).   In the Pacific region, small islands with no domestic submarine cables would require microwave radio transmission, satellite or mobile which are not so stable as cables. Therefore, ensuring the QoS of telecommunication services in the Pacific countries is quite challenging but essential to provide reliable services.*  *The session will discuss the technical aspect and policy/regulatory aspects to address the challenges and way forward regarding QoS in the context of telecommunication environment of the Pacific countries.*  ***Moderator: (tbd)***    ***Topics:***  Challenges faced byservice providers in the Pacific countries in terms of QoS   * Role of policy makers and regulators in ensuring rollout of quality telecommunication services * What are the measures taken for improving the QoS?   ***Speakers:***   * Member Administrations * Industry Representatives |
| 15:15 – 15:45 | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 15:45 – 17:00 | **Session 8 :** ***Closed Session for Policy Makers and Regulators***  *This session is an exclusive session for exchanging candid views and information amongst Policy Makers and Regulators on issues around ICT in the Pacific countries. The discussion topics will be decided by the participating countries.*  *Moderator:* ***Chairman of PRFP*** |
| **Day - 3** | **Thursday, 1 September 2022** |
| 9:00 - 10:15 | **Session 9 :**  ***Improving Digital skills in Pacific in a rapid changing ICT environment***  *In Pacific region, improving Digital skills has been a cross-cutting issue to reach targets of poverty reduction and economic growth. Also, it is critical for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs). The rapid pace of technological changes in the ICT sector demands a matching pace in the development of the Digital skills and competencies required to fully leverage the benefits of these new technologies.*  *This session will discuss on the challenges to improve Digital skills in Pacific Island countries, and lessons learned from the initiatives for improving Digital skills. We will also explore the correlation between youth and ICT in the aspect of utilizing the power of youth in the ICT sector.*  ***Moderator: (tbd)***  ***Topics:***   * Challenges to improve Digital skills in Pacific Island countries * Lesson learned from the initiatives for improving Digital skills * Best practices in ICT capacity building across the world * Initiatives to be taken to utilize the power of youth in the ICT sector   ***Speakers:***   * Member Administrations * Industry Representatives |
| 10:15 – 10:45 | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 10:45 - 12:00 | **Session 10 : *Improving Disaster Management in the Pacific***  *Recently, Pacific region has experienced a lot of disasters such as the volcanic eruption in Tonga, etc. Managing disasters well in the Pacific is becoming more and more important for stable development of society and wellness of citizens.*  *This session provides updates of policies and strategies for reliable and resilient telecommunication/ICT infrastructure and services to secure their availability during disasters, and to support all phases of disaster management, including dissemination of information for public safety, and enabling disaster communication and resource mobilization during disaster-relief effort and recovery efforts in the Pacific.*  ***Moderator: (tbd)***  ***Topics:***   * Policies and strategies for sustainable, reliable and resilient telecommunication/ICT infrastructure and services during natural disasters * Challenges related to disaster preparedness, risk reduction and mitigation * New ICT technologies and their roles in disaster management * Sharing of information, best practices and ICT based solutions   ***Speakers:***   * Member Administration * Industry representatives |
| 12:00 – 14:00 | Lunch Break |
| 14:00 – 15:15 | **Session 11: *Plenary and Closing***  *Chairman*: ***Mr. John Jack, Chairman of PRFP***  ***Topics:***   * Way Forward (Future Outlook and potential cooperative issues) * Nomination of Chair and Vice-Chairs of PRFP * Date and Venue of PRFP-16 * Any other matters   Closing   * Remarks by Secretary General, APT * Remarks by Host * Remarks and closing by *Chairman of PRFP* |