



## **THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY FOR 2021-2023**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) has played a vital role in development of telecommunication/ICT in the past four decades. During the period 2018-2020, the APT has focused on its work within the five Strategic Pillars that implement the objectives outlined in its Constitution and the priority areas established in the Brunei Darussalam Statement of the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministers on “Building Smart Digital Economy through ICT”.

APT has worked with members as a community in developing the digital infrastructure, enabling conducive environments and harnessing the benefits of new technologies, promoting security and resilience through ICT, promoting inclusiveness and enhancing expertise, and solidifying strategic cooperation with stakeholders.

APT has also authored technical reports, guidelines and recommendations in the areas of radio-communication and standardization. In addition, APT provides platforms for collaboration and cooperation among its members, including assistance to members in crafting regional views for international fora, especially ITU conferences and assemblies.

In order to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the APT, the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting was held in Singapore on 25-26 June 2019. The Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting recognized that there remain opportunities for improvement in telecommunication/ICT development in the Asia-Pacific region to support sustainable development and to harness the benefits of the digital economy, including for APT Members to further strengthen their telecommunication/ICT connectivity and access, as well as to promote innovative telecommunication/ICT services. The meeting also resolved to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to provide affordable, available, accessible and sustainable telecommunication/ICT connectivity coupled with a safe and trusted environment that enables businesses to thrive and innovate in the digital economy and to provide all citizens with the skills and knowledge to harness the benefits of the digital future.

The vision was realised through the Singapore Statement on “Co-creating a connected digital future in the Asia-Pacific” which set out five Strategic Goals, namely, Digital Transformation; Digital Innovation; Digital Community; Digital Trust; and Digital Capacity Building and Partnership. This Statement is the basis of the Strategic Plan of the APT for 2021-2023 which will lead the Asia-Pacific region towards a co-created and connected digital future.

This Strategic Plan of the APT for 2021-2023 adopted at the 15th Session of the General Assembly will serve as the guideline for APT’s activities for the period 2021-2023.

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 plan’s objectives and to deliver its expected outcomes in the next three-year period.

APT has worked with members on promoting telecommunication/ICT and global interconnectedness in the region, which have great potential to accelerate progress in society, to bridge the digital divide and to develop digital societies. Thus, telecommunication/ICT has contributed to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and it can be observed that the role and importance of telecommunication/ICT is increasing in the global crisis engendered by the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. APT will continue to work with members to harness the benefit of telecommunication/ICT to all citizens in the Asia-Pacific region.

## OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overarching objective of the Strategic Plan of the APT for 2021-2023 is 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.

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

- a. **Connectivity:** Enhancing access and efficiency of digital infrastructure.
- b. **Innovation:** Enabling conducive environments and harnessing the benefits of telecommunication/ICT.
- c. **Trust and Safety:** Ensuring secure cyberspace, security and resilience through telecommunication/ICT.
- d. **Inclusion and Capacity Building:** Promoting inclusiveness and enhancing digital skills and literacy.
- e. **Collaboration and Partnership:** Solidifying strategic collaboration with stakeholders.

The Strategic Pillars provide focus and clarity for the APT, and the Action Plans and Assessment of the Implementation 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:** Enhancing access and efficiency of digital infrastructure

Taking into account the need to bridge the digital divide within the Asia-Pacific region, APT will assist members to increase broadband penetration with an emphasis on reaching unserved and underserved populations<sup>1</sup> and to people of vulnerable groups<sup>2</sup> focusing on affordability and quality of service and on improving speed, cost management of service, and coverage. APT will also assist members with improving spectrum management practices to mitigate digital infrastructure constraints relating to, and optimize, the use of this scarce resource.

<sup>1</sup> Understood to refer to both unserved and underserved populations within APT countries and to Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) within the APT region.

<sup>2</sup> Understood to refer to people with special needs, including children, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

**Objective a.1: To increase access to affordable, sustainable and resilient telecommunication/ ICT and broadband infrastructure to unserved and underserved areas<sup>1</sup>, APT will:**

- a.1.1** Support to develop or update the national broadband plan of the members with special emphasis on unserved and underserved populations<sup>1</sup> and people of vulnerable groups<sup>2</sup> considering the importance of the development of fair, predictable, and transparent policy and regulatory environments that promote sustainable investment, productivity, competition, consumer safeguards and quality of service(QoS)/experience(QoE);
- a.1.2** Assist to develop and promote advanced and high quality broadband connectivity through fiber optics, international submarine and terrestrial cables, satellites, mobile and fixed networks, and so forth taking into account the aspect of network reliability, security, resiliency, sustainability and future readiness and encourage green technology solutions for the development of an inclusive telecommunication/ICT infrastructure; and
- a.1.3** Provide a platform to discuss and share best practices, legislation, policies, regulations, guidelines, and regional cooperation and initiatives to increase affordable and seamless broadband connectivity in the region, especially for developing countries, in particular for LLDCs and SIDS.

**Objective a.2: To improve the policies, regulations and measures for spectrum, which is a critical resource for delivering connectivity, APT will:**

- a.2.1** Assist in ensuring fair, predictable and transparent policy and regulation to access spectrum resources effectively that enable the use of mobile and fixed wireless and satellite technologies to enhance connectivity;
- a.2.2** Assist to ensure the availability of sufficient and harmonized spectrum bands for the adoption of IMT-2020 (5G) and other wireless technologies while recognizing the continued importance of 3G and 4G to connect people and businesses in some areas of the APT region, where necessary;
- a.2.3** Provide support in assessing the spectrum management practices of members including spectrum sharing, refarming, licensing, pricing, valuation, monitoring and protection, developing spectrum roadmap and action plans for the development of spectrum management infrastructure, procedures and tools; and
- a.2.4** Encourage and promote collaboration and cross-border coordination among members for improving spectrum management practices, including regional and sub-regional harmonization and efficient utilization of spectrum for innovative usage.

***Expected outcomes:***

- ✓ a1 - Increased penetration of broadband with improved quality of service/experience in the region; and
- ✓ a2 - Improved spectrum management practices, including timely availability of spectrum according to market demand.

**b. INNOVATION: Enabling conducive environments and harnessing the benefits of telecommunication/ICT**

APT will continue its efforts to foster the development and adoption of the latest innovative telecommunication/ICT. Furthermore, APT will work with all members to develop policy and regulatory environments that enable them to effectively harness the benefits of telecommunication/ ICT innovation as an enabler in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Objective b.1: To foster the development and adoption of new and emerging telecommunication/ICT and appropriate international standards, APT will:**

- b.1.1** Encourage the development of emerging telecommunication/ICT, including, but not limited to, Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support the digital transformation of the economy and society and to equip the members for the advent of the new industrial revolution;
- b.1.2** Assist in the development of enabling policy and regulatory environments that encourage and leverage innovation and investment in new and emerging telecommunication/ICT, including the new ecosystem brought by IMT-2020 (5G) to foster an open and competitive economy;
- b.1.3** Provide assistance in adopting international standards by providing relevant guidelines, implementation specifications, compatibility and interoperability reports and best practices;
- b.1.4** Support to bridge the innovative gap between LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, developing countries and developed countries in the region; and
- b.1.5** Provide platforms to promote collaborative innovation and technology development and to share the knowledge of and trends in relation to emerging telecommunication/ICT and share best practice for the effective use of emerging telecommunication/ICT.

**Objective b.2: To harness the benefits of telecommunication/ICT and enhance the use of telecommunication/ICT as an enabler, APT will:**

- b.2.1** Provide assistance in the development of innovative telecommunication/ICT services and applications by providing policy and regulatory guidelines, technical assistances and recommendations and promote best practice;
- b.2.2** Promote the development of national digital government policies, strategies, practices and activities, in collaboration with all relevant sectors, in order to enhance the accessibility and delivery of e-services to citizens;
- b.2.3** Promote the development, interoperability and adoption of platforms and enablers to accelerate greater take-up of digital technologies and services by governments, businesses and citizens in building more connected and inclusive digital economy;

- b.2.4** Promote policies and initiatives to bolster and encourage investment in telecommunication/ICT-centric innovation, entrepreneurship and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by supporting start-ups and entrepreneurs, facilitating access to public platforms and public data as well as facilitating networking and scaling up among local and regional stakeholders; and
- b.2.5** Support to work with other sectors, upon request, such as agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, health, education, creative industry, etc. in understanding the opportunities that telecommunication/ICT-centric products and services can provide these sectors with respect to improving efficiencies, achieving sustainability and alleviating inherent constraints for inclusive development.

***Expected outcomes:***

- ✓ *b1* - Improved 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 telecommunication/ICT and progress toward the SDGs.

**c. TRUST AND SAFETY: Ensuring secure cyberspace, security and resilience through telecommunication/ICT**

Recognizing the vulnerability of citizens and members to cyberbullying, malicious cyber activities and natural disasters, APT will assist them to develop and maintain secure, trusted and resilient telecommunication/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 telecommunication/ ICT networks and services and to enhance confidence in the use of telecommunication/ ICT, APT will:**

- c.1.1** Support to strengthen the human and institutional capacity especially for technical skills to respond to the threats in cyberspace or to critical information infrastructures;
- c.1.2** Support to strengthen the human and institutional capacity to develop and implement national laws, policies and measures in order to enhance cybersecurity vigilance and foster a trusted and secure cyberspace in both public and private sectors;
- c.1.3** Strengthen cooperation and collaboration among stakeholders through, enhancing awareness, strengthening capacity building and sharing of information, best practices, legislative frameworks, national initiatives and policies and experiences in operating national/regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) / and Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) and promoting cooperation in the development of international standards on cybersecurity;
- c.1.4** Promote the development of policies and regulations on the protection of data privacy and the development of regulatory environments, where required, to facilitate the free and secure flow of information in the region while recognizing existing international

and national frameworks for data privacy and legitimate public policy considerations;  
and

- c.1.5** Promote and enhance policies, regulations and strategies and support initiatives to promote the online safety and well-being of citizens, including in the area of child protection, with special considerations given to gender equality and to citizens who may be particularly vulnerable and to address issues such as cyberbullying and the dissemination of inappropriate, misleading or illegal content through strengthening international cooperation.

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

- c.2.1** Assist to develop and promote national telecommunication/ICT policies and strategies for sustainable, reliable and resilient telecommunication/ICT infrastructure and services to secure their availability and to support all phases of disaster management;
- c.2.2** Provide support in establishing telecommunication/ICT-based solutions to assist with disaster preparedness, risk reduction and response to crisis management (such as COVID-19 outbreak, and/or natural disasters), including wireless and satellite-based technologies; and
- c.2.3** Strengthen the collaboration and cooperation among members, key institutions and industry players and stakeholders to mitigate and manage risk in crisis management, including the timely sharing of information, best practices and any telecommunication/ICT based solutions.

***Expected outcomes:***

- ✓ *c1* - Improved trust and confidence in adoption and take up of key new and emerging telecommunication/ICT and implementation of effective policies that support telecommunication/ICT promotion and address telecommunication/ICT security threats; and
- ✓ *c2* - Increased use of telecommunication/ICT based solutions and collaboration among members in addressing challenges related to disaster preparedness, crisis management, risk reduction, mitigation and recovery.

**d. INCLUSION AND CAPACITY BUILDING: Promoting inclusiveness and enhancing digital skills and literacy**

APT will make telecommunication/ICT accessible to everyone in the region, including among unserved and underserved populations<sup>1</sup> and geographical regions and people from vulnerable groups<sup>2</sup>, and to embrace diversity. APT will continue its efforts to strengthen the human and institutional capacity of its members, particularly developing and least developed countries. Furthermore, APT would work with its members to enrich the digital skills and literacy of the citizens to leverage the benefits of telecommunication/ICT.

**Objective d.1: To enhance access to Telecommunication/ICT services to all citizens, APT will:**

- d.1.1* Promote the development of national digital inclusion policies, skills, strategies, practices and activities, and share experiences and best practices including new initiatives for digital financial inclusion;
- d.1.2* Assist to develop and implement strategies to make telecommunication/ICT more accessible, affordable and usable for all citizens, especially for people of vulnerable groups<sup>2</sup>; and
- d.1.3* Assist to promote the development of telecommunication/ICT-centric content and applications in local and ethnic languages and contexts to facilitate active participation by all citizens, especially people of vulnerable groups<sup>2</sup>, to achieve full economic, social and digital inclusion.

**Objective d.2: To continue to enhance the awareness and telecommunication/ICT capacity building initiatives to support members to improve the digital skills and literacy, APT will:**

- d.2.1* Support in developing policies and initiatives to promote and facilitate enhancing digital skills and literacy for their citizens;
- d.2.2* Assist to enhance and expand human and institutional capacity, including technical and creative talents and digital skills in order to harness the benefits of telecommunication/ICT and keep abreast of the latest trends;
- d.2.3* Continue to innovate capacity building initiatives to better meet the various needs of members and address the needs of training in cross-cutting fields for which telecommunication/ICT can be applied;
- d.2.4* Assist to enhance the awareness and institutional capacity to address policy and regulatory challenges through Expert missions; and
- d.2.5* Provide a platform to promote collaboration among telecommunication/ICT experts, researchers, academia, engineers and technical experts through exchange of experiences and knowledge sharing.

***Expected outcomes:***

- ✓ *d1* - Enhanced access to Telecommunication/ICT services to all citizens; and
- ✓ *d2* - Enhanced digital skills and literacy of citizens to harness the benefit of telecommunication/ICT.



**e. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP: Solidifying strategic collaboration with stakeholders**

APT will take a leading role in shaping the development agenda and coordinating regional views on telecommunication/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.

**Objective e.1: To take a leading role in shaping the development agenda and coordinating regional views on telecommunication/ICT issues, APT will:**

- e.1.1* Strengthen regional cooperation among APT members in areas of common interest and provide opportunities to develop agendas focused on enhancing telecommunication/ ICT services and infrastructure in the region and take a leading role in coordinating regional views on telecommunication/ICT issues, especially in preparation for ITU World Conferences and Assemblies; and
- e.1.2* Assist members, especially developing countries, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, in their preparations for ITU World Conferences and Assemblies by sharing information on recent developments and identifying key issues of interest in the area of telecommunication/ICT.

**Objective e.2: To facilitate engagement by interested parties in order to build and leverage strategic partnerships in addressing the needs of APT members, APT will:**

- e.2.1* Provide an open consultative platform for policy makers and regulators in both telecommunication/ICT and other related sectors to address the issue of telecommunication/ICT convergence;
- e.2.2* Encourage and engage to build an inclusive multi-stakeholder ecosystem, comprising government, businesses, academia and other stakeholders (including civil society) to promote the development and deployment of telecommunication/ICT-centric products and services to foster sustainable development; and
- e.2.3* Strengthen cooperation with international, regional and multilateral organizations to maximize synergies, harness resources and minimize duplication of work.

***Expected outcomes:***

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



## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### ***Key Performance Indicators***

The expected outcomes above demonstrate how the APT will monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the APT for 2021-2023. The following additional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be monitored and reported to the session(s) of the General Assembly and the Management Committee of the APT:

- (KPI-1) ICT Statistics on the broadband connectivity and ICT development 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 and partnership activities with members and other stakeholders; and
- (KPI-4) Number of APT training courses and trainees and the number of Expert missions.

### ***Reporting System***

- The implementation status of the Strategic Plan of the APT for 2021 – 2023 will be reported to each session of the Management Committee for its review and guidance;
- 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; and
- The final report on the implementation of the Plan will be submitted to the next session of the General Assembly.

## **STATEMENT OF IMPACTS**

The Strategic Plan of the APT for 2021-2023 provides the roadmap for the APT to successfully achieve the objectives of the five Strategic Pillars and harness the strength of APT and facilitate the benefits of the digital future in the Asia-Pacific region. The Strategic Plan has been developed openly in close collaboration with APT members through the Correspondence Group for the Strategic Plan of the APT (CGSP) through consultation and contributions from APT members.

The Strategic Plan will assist the APT in moving forward to dynamically respond to the emerging needs of the Asia-Pacific region. It will guide APT members to cooperate to create opportunities and overcome challenges, including in new innovative and emerging technologies in the field of telecommunication/ICT. The implementation mechanism includes Key Performance Indicators and a reporting system which are aligned with the Strategic Pillars and objectives and reflect a commitment to continuous improvement.

The Strategic Plan is focused on a three-year plan with longer term impact to support and achieve the objectives articulated in the Singapore Statement of the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministers and the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals 2030.