



Implementation Plan to Select 10 Underserved Areas for Universal Service Infrastructure Projects in Trinidad and Tobago

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Abbreviations

BOM	bill of materials
CPE	customer premise equipment
CROP	Consumer Rights and Obligations Policy
CUSI	contractual universal service initiative
GORTT	Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
ICT	information and communications technology
ISP	Internet service provider
MDT	Ministry of Digital Transformation
OBA	outcome-based assessment
PPP	public-private partnership
SDG	sustainable development goal
THA	Tobago House of Assembly
USF	Universal Service Fund
USR	Telecommunications (Universal Service) Regulations

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) policy has recognised the socio-economic benefits to be derived from information and communications technology (ICT) and particularly the country-wide benefits of broadband access. ICT has been identified as a discrete sector and a crucial enabler to many other sectors, contributing to the diversification of the national economy and the strengthening of the country's competitiveness and viability in the global arena.

Section 18(1) of the *Telecommunications (Universal Service) Regulations (USR)* states "The Authority shall, from time to time, issue an invitation for submission of Universal Service projects, by publication in the Gazette and at least two daily newspapers in daily circulation in Trinidad and Tobago.

Section 18(2) of the USR states "An invitation under subregulation (1) shall invite concessionaires and relevant Ministries and stakeholder groups to identify proposals for projects to be considered as Contractual Universal initiatives.

Section 18(3) of the USR permits concessionaires to implement contractual universal service initiatives (CUSIs), which should focus on or consider:

1. infrastructure development within the access gaps, as identified by the Authority.
2. resolving structural deficiencies in the national telecommunications grid.
3. projects that can be implemented by similarly situated concessionaires in a given market.

Subsection 18(4) of the USR states that interested concessionaires, ministries and stakeholder groups may submit proposals within the time frame specified in the Notice.

Further, Section 18(5) states "the Authority may consider proposals submitted under subregulation (4) in conjunction with projects proposed by the Authority pursuant to its evaluation of network coverage and service capacity."

The availability, affordability and accessibility of broadband Internet is the foundation for ICT-enabled socio-economic development. Many countries have adopted this position and have begun aggressive programmes to encourage the build out of broadband networks and services.

The latest digital divide survey conducted by the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (the Authority) was the *National Digital Inclusion Survey 2021* (DIS 2021), which revealed the remaining underserved and unserved areas in Trinidad and Tobago. To advance the goals of the *Digital Transformation Strategy 2023–2026*, which is aligned with GORTT’s *Vision 2030: The National Development Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago 2016–2030*, these access gaps must be bridged, to create opportunities for all citizens to participate in the digital society and help grow the digital economy.

Considering the foregoing, the Authority proposes to leverage the Universal Service Fund (USF) to embark on CUSIs aimed at making telecommunications access infrastructure and broadband Internet services available to 10 identified underserved/unserved areas in Trinidad and Tobago, in the first instance, with the goal of fostering greater digital inclusion.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of this *Implementation Plan to Select 10 Underserved Areas for Universal Service Infrastructure Projects in Trinidad and Tobago* (the Implementation Plan) is to identify the areas and outline the implementation plan for providing them with broadband Internet access service via the USF.

1.3. Objectives

This Implementation Plan, in the first instance:

1. identifies 20 underserved communities (with respect to the availability of broadband Internet access service) in Trinidad and Tobago.
2. details the methodology utilised to select 10 communities from the 20 identified.
3. details the methodology that will be used to execute the projects via the USF.

1.4. Relevant Legislation

Sections 3(b) and (c) of the Telecommunications Act, Chap. 47:31 (the Act) prescribe that the objectives of the Act are to establish conditions for:

- (b) the facilitation of the orderly development of a telecommunications system that serves to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the national, social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the society;
- (c) promoting and protecting interests of the public by –
 - (i) promoting access to telecommunications services;
 - (ii) ensuring that services are provided to persons able to meet the financial and technical obligations in relation to those services...
 - (iv) promoting the interests of customers, purchasers and other users in respect of the quality and variety of telecommunications services and equipment supplied;

In relation to universal service, section 28 of the Act mandates the Minister with responsibility for telecommunications to establish the policy for universal service. It further provides that the Authority shall, in accordance with such a policy, determine the services, in respect of which the requirements of universal service shall apply and shall determine the manner in which such services shall be provided and funded to meet the requirements of universal service.

Section 18(1)(c) of the Act provides for the Authority to determine universal service obligations throughout Trinidad and Tobago, pursuant to section 28, and to ensure that such obligations are realised.

The USR, as amended, established the framework for the operationalisation of the USF and created the mechanisms for the implementation of mandatory and contractual universal service initiatives.

For the purposes of this project, the process established under Part V of the USR will be utilised (see Appendix I for Part V of the USR).

1.5. Other Relevant Documents

The following documents make provisions which were used in the preparation of this Implementation Plan:

1. *Universal Service Framework for Telecommunications Services in Trinidad and Tobago* (June 2012)
2. *Authorisation Framework for the Telecommunications and Broadcasting Sectors of Trinidad and Tobago* (ver. 0.5, 2005)
3. *Telecommunications (Universal Service) Regulations*
4. *National Digital Inclusion Survey 2021*

2. Project Definition

2.1. Project Scope

The aim of the project is to deploy telecommunications access infrastructure that will facilitate the provision of broadband Internet access services in the specified communities. Once the project is completed, residents in these areas, will be able to subscribe to the broadband Internet access service commonly available in well-served areas¹. The advantages of this service include full access to government online services; remote working capabilities; education platforms; online bill payment and applications; ease of access to information that can enhance individual pursuits; entertainment opportunities; and other social benefits.

The tenders will be evaluated which forms part of a request for proposals (RFP) process, in accordance with the USR. The USF subsidises the uneconomic cost of the deployment of broadband Internet access infrastructure and service to the prescribed communities.

An initial step of this project involved a needs assessment, which informed the overall scope of the project and included:

¹ A well-served area is one that is afforded access to a wide range of broadband packages from Internet service providers.

1. the solicitation of project proposals for CUSIs.
2. stakeholder identification and engagement.
3. analysis and identification of suitable geographic areas without access.

Other activities within the project scope will include the following:

1. Selection of the service provider(s):
 - a) Creation of an RFP to submit to qualified service providers
 - b) Issuance of the RFP
 - c) Conduct of a reverse auction (if more than one bid is submitted via the RFP process), followed by the award of the contract to the winning bidder(s)
2. Project management and monitoring:
 - a) Review of project reports from service provider(s) on the progress of the project(s)
 - b) Ensure that implementation is aligned with the submitted bid(s)
3. Project evaluation:
 - a) Collection of data to determine project effectiveness, e.g., digital inclusion survey.

2.2. Assumptions

The successful implementation of this project will depend on the Authority gaining the full cooperation of the relevant stakeholders. The following are some assumptions, upon which such success depends:

1. The deployment of broadband Internet access infrastructure is technically feasible.
2. The eligible service providers are interested in providing broadband Internet access services to the identified areas.
3. Timely approval of the plan by the Authority's Universal Service Committee and Board
4. Timely approval of the proposal by the Authority's line Minister

5. Full support and assistance from the Authority's line Ministry with the implementation of the project
6. The project costs are within the limits afforded by the available funds.
7. Timely approvals from other government agencies, to permit the deployment of infrastructure in the identified areas
8. Available foreign exchange to fund the deployment of infrastructure

2.3. Critical Factors for Success

The successful implementation of this project rests on the factors listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Critical factors for achieving project objectives

Objectives	Critical Factors for Success	Key Performance Indicators
Select 10 underserved communities	i. Ministerial approval of the identified locations	Duration for ministerial approval
Reduce the gap in availability of broadband Internet access in the identified communities	i. Interest by service providers in accessing the USF via a reverse auction process to implement network infrastructure in the identified communities ii. Approvals by the relevant agencies, e.g., the Ministry of Works and Transport, for whatever necessary infrastructure works must be undertaken in the identified communities iii. Access to the necessary foreign exchange by service providers to procure the requisite network equipment and supply chain delays iv. Acceptance of the necessary infrastructure works and availability of new broadband Internet services by the residents in the identified communities	Number of participants in the reverse auction process, if applicable, by qualified service providers ² Number of approvals for the necessary infrastructure works. Foreign exchange accessed and the delivery of equipment and materials on schedule Availability of training on digital skills and customer uptake of service

² In cases where there is no voluntary participation, the Authority can mandate a suitable service provider to implement the project.

3. Strategy for Implementation

3.1. Key Stakeholders

The engagement and involvement of key stakeholders will be critical to the success of this initiative. The key stakeholders identified for this initiative are the Ministry of Digital Transformation (MDT), on behalf of the GORTT, the Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT), the Authority and the national domestic fixed concessionaires who currently operate as fixed Internet service providers (ISPs), the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and the regional corporations of the specific municipalities.

Identification of stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and their purpose of engagement and expected contribution, will also be critical to the successful completion of the project. These roles and responsibilities are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Stakeholder roles and responsibilities

Stakeholder	Role	Responsibilities
Ministry of Digital Transformation (on behalf of GORTT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Policy direction ii. Facilitation of engagement with other government ministries and agencies, in support of the Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Approval of this Implementation Plan ii. Assistance to the Authority, where required
Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. CUSI coordinator ii. Coordination with other government ministries and agencies, with support from the MDT iii. Coordination with other stakeholders to facilitate timely approvals for infrastructure deployment iv. Fund administrator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop the implementation plan to execute the CUSI ii. Liaise with relevant concessionaires to implement the CUSI iii. Manage initiative under the <i>Universal Service Governance Framework</i> established by the Authority (see Appendix IV)

Stakeholder	Role	Responsibilities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Recommend target locations for the project and seek approval v. Define the parameters of the target locations and service areas. vi. Issue the RFP to fixed concessionaires. vii. Evaluate the respective bids from the RFP and choose the best bidder(s) in accordance with the USR viii. Facilitate communication with, and timely approval from, agencies that may be needed, to allow for infrastructure deployment, based on escalations from ISP(s) ix. Manage the disbursement of the USF based on targeted outcomes. x. Ensure that quality of service targets are met. xi. Conduct post audit of project implementation and identify any deficiencies to be addressed
National public domestic fixed concessionaires who currently operate as fixed ISPs	Telecommunications service provider(s) with contractual universal service obligation who was/were awarded the contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Installation of infrastructure to provide broadband Internet service to the 10 identified communities, in accordance with the scope of the initiative.

Stakeholder	Role	Responsibilities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Provision of broadband Internet access service to the 10 identified communities, in accordance with the requirements and quality of service parameters, as specified by the Authority. iii. Obtaining the necessary permits and approvals from other government agencies in order to deploy infrastructure
Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Providing pole usage for aerial fibre ii. Providing electrical supply when needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. ISP(s) may need to rent poles to run aerial fibre along roadways to provide the service ii. Timely provision of power supply when requested
Trinidad and Tobago Police Service	Management of road traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Granting permission to manage road traffic in cases where infrastructure work will obstruct traffic flow
Regional corporations of the varying municipalities	Giving consent in areas that are under their jurisdiction for infrastructure deployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Giving consent, where necessary, to allow ISP(s) to deploy infrastructure, e.g., the planting of poles

3.2. Project Implementation

The project shall employ a specified implementation approach, utilising a project organisational structure in accordance with the *Universal Service Framework for Telecommunications Services in Trinidad and Tobago* (June 2012), adhere to a tender process and eligibility criteria as prescribed in the USR and use a project management methodology for implementation.

3.2.1. Implementation Approach

The Authority is required to conduct a reverse auction for the build out of infrastructure and the provision of services to identified communities in Trinidad and Tobago. The winning bidder(s) will be the service provider(s) who satisfy/satisfies the criteria for the project at the least (USF-subsidised) cost. Service providers will be allowed to participate in some or all the identified communities within the RFP.

Key elements of the approach are:

1. preparation of an RFP for eligible service provider(s) to build out the infrastructure, and provide broadband Internet access service.
2. confirmation that the geographical footprint being served by the solution is aligned to the specifications provided by the Authority.
3. indication of the broadband Internet access speed that must be supported, in conformance with the RFP specifications, at a minimum.

The Authority also recommends that wired access infrastructure, preferably fibre or hybrid fibre coaxial access networks, be utilised as a first choice for these areas. However, the Authority will entertain hybrid wireless/wired infrastructure proposals, should this be a better solution for the particular area and terrain.

3.2.1.1 Proposed Organisation Structure for the Project

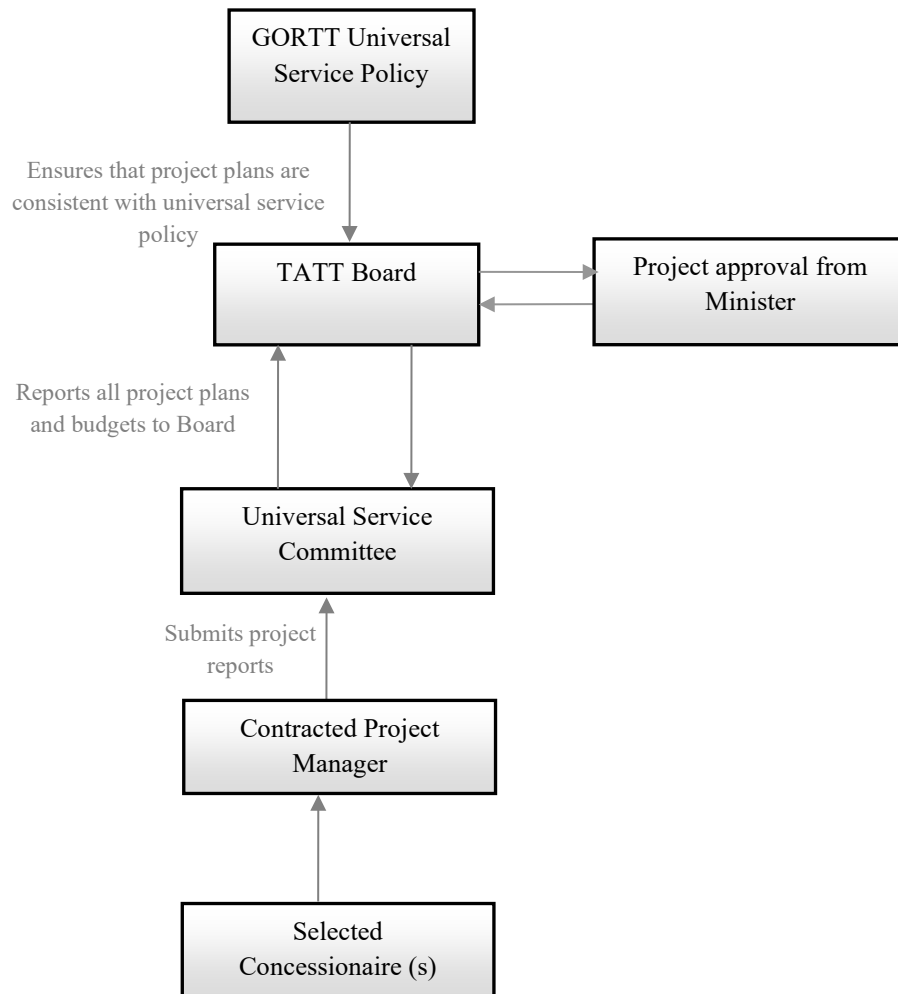


Figure 1: Proposed organisation structure for the project

3.2.2. Eligibility Criteria

These criteria refer to the concessionaries that are eligible to participate in the RFP process and reverse auction, if required, to effectively provide the services intended to bridge the access gaps in broadband Internet service in the relevant communities.

In accordance with section 19 (3) of the USR, “Only a concessionaire authorized to provide the service or services that comprise a Universal Service initiative may submit a bid under sub-regulation (1) to be granted funding to implement the Universal Service initiative.”

3.2.3. Procurement Process

The procurement process will involve an RFP process, followed by a reverse auction, if required. The service provider(s) that meets the requirements for coverage and broadband Internet access speed at the least subsidised cost will be awarded the contract.

The provider(s) must include the following as part of their proposal:

1. Confirmation that the geographical footprint being served by the solution is aligned to the specified area identified by the Authority.
2. A minimum of 10 Mbps download speed paired with 5 Mbps upload speed provided 100% of the time, and packages of at least 100 Mbps download paired with 25 Mbps upload speeds available to each customer on request.
3. Details of the technical design in providing broadband Internet access service to the targeted areas. The recommended solution must clearly indicate the technology to be utilised.
4. Milestones for the project implementation, based on the duration of activity and respective achievements.

Additional requirements related to quality and customer service standards, as determined by the Authority, are as follows:

1. The quality of service experience in these communities should be similar to that of any other community already provided with such service.
2. Service outages and other customer issues experienced in these communities are to be handled in the same manner and with the same urgency as in any other area in Trinidad and Tobago provided with such services.

3. The successful ISP will be expected to treat customers in these communities in the same manner as other customers on their network are treated. Customers will be billed as per standard practice.

3.2.4. Project Management Methodology

3.2.4.1 Duties of the Contracted Project Manager

The main duties of the contracted project manager will be:

1. reporting on the project milestones tied to USF reimbursements.
2. status and progress reporting.
3. treating with requests for a change of scope.
4. liaising with, and reporting to, the Universal Service Committee.

3.2.4.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Once the project is implemented, there will be the need for post-implementation monitoring, a review of lessons learnt, and remedial actions for any mistakes made during implementation or observed as part of the Authority's monitoring. There will also need to be acceptance criteria to be met by the winning bidder(s), to ensure that installation and service comply with all requirements and are error or issue free.

3.3. Funding

Funding for this project will be from the USF, based on the winning bid and in accordance with the defined reimbursement schedule.

3.3.1. Quantum of Subsidy

This cost will be determined by the winning bidder(s)' quote, i.e., the bidder(s) requiring the lowest subsidy to meet the stated requirements. The subsidy may be a one-off payment or payments over a specific time period. The RFP will state details of the proposed subsidy options.

3.3.2. Proposed Disbursement of Funds

In order to properly manage the disbursement from the USF, clear objectives will be defined. The disbursement will be specified based on CAPEX and recurrent expenditure. The disbursement for the CAPEX requirement will be determined by different outcome-based assessment targets and

associated invoices, as shown in Table 3. Reimbursement of service provider(s) for recurrent expenditure, if applicable, will be permitted for a maximum of three years, and thereafter borne by the service provider(s).

Table 3: Proposed milestones for the disbursement of the USF for CAPEX

Milestone/Target	Disbursement from USF (% of the Total in Accordance to the Winning Bid)	Additional Details of Terms for Disbursement
1. Mobilization	10%	
2. Materials in country and in the concessionaire's possession	15%	The provider will need to show proof that the bill of materials (BOM) required to undertake this project is all in country and has been cleared by customs.
3. Network equipment fully deployed	50%	All network infrastructure needed to provide broadband Internet access service has been commissioned.
4. Six months from inception of service to customers' premises	15%	Six months following the date of the first customer installation at each of the locations
5. Commissioned network operating within specifications	10%	All issues/deficiencies identified by the Authority are satisfactorily addressed to have a properly functioning system in place for the community.

If a recurrent subsidy is required, the disbursement of such subsidy will commence following the first customer subscription and will be permitted for a maximum of three years thereafter, based on the invoices submitted by the service provider(s), and thereafter borne by the service provider(s).

3.3.3. Procedures for Reimbursement

To access the funds, concessionaires will be required to submit, on a milestone basis and at a minimum, a completed Universal Service Fund Claim Form³, associated attachments and any other pertinent information including:

³ See Appendix V.

1. an original invoice, referred to in section 3.3.2.
2. copies of signed contracts between service providers and the recipients of the fixed broadband Internet services provided.
3. type of claim (whether recurrent or CAPEX).

The specific payment terms will be in accordance with the signed contract.

4. The 10 Targeted Areas in Trinidad and Tobago

To determine the 10 areas to be targeted by the project, 20 communities were first identified. Table 4 lists 20 of the most underserved communities in Trinidad, as identified in DIS 2021. No communities in Tobago were listed in Table 4 as a USF project is currently being undertaken in the St John's parish, covering the communities of Parlatuvier, Bloody Bay and L'Anse Fourmi.

Table 4: The 20 most underserved communities

Community	ICT Access Sub-Index	ICT Development Index (IDI)
Tompson	0.62	6.88
Techier Village	0.62	7.44
Guaico	0.62	6.37
Chinese Village	0.62	7.12
Guapo Lot 10	0.62	7.12
Quarry Village	0.62	7.12
Rancho Quemado	0.62	7.12
Vessigny	0.62	7.12
Cocoyea Village	0.62	6.79
Jacob Village	0.61	7.77
Palo Seco	0.61	7.77
Vance River	0.61	7.77
Brothers Settlement	0.61	6.88
Indian Walk	0.61	6.88
Tableland	0.61	6.88
Tabaquite	0.61	6.49
Tortuga	0.61	6.49
Grand Lagoon	0.61	6.93
Dow Village	0.57	6.64
Fyzabad	0.57	6.64

The Authority conducted a desktop study of these communities, using GIS data on ISP-served areas and publicly available mapping data of Trinidad and Tobago. The Authority considered consumer complaints from areas including Brasso Seco, Cumaca, Gowers Well Road and Rincon Village. Information was also received from one concessionaire in response to the Authority's request for an update on its network and service rollout. The concessionaire identified a list of unserved and underserved rural areas deemed unprofitable.

Additionally, the Authority conducted a field study of the north coast of Trinidad, from the north Paramin to Rincon (Las Cuevas) communities along the North Coast Road.

The results of the desktop and field studies, concessionaire inputs and customer complaints were then considered, collated, and then grouped in terms of geographical proximity, building layout and population. This is presented in Table 5, grouped to form the 10 areas.

Table 5: Results of desktop and field studies

	Community	Wired ISPs Serving the Area	Comments	Number of Unserviced Buildings
1	Matelot	Nil	-	145
2	North Paramin, Maracas, Damien Bay, Rincon, Las Cuevas	Nil	Field study done	355
3	La Fillette, Yara, Blanchisseuse	Nil	-	497
4	Brasso Seco, Morne La Croix	Nil	-	68
5	Cumaca, Valencia	Two	Flow and Digicel serve the area. Cumaca Road (North) has no service.	46
6	Nariva Rd, Navet Dam Access Road	Nil	RVR is close by.	87
7	Indian Trail Couva	Nil	RVR, Flow, Digicel are close by.	144
8	Corosan Village, Tableland	Nil	RVR is close by.	68
9	Tortuga, Gran Couva	Nil	RVR is close by.	37
10	Gowers Well Road, Fyzabad	Nil	RVR and Flow are close by.	11

In July 2022, the Authority completed a detailed site survey along the North Coast Road (included in the 10 areas), as per the area identified in Appendix II. Site surveys will be carried out prior to the issuance of RFPs to serve the other areas.

5. Risk Management

Table 6 summarises some risks that may be encountered in the execution of this project and proposed mitigation strategies.

Table 6: Risks and mitigating strategies

Identified Risks	Mitigating Strategies
Low customer uptake of service	Effective advertising and skills training by service providers and the Authority for customers in the areas
Delays in material being on island	Assistance from relevant ministries
Foreign exchange issues	Assistance from relevant ministries
Failure to have proper material management (secure warehouse storage in Trinidad and oversee that there is no wastage)	Competent contracted project manager to identify any abnormalities or wastage
Subsidy abuse	Explicit, clearly written methodology for disbursement of funds with adequate checks and balances

6. Implementation Schedule

Once this Implementation Plan is approved, given the detailed site survey (see Appendix II) already conducted along the North Coast Road in Trinidad, the Authority proposes, as a priority, the commencement of a USF CUSI in this area. The area came to the attention of the Authority in July 2022 following consumer complaints. The villages identified have limited mobile voice and data coverage (or none at all in some areas) and/or very limited fixed wireless coverage. If approved, the proposed implementation schedule presented in Table 7 will be applied.

Table 7: Project implementation schedule

	Key Milestone	Start Date	End Date
1	Initial selection of communities	June 2023	June 2023
2	Approval from the Minister	September 2023	December 2024
3	Request for Proposals process for RFP process 1 of identified underserved areas	February 2025	April 2025
4	Evaluation and Reverse Auction process for RFP process 1	May 2025	June 2025
5	Contract Award	July 2025	July 2025
6	Implementation of broadband access for RFP process 1 (estimated nine months)	August 2025	April 2026
7	Deployment post-mortem for RFP process 1	April 2026	May 2026
8	Monitoring customer uptake and compliance	April 2026	June 2026
9	Final post-mortem	June 2026	July 2026
10	Request for Proposals process for RFP process 2 of identified underserved areas	June 2025	August 2025
11	Evaluation and Reverse Auction process for RFP process 2	September 2025	October 2025
12	Contract award	November 2025	December 2025
13	Implementation of broadband access for second group (estimated nine months)	January 2026	September 2026
14	Deployment post-mortem for RFP process 2	September 2026	October 2026

	Key Milestone	Start Date	End Date
15	Monitoring customer uptake and compliance	September 2026	November 2026
16	Final post-mortem	November 2026	December 2026
17	Request for Proposals process for RFP process 3 of identified underserved areas	November 2025	January 2026
18	Evaluation and Reverse Auction process for RFP process 3	February 2026	March 2026
19	Contract award	April 2026	April 2026
20	Implementation of broadband access for RFP process 3 (estimated eight months)	May 2026	December 2026
21	Deployment post-mortem for RFP process 3	January 2027	February 2027
22	Monitoring customer uptake and compliance	January 2027	March 2027
23	Final post-mortem	March 2027	April 2027

Three Request for Proposal (RFP) processes shall be employed to implement this contractual universal service initiative (CUSI), whereby the communities with underserved areas will be included within these three RFPs. The RFPs and incorporated packages for consecutive issuance are:

- i. RFP process 1 – Matelot and Navet area
- ii. RFP process 2 – North Paramin/Maracas/Rincon, Tableland (Corosan Village), Indian Trail and Cumaca
- iii. RFP process 3 – Blanchiseuse, Brasso Seco/Morne Croix, areas in Tortuga and Fyzabad (Gowers Well Road)

Appendix I Telecommunications (Universal Service) Regulations, as amended – Part V

Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

1102

Telecommunications (Universal Service) Regulations, 2015

PART V

CONTRACTUAL UNIVERSAL SERVICE INITIATIVES

Identification of Contractual Universal Service projects

18. (1) The Authority shall, from time to time, issue an invitation for submission of Universal Service projects, by publication in the *Gazette* and at least two daily newspapers in daily circulation in Trinidad and Tobago.

(2) An invitation under subregulation (1) shall invite concessionaires and relevant Ministries and stakeholder groups to identify proposals for projects to be considered as Contractual Universal Service initiatives.

(3) Proposals under this regulation shall be limited to projects which—

- (a) targets the provision of infrastructure development areas identified within the access gap by the Authority;
- (b) targets the resolution of structural deficiencies in the national telecommunications grid;
- (c) can be implemented by all similarly situated concessionaires in a given market or sub-market; and
- (d) meet other conditions as specified by the Authority in the notice.

(4) Interested concessionaires, Ministries and stakeholder groups may submit proposals within the time frame specified in the Notice.

(5) The Authority may consider proposals submitted under subregulation (4) in conjunction with projects proposed by the Authority pursuant to its evaluation of network coverage and service capacity.

(6) The Authority shall submit to the Minister its recommendations, in accordance with section 28 of the Act.

(7) Upon approval, modification or rejection of its recommendation by the Minister, the Authority shall publish the recommendation and, where applicable, the Minister's reasons for modification or rejection in respect thereof on its website for public viewing.

(8) Where a person who has made a submission pursuant to this regulation wishes to dispute the decision of the Minister, he may, within thirty days of the publication of such decision, request in writing, a review or reconsideration by the Minister of his decision, stating the grounds or reasons upon which such review or reconsideration is requested.

July 2020

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TATT Ref: 2/17/23

(9) The Minister shall determine such a review or reconsideration as soon as practicable but in any event no later than sixty days after the receipt of the request for the review or reconsideration and shall notify the applicant in writing, of his decision.

19. (1) In implementing the Contractual Universal Service initiatives^{Submission of bids for the implementation of Contractual Universal Service initiatives} planned for a given fiscal period, the Authority shall prepare and issue Requests for Proposals in accordance with the Telecommunications Tender Rules for the selected Universal Service initiatives identified by the Authority to be granted funding from the Universal Service Fund for that fiscal period.

(2) A concessionaire may submit a bid in accordance with the directions set out in any Request for Proposals that may be issued by the Authority from time to time pursuant to subregulation (1).

(3) Only a concessionaire authorised to provide the service or services that comprise a Universal Service initiative may submit a bid under subregulation (1) to be granted funding to implement the Universal Service initiative.

(4) Where more than one bid is submitted under subregulation (1), the Authority shall use the reverse auction method to evaluate the bids submitted by concessionaires.

20. (1) In response to a request from the concessionaire^{General rules regarding disbursement of funds associated with Contractual Universal Service initiatives} implementing a Contractual Universal Service initiative, the Authority may disburse mobilisation funds to support project initiation.

(2) Mobilisation payments under subregulation (1) shall be no greater than fifteen per cent of the estimated cost of the project.

(3) Professional fees associated with any Contractual Universal Service initiative shall be no greater than six per cent of the total cost of the initiative.

(4) The executing concessionaire shall submit in a form approved by the Authority and for a period not to exceed a bimonthly schedule, status reports, on the progress of Contractual Universal Service initiatives to the Universal Service Committee.

(5) Where the Authority receives a report under subregulation (4), it shall publish the report within two weeks of its receipt on its website.

Recurrent charges associated with a Contractual Universal Service initiative

21. (1) Where the Universal Service Committee determines, based on the projections of the Authority or on the presentation of relevant facts and trends by the concessionaire, that aspects of the recurrent costs associated with a completed project implemented as a Contractual Universal Service initiative may require continued subsidisation from the Universal Service Fund, the Universal Service Committee may authorise an annual charge to the Universal Service Fund to cover such a subsidy.

(2) Where the Universal Service Committee undertakes the action outlined in subregulation (1), it shall ensure that the concessionaire enters into an agreement with the Authority outlining, *inter alia*—

- (a) the terms and conditions by which the recurrent costs are subsidised;
- (b) performance obligations of the concessionaire to encourage increased service utilisation to enhance economic viability of the initiative;
- (c) reporting obligations of the concessionaire to encourage accurate and timely measurement of the uptake of basic telecommunications services in the area in which the Universal Service initiative project is implemented;
- (d) the criteria through which the Universal Service Committee may determine that a recurrent operation of the Universal Service initiative has become sustainable and no longer requires supplemental financing from the Universal Service Fund; and
- (e) that the Authority may seek to recover funds provided to the concessionaire where there is non-compliance with the Universal Service initiative and where funds received under the regulation were not utilised for the specified purpose.

Obligation to implement contractual Universal Service initiative

22. (1) The concessionaire who submits a bid under regulation 19 and is successful shall be awarded an offer or the grant of funding from the Universal Service Fund and shall, upon acceptance of the offer—

- (a) enter into and be bound by a contract of service with the Authority for the implementation of the Universal Service initiative;
- (b) have the obligation under these Regulations to implement the Universal Service initiative in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the contract of service entered into with the Authority under paragraph (a); and
- (c) be granted from the Universal Service Fund such funding for which the concessionaire had bid on the terms and conditions set out in the contract of service entered into with the Authority under paragraph (a).

(2) Where no concessionaire submits a bid under regulation 19, the concessionaire who is authorised to provide the service or services that comprise the Contractual Universal Service initiative and who, in the opinion of the Authority, has the highest available network capacity and requires the least infrastructural build out to roll out services for that particular Contractual Service initiative—

- (a) may enter into and be bound by a contract of service with the Authority for the implementation of the Universal Service initiatives; and
- (b) shall have the obligation under these Regulations to implement the Contractual Universal Service initiatives in accordance with the terms of conditions set out in the contract of service entered into with the Authority under paragraph (a).

23. (1) The Authority shall only authorize payments out of the Universal Service Fund where invoices are submitted by the concessionaire.

Disbursement
of funds
pursuant to a
Contractual
Universal
Service
initiative

(2) Invoices shall be in the form approved by the Authority.

(3) Concessionaires requesting disbursement of funds pursuant to a Contractual Universal Service initiative shall submit invoices to the Committee for certification in keeping with the conditions of the contract.

(4) A concessionaire under this regulation shall submit reports to the Authority containing information to be specified by the Authority to ensure timely certification of invoices.

PART VI
MISCELLANEOUS

24. (1) The Authority may provide an amount not exceeding five per cent of the value of the contributions to the Universal Service Fund in any financial year towards the provision of services as approved by the Authority to community access centres which are established by the State or State agencies.

Funding of
community
access centre

(2) Approved services for which funding may be provided pursuant to subregulation (1) shall be targeted towards subsidising the cost of the following services only:

- (a) telephone connectivity to service a sated usage volume;
- (b) internet bandwidth as defined by the Authority from time to time;
- (c) facsimile services; and
- (d) such other services as the Authority may approve.

Appendix II North Coast Road Site Visit Report



North Coast Road Site Visit Report

1 Purpose

A site visit to the region North Coast Road from Maraval to Rincon Village, Trinidad was conducted by Kurleigh Prescod, Dexter Boswell-Inniss, Harrinath Sawh and Naseema Mohammed of the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (the Authority) on July 20, 2022. The intention of the site visit being to assess the availability of fixed broadband Internet access services in the communities along the North Coast Road up to the vicinity of Rincon Village. The communities assessed included:

1. Fond Pois Doux Road
2. Fishing Bay Road
3. Old Bay Road
4. Grand Fond Road
5. Damien Bay
6. Rincon Village
7. Pierre Trace

The information collected on the site visit and further analysis would be utilised in assessing whether these communities are underserved and suitable for a Universal Service Fund (USF) project, in accordance with the Universal Service Regulations.

2 Background

The community of Rincon Village, Las Cuevas initially came to the attention of the Authority in 2020 when there was a complaint by a student participating in online schooling due to the COVID-19 restrictions. As such an initial investigation, site visit and report was completed by the Monitoring Department (November 2020) and the community of Rincon Village assessed via a criteria for determination of an underserved or unserved community. The assessment indicated that Rincon Village met all the components of the criteria checklist to be classified as an underserved community. Further to this, the Authority decided to complete one more site visit along the North Coast Road towards Rincon Village to reconfirm telecommunication services available in Rincon Village and the infrastructure available in neighbouring vicinities along the North Coast Road.

3 Assessment & Analysis

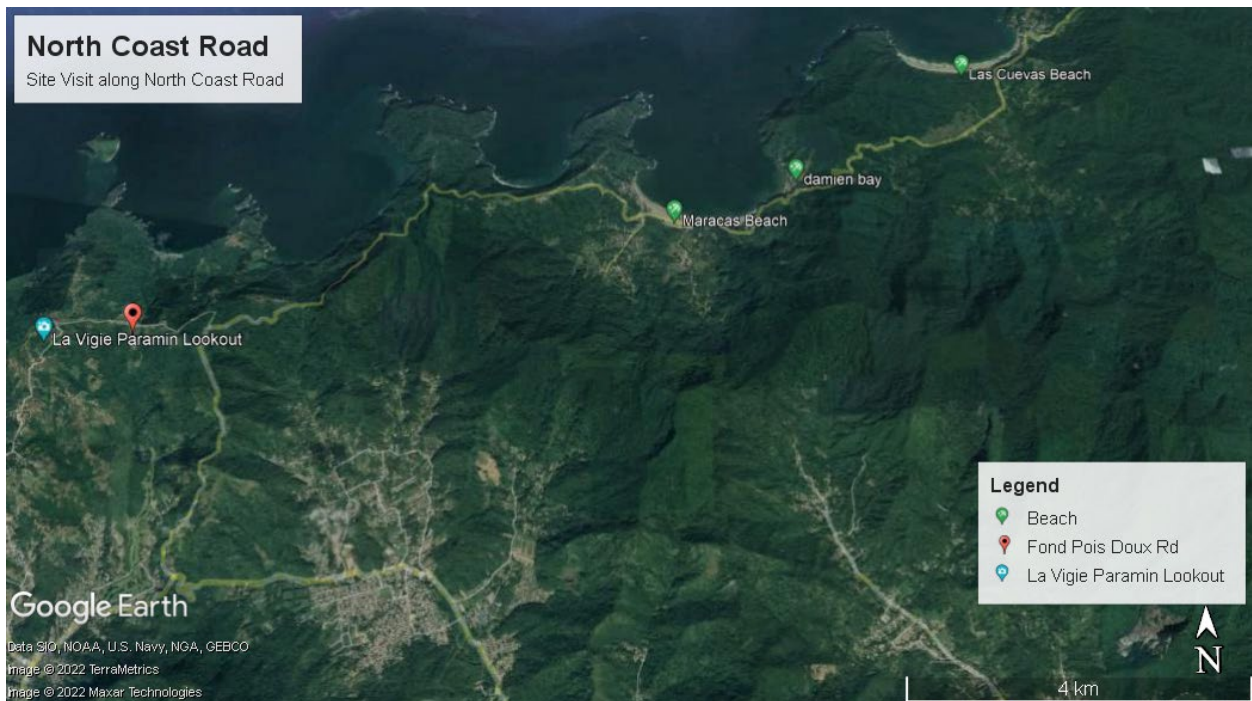


Figure 1: Google Earth of the Area of the North Coast Road Visited

The communities visited and assessed during the Authorities site visit along the North Coast Road fall within the regional corporations of Diego Martin and San Juan/Laventille.

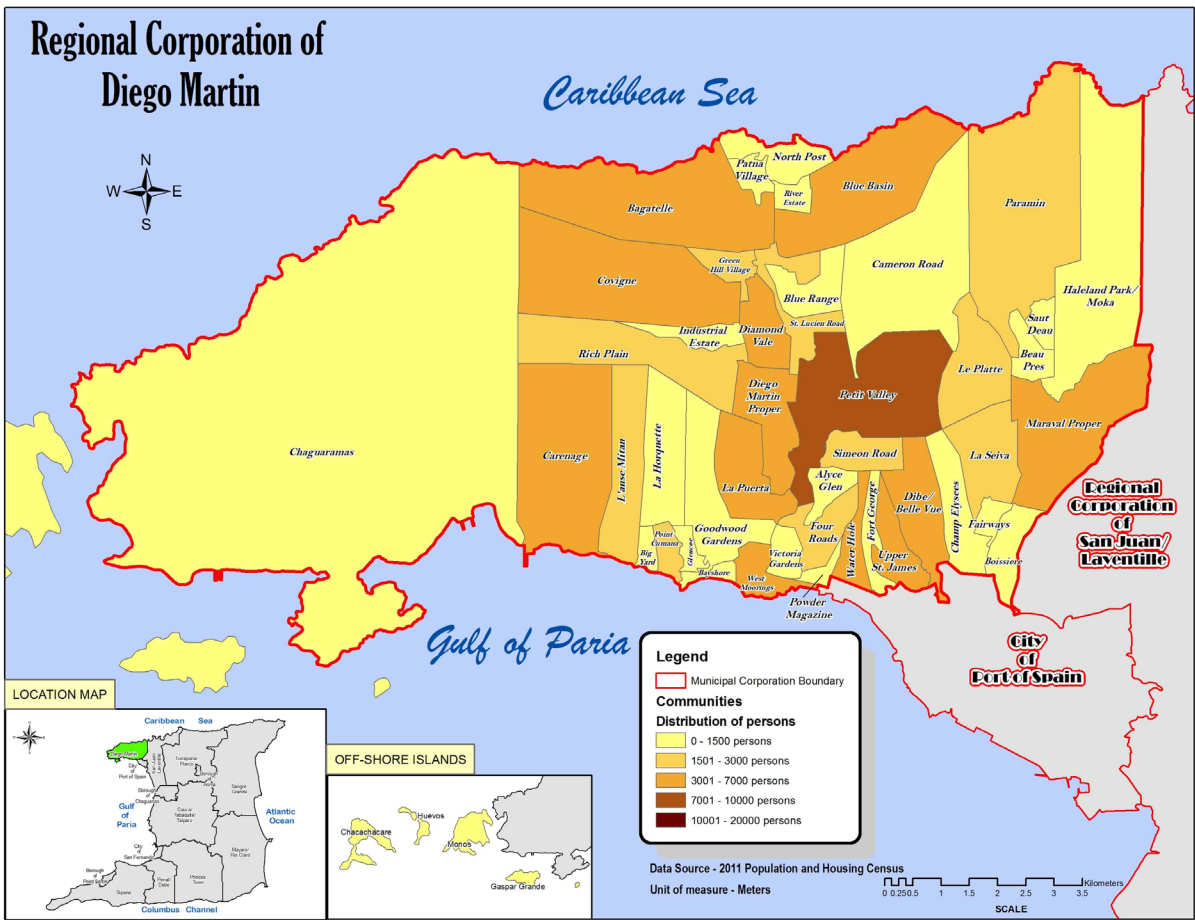


Figure 2: Regional Corporation of Diego Martin

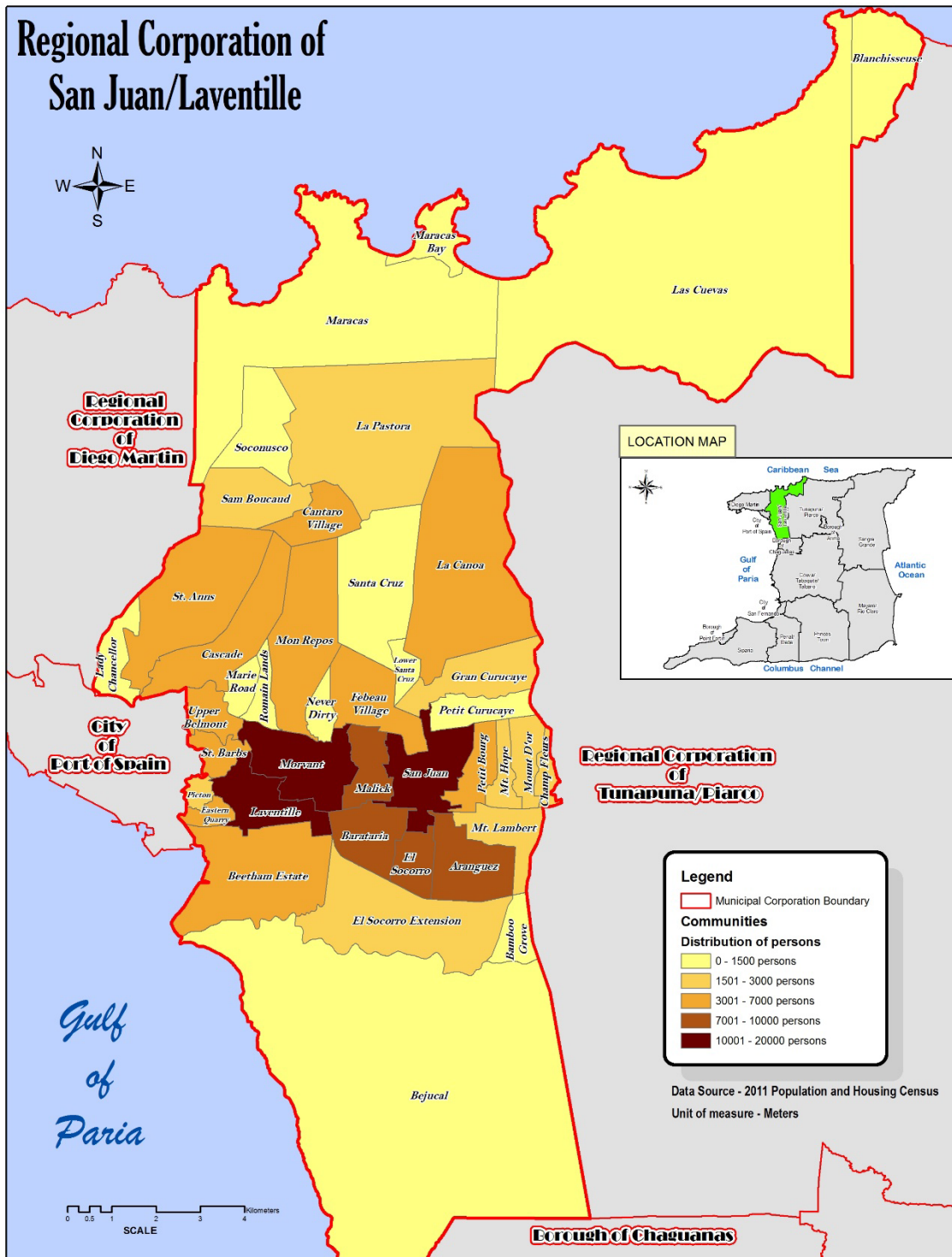


Figure 3: Regional Corporation of San Juan/Laventille

The communities visited and assessed along the North Coast Road and its environs are illustrated in the map below.

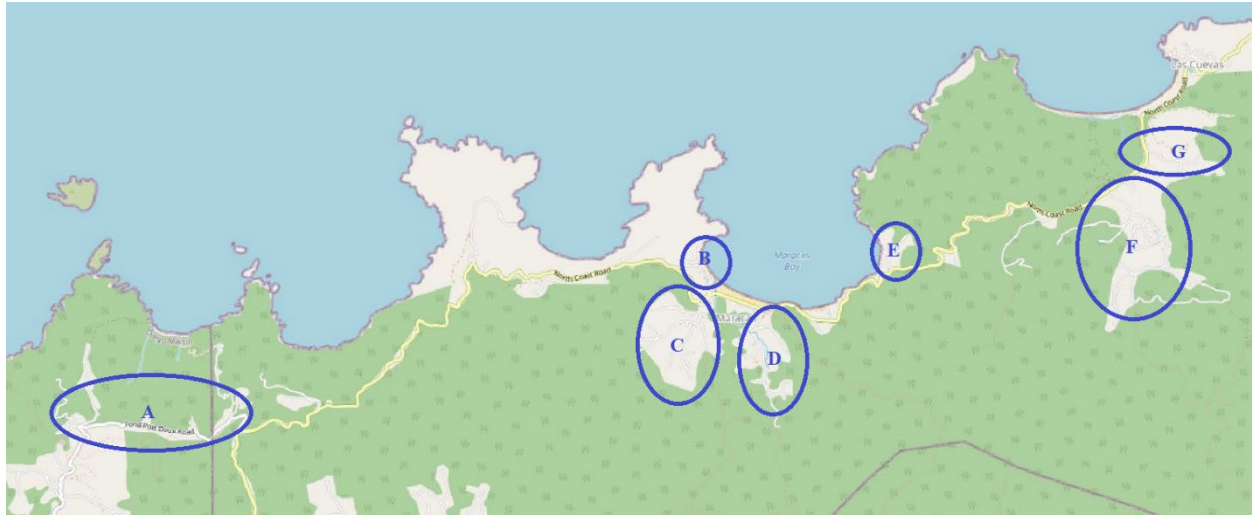


Figure 4: Visited Communities along the North Coast Road

A drive through the area confirmed the telecommunication services available in these areas as shown below.

Table 8: Summary of Information Related to the Communities Visited

Community	Municipality	IDI 2021 Value (<i>threshold</i> <7.86)	Region Label	Mobile Services	TV & Broadband Services
Fond Pois Doux Road	Paramin Maracas Haleland Park/Moka	7.21 8.38 8.42	A	Digicel Bmobile	DirecTV Greendot
Fishing Bay Road	Maracas Bay	8.38	B	Digicel Bmobile	DirecTV
Old Bay Road	Maracas	8.38	C	Digicel Bmobile	DirecTV
Grand Fond Road	Maracas	8.38	D	Digicel Bmobile	DirecTV
Damien Bay Road Damien Bay	Las Cuevas	8.38	E	Digicel Bmobile	DirecTV
Rincon Road Rincon Village	Las Cuevas	8.38	F	Minimal Digicel	DirecTV
Pierre Trace	Las Cuevas	8.38	G	Minimal Digicel	DirecTV

Fond Pois Doux Road

The community consists of approximately 50 houses and a few business establishments. Fond Pois Doux Road has both Bmobile and Digicel mobile coverage. North Deck (a hotel), 10° 44' 44.61" N, 61° 29' 43.07" W can be found along Fond Pois Doux Road. There is no visible wire-line infrastructure. However observations of a few DirecTV dishes and one Greendot microwave was noted. A Digicel cell tower can be seen looking over the stretch of road.

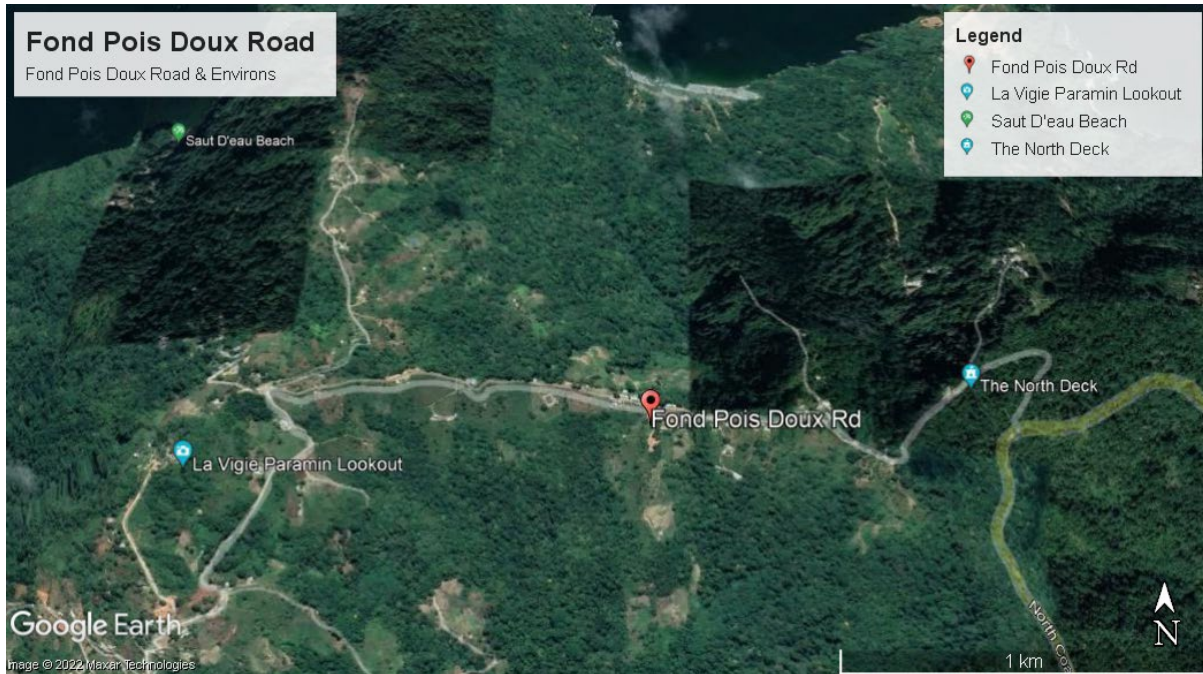


Figure 5: Region A – Fond Pois Doux Road

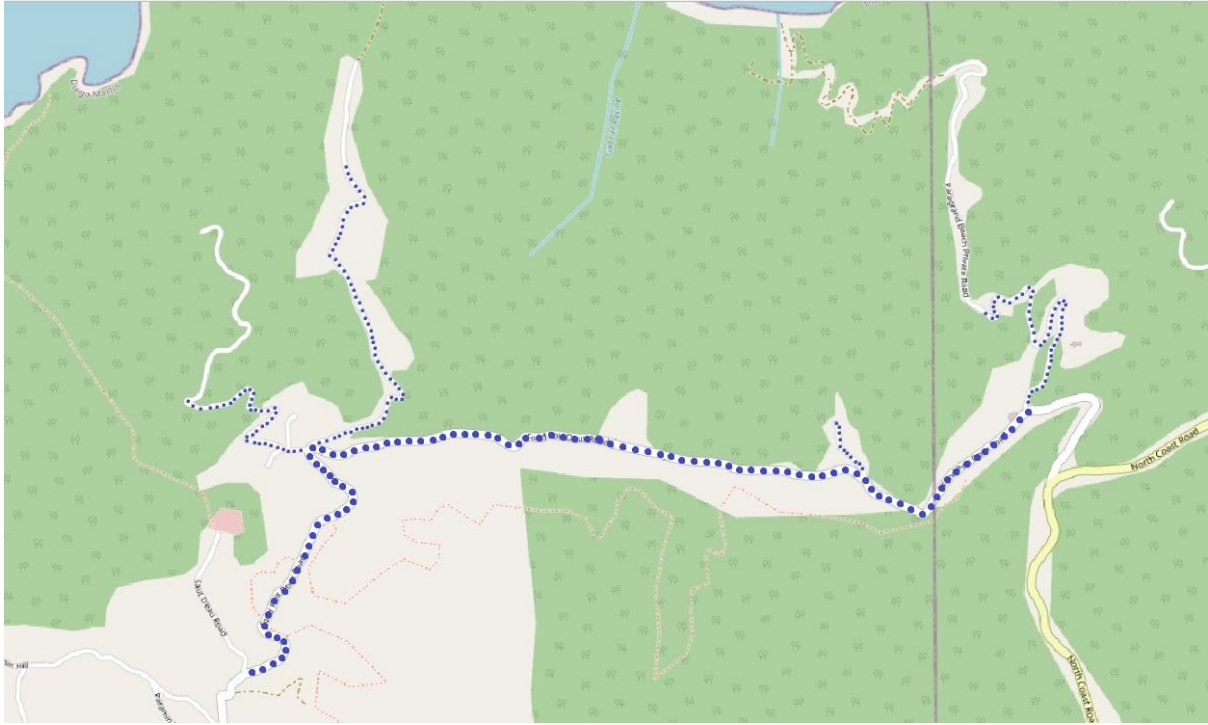


Figure 6: Region A expected Area for Broadband Services



Photo 1: Fond Pois Doux Road

Fishing Bay Road

Along the North Coast Road, Fishing Bay Road, Maracas Bay can be found with both Bmobile and Digicel mobile coverage, however the broadband service available in the area are minimal and utilize the existing mobile networks to provide service. Observations of DirecTV being utilized in the community were made. The community consists of approximately 40 houses. Additionally on the day of the Authority's visit, one store owner informed the Authority of an ongoing TSTT outage for the last 4 to 5 days, which left the members of the community depending on this service for business or otherwise in a predicament. Linx services were unavailable.

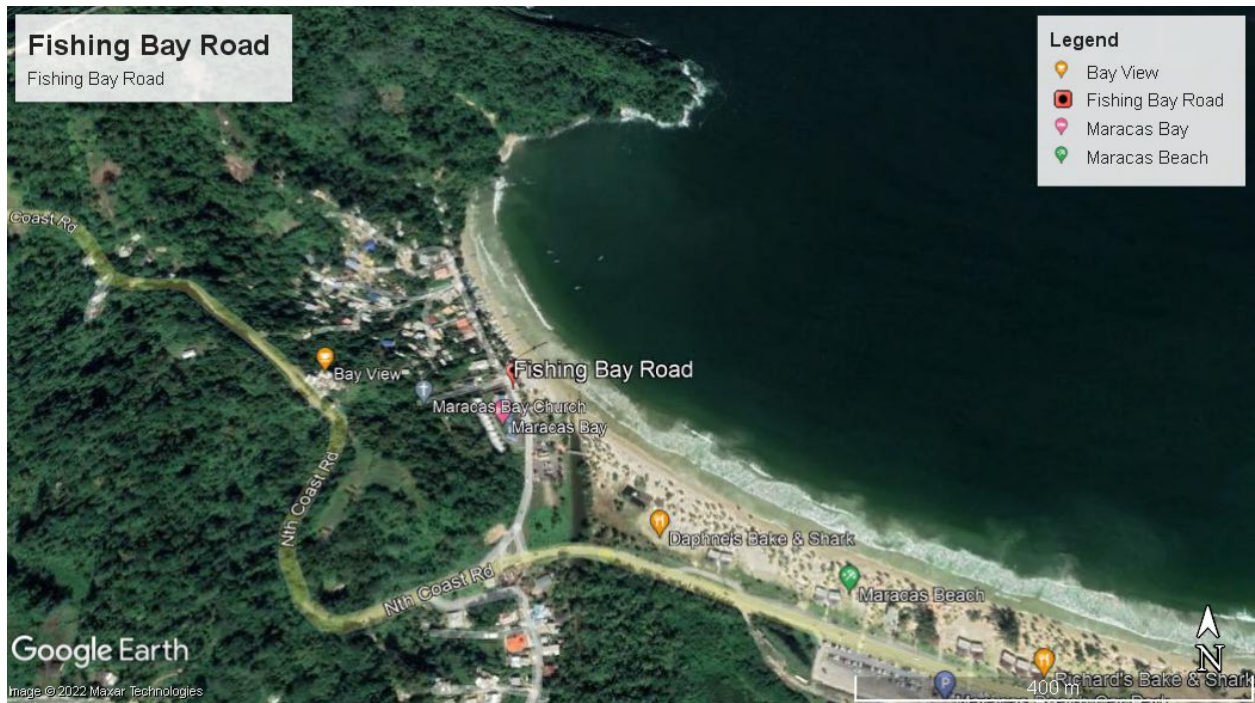


Figure 7: Region B – Fishing Bay Road

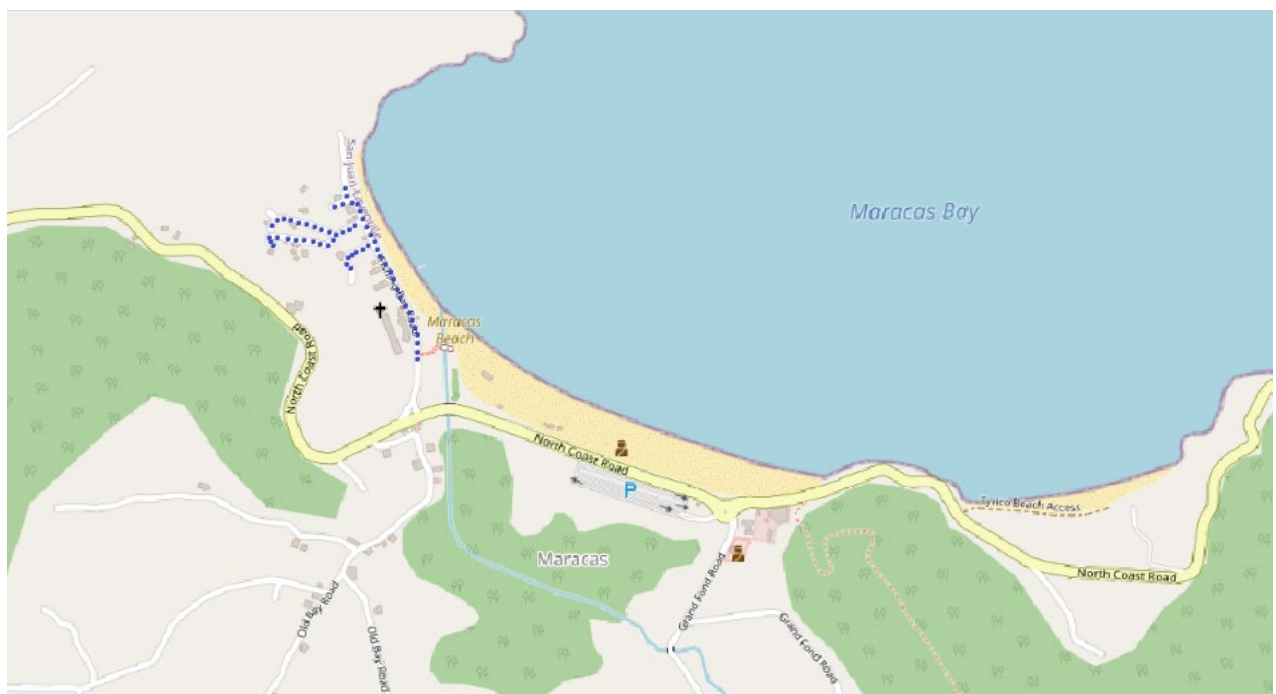


Figure 8: Region B expected Area for Broadband Services



Photo 2: Device used to provide Internet Service by TSTT

Old Bay Road

This community consists of approximately 100 houses and a few business establishments. Site observations included Bmobile and Digicel mobile presence, however the Internet services available in the area rely on the existing mobile networks to connect, such as Digi MiFi. Additionally, there is no landline service available in the area. Observations of DirecTV being utilized in the community were noted.



Figure 9: Region C – Old Bay Road

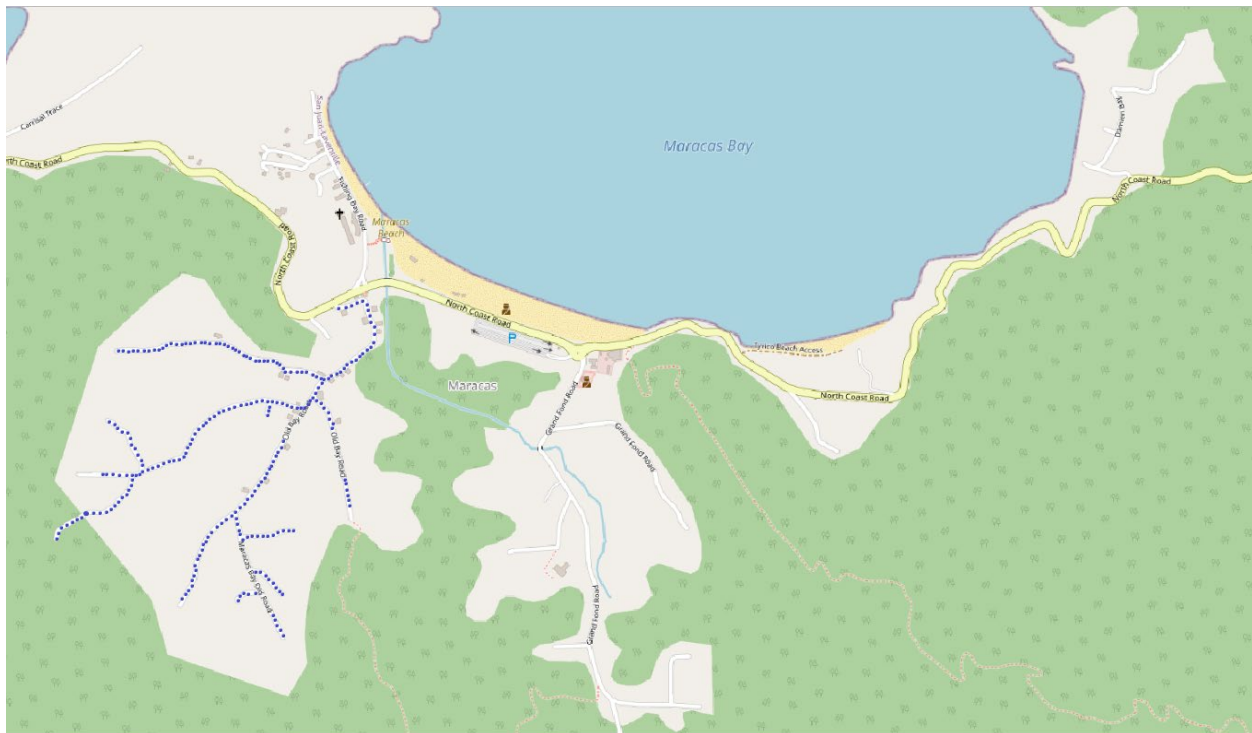


Figure 10: Region C expected Area for Broadband Services



Photo 3: Old Bay Road Observations

Grand Fond Road

This community consists of approximately 50 houses and a few business establishments. The Maracas Bay Police Station is also located on this road. Site observations included Bmobile and Digicel mobile presence, however the Internet services available in the area rely on the existing mobile networks to connect. Observations of DirecTV being utilized in the community were made. The community centre has an existing Digicel microwave link that provides Wi-Fi services to the compound.



Figure 11: Region D – Grand Fond Road

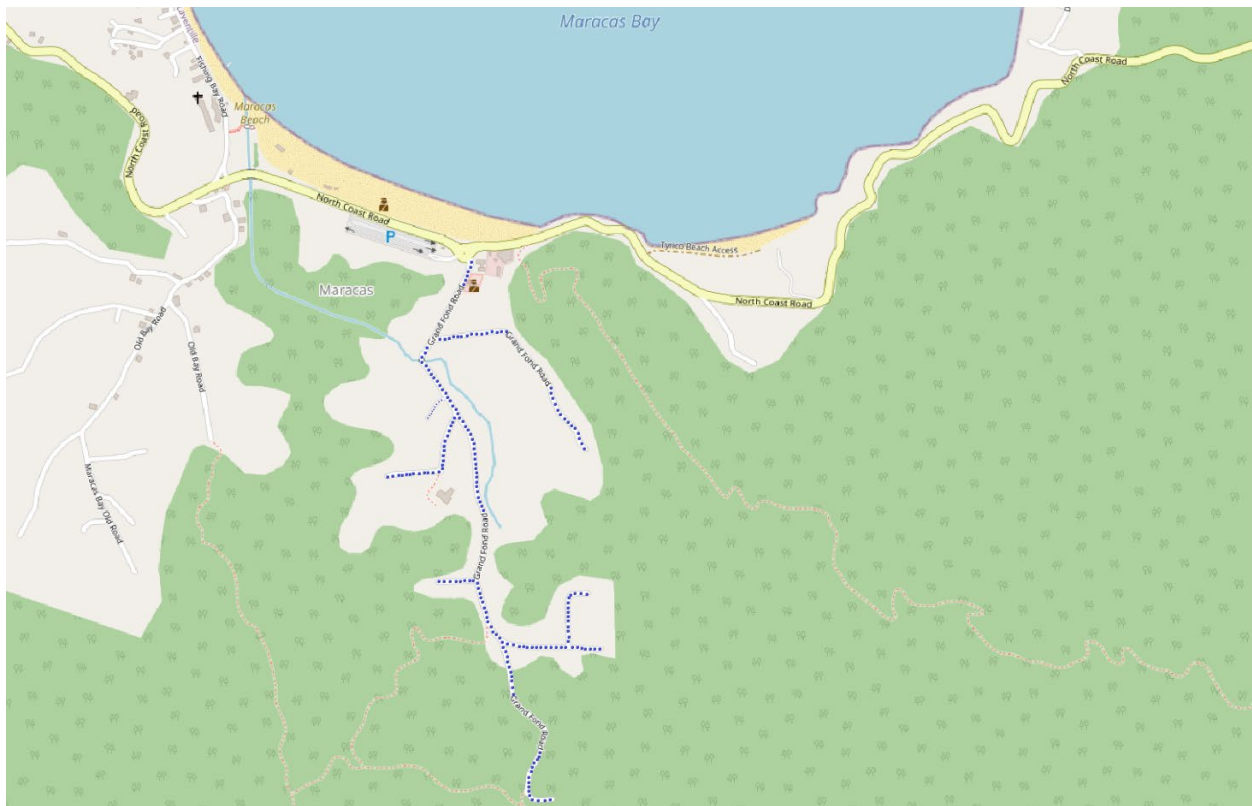


Figure 12: Region D expected Area for Broadband Services



Photo 4: Grand Fond Road Observations

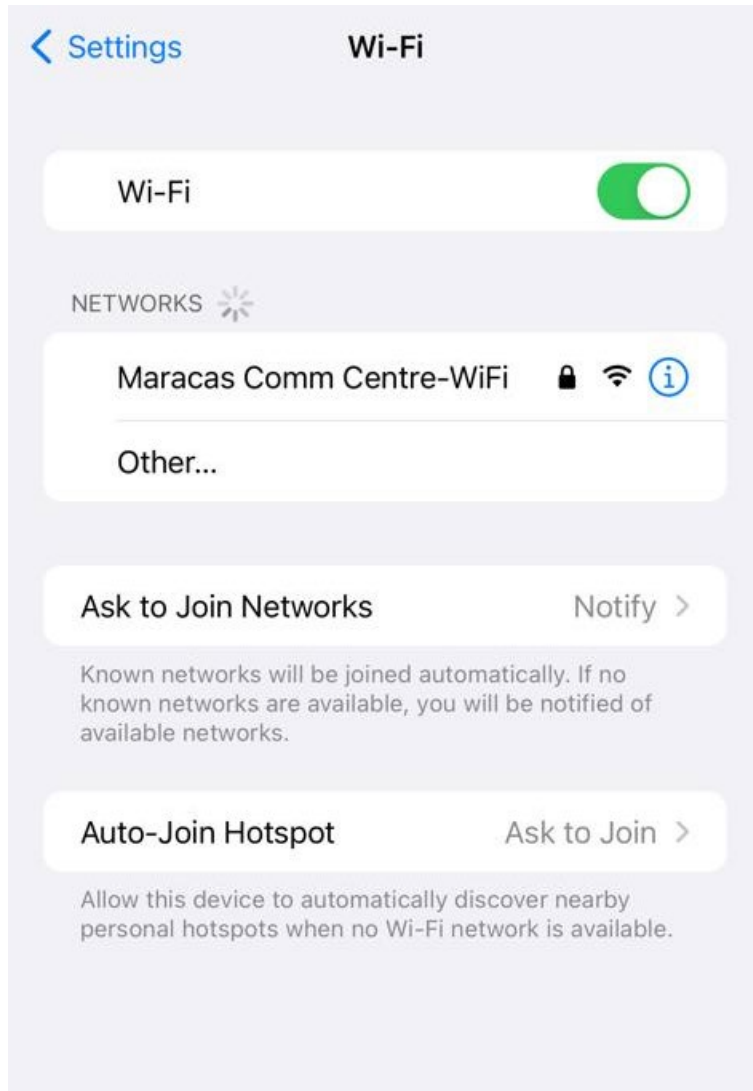


Figure 13: Available Wi-Fi at the Maracas Community Centre

Damien Bay

Damien Bay is next to a TSTT mobile site. The service in the area is similar to the Maracas communities previously mentioned, where there is Bmobile and Digicel mobile coverage. The Internet services are dependent on mobile coverage and DirecTV is the only provider for television services in the area. This community consists of approximately 25 houses.



Photo 5: Damien Bay Observations

Rincon Road/Rincon Village

This community consists of approximately 50 houses and a few business establishments. There is also a WASA water treatment plant that serves the area and environs. Rincon Village has little to no mobile coverage with Digicel being the main provider in the community. The use of DirecTV was observed in this community.

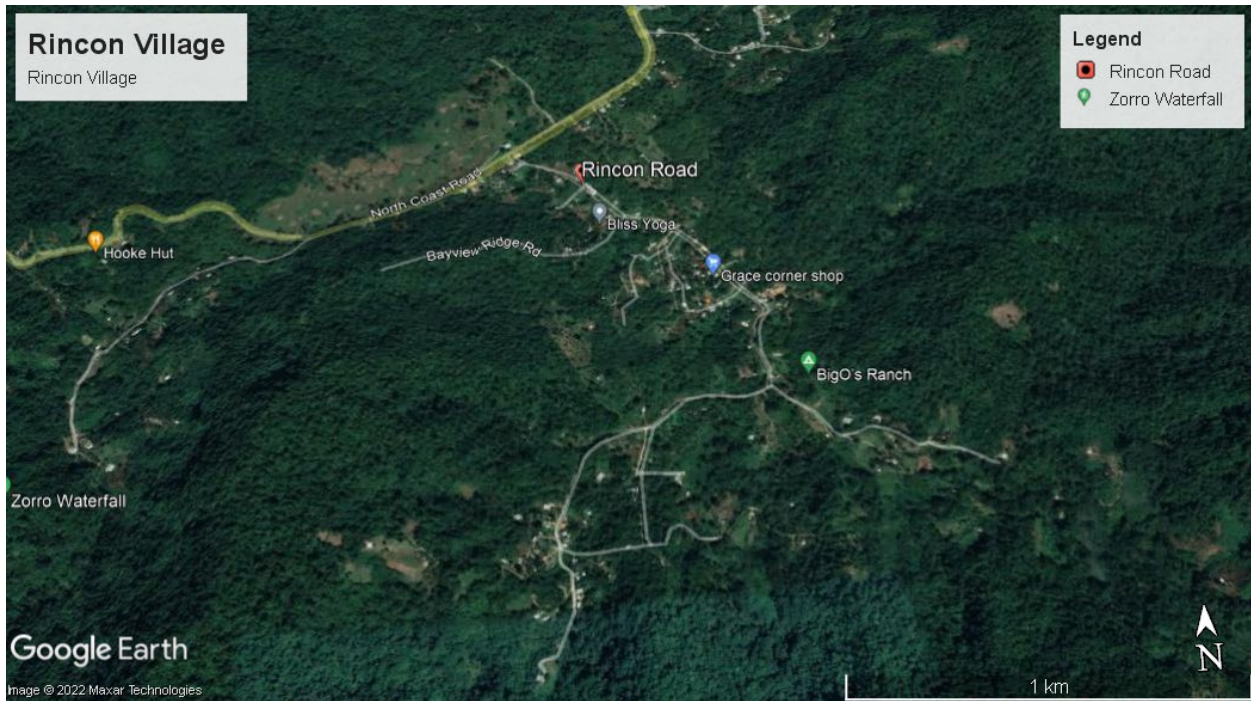


Figure 16: Region F – Rincon Village

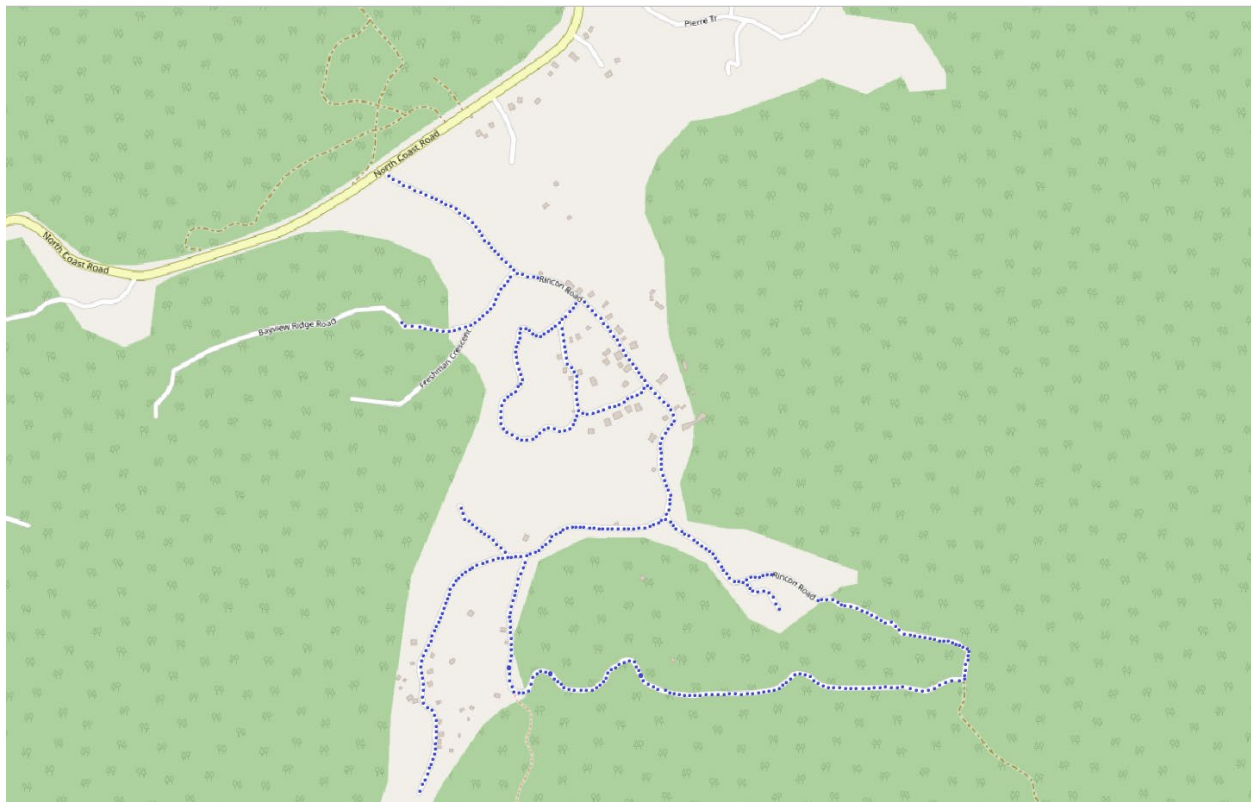


Figure 17: Region F expected Area for Broadband Services



Photo 6: Rincon Village Observations

Pierre Road

The community has approximately 20 houses. Pierre Road has limited mobile coverage. The use of DirecTV was observed in this community.



Figure 18: Region G – Pierre Road

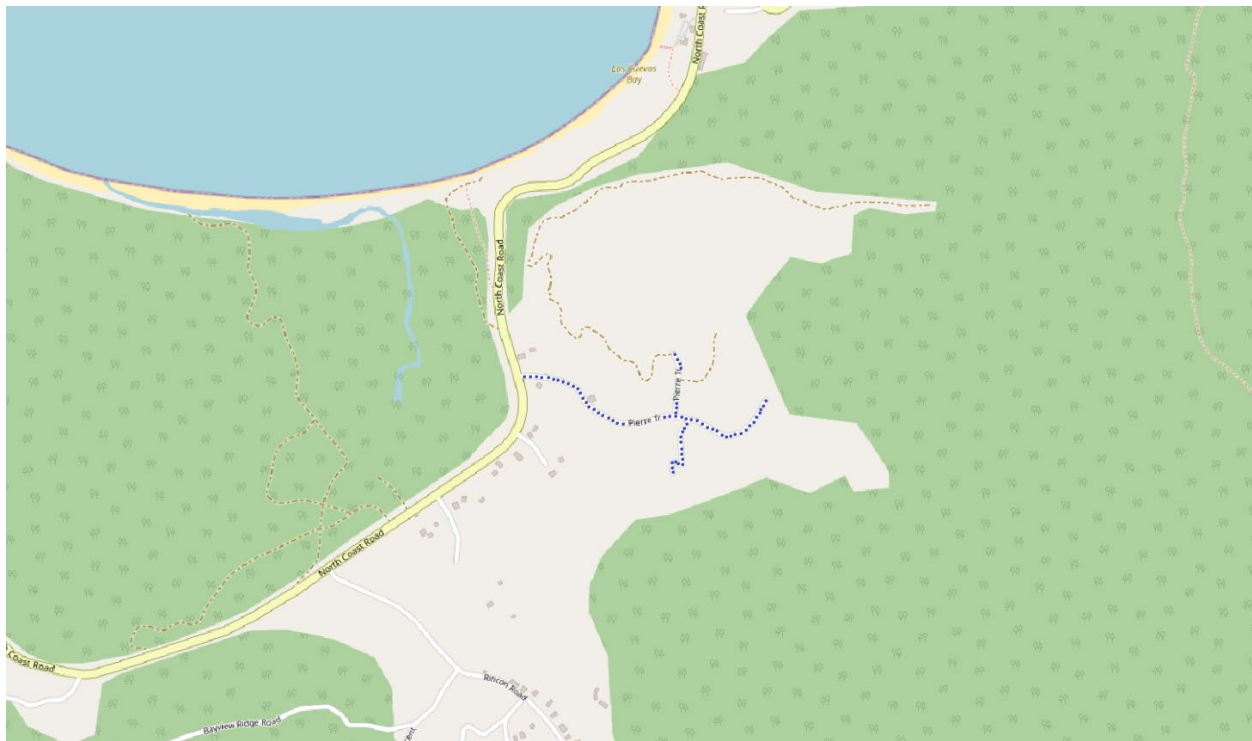


Figure 19: Region G expected Area for Broadband Services

4 Conclusion

These communities all have limited Internet services from the existing mobile networks at minimum speed capabilities. These services in these afore-mentioned communities can be unreliable, as there are many factors that can result in disruption of services, such as but not limited to power outages and equipment failure, resulting in both the mobile and Internet services impacted simultaneously, due to the dependency on the same infrastructure. Whereas most of the communities at least have mobile coverage, Rincon Village, due to the nature of the topography of the land, has little to non-existent mobile coverage.

The solution to deploy broadband infrastructure to provide basic telecommunication services to Rincon Village in isolation may not be a cost effective, scalable, long-term solution. From observations made, the ability of all the residents of Rincon Village to pay for broadband services utilising existing packages may not be possible. Some form of subsidy may be required. However, providing broadband infrastructure to service the identified communities along the route of the North Coast Road as prescribed in Section 3, Assessment & Analysis to an upgraded, more reliable and consistent service can be more cost effective and scalable in the long-term, as there can be some cost sharing of common transport infrastructure amongst the identified communities and there is a larger subscriber base with an observed higher economic base than Rincon Village in isolation. Additionally, delivering more connectivity to this region can boost eco-tourism traffic as a bonus.

In conclusion, aggregating these seven communities, Fond Pois Doux Road, Fishing Bay Road, Old Bay Road, Grand Fond Road, Damien Bay, Rincon Village and Pierre Road, as suitable locations for the implementation of one CUSI project is a sensible and logical approach. Approximately 335 houses will benefit from implementing such a CUSI project in these communities along the North Coast Road.

Appendix I – Bmobile Internet Plans, as of July 2022

Plans & Prices				
Unlimited 4GLTE Wireless Data	Unlimited 4GLTE Wireless Data	Unlimited 4GLTE Wireless Data	Unlimited 4GLTE Wireless Data	Unlimited 4GLTE Wireless Data
6 Mbps Download Speed	10 Mbps Download Speed	6 Mbps Download Speed	20 Mbps Download Speed	20 Mbps Download Speed
		Unlimited Landline to Landline Calling & Call Master Services		Unlimited Landline to Landline Calling & Call Master Services
Price: \$149.00	Price: \$179.00	Price: \$199.00	Price: \$199.00	Price: \$249.00
VAT: \$18.63	VAT: \$22.38	VAT: \$24.88	VAT: \$24.88	VAT: \$31.13

Appendix II – Digicel MiFi Plans, as of July 2022

Plan Type	Postpaid	Prepaid	
Plan Name	Unlimited CPE Dongle/ Mifi Plan (30 day plan)	30-Day 4G 30GB Dongle/Mifi Modem Plan	30 Day 4G 10GB Prepaid Dongle Data Plan
Price (VAT Inc.)	\$393.75	\$296.16	\$163.27
Price (VAT Ex.)	\$350.00	\$263.25	\$145.13
Data Bundle	*Unlimited LTE/4G	30GB	10GB
Voice Bundle	No	No	No
SMS Bundle	No	No	No
Out of Bundle data	No	No	No

*** Fair usage of 400GB of LTE/4G data applies; throttled to 3G thereafter.**

Appendix III Universal Service Governance Framework (Section 7)

1 Governance Framework for the Implementation of Universal Service Projects

This section of the document presents the Governance Framework for the decision-making process for the selection and implementation of Universal Service projects, and for the operations of the Universal Service Fund. In particular, this section focuses on the selection process of choosing initiatives as Universal Service projects and the standards and procedures to be implemented for proper management and provision of such.

1.1 Act Requirements for the Implementation of Universal Service Projects

As governed by the Telecommunications Act, the Authority is seeking to implement Universal Service projects which are to be financed through the Universal Service Fund. The following sections highlight the areas of the Act to fulfil such requirements:

Section 28 (1) *“In accordance with the policy established by the Minister, the Authority shall determine the public telecommunications services in respect of which the requirement of Universal Service shall apply.”*

Section 28 (5) *“The Authority shall forward its recommendations to the Minister pursuant to this section and the Minister shall indicate his approval, modification or disapproval of the recommendation within sixty days of receipt of the Authority's recommendation.”*

Section 28 (8) *“The obligations to provide and contribute to the funding of the services referred to in subsection (1) shall be applied on a non-discriminatory basis as between all similarly situated telecommunications service providers and users.”*

Section 53 (3) *“Funds arising in respect of paragraph (1) (d) shall only be applied to facilitate the provision of Universal Service in accordance with the provisions of section 28.”*

1.2 Objectives of the Universal Service Projects

As described within this framework, the Universal Service Fund will consist of contributions made by service providers through the ‘mandatory Universal Service paying obligations’. In addition to this, a percentage of excess funds collected from the Authority’s Operating Budget

may be allocated towards the Universal Service Fund. Monies of the USF will be used for the implementation of the Universal Service projects. These projects will focus on:

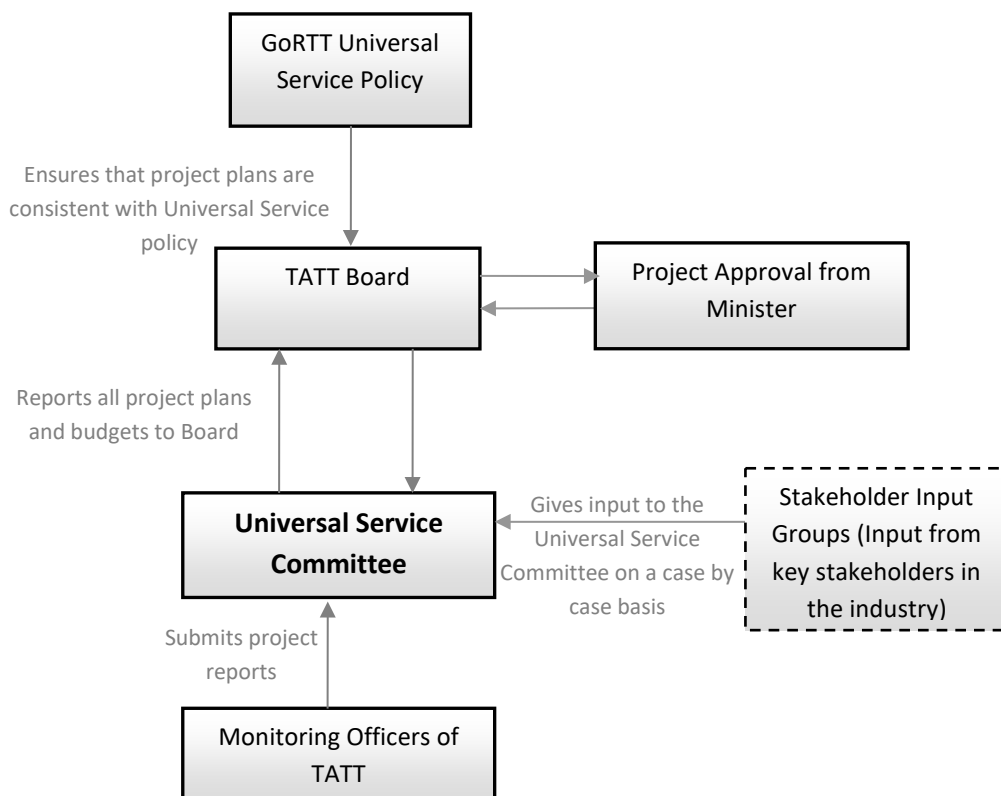
- a) Ensuring that underserved communities in Trinidad and Tobago, as identified by the conducting of Digital Divide surveys and other research methodologies, are facilitated by having access to the basic telecommunications services listed in section 2 of the Universal Service Framework.
- b) Ensuring that underserved population groups are facilitated by having access to affordable basic telecommunications services.

1.3 Universal Service Project Management Structure and Administration

The establishment of a management structure to ensure that there is governance in the decision-making process and the process by which projects implemented is necessary for its successful operations.

The Authority is prescribing to use the organisational structure prescribed in Figure 1 to manage and administer the decision-making process:

Figure 20: Structure for the Administration of the Universal Service Projects



The above diagram depicts the reporting relationships among participants in the selection and implementation process for the Universal Service projects.

At the start of the decision-making process, the Universal Service Committee will receive inputs from the stakeholder input group, in addition to considering the projects devised from research conducted into bridging the digital divide. After evaluation and deliberation of all the proposed Universal Service initiatives received, the Universal Service Committee will submit its recommended Universal Service projects to the Authority's Board for approval.

Upon receipt, the Board will review and submit its recommendations of the Universal Service projects to the Minister for approval in accordance with Section 28 (5) of the Act.

On approval by the Minister, authorisation will then be given by the Board to the Universal Service Committee for the implementation of the selected Universal Service projects. Throughout project implementation, the monitoring officers must provide reporting/feedback on the status of the projects to the Universal Service Committee.

1.4 Operations of Project Administration

1.4.1 Role of the Minister

According to Section 28(5) of the Telecommunications Act:

“The Authority shall forward its recommendations to the Minister pursuant to this section and the Minister shall indicate his approval, modification or disapproval of the recommendation within sixty days of receipt of the Authority's recommendation.”

This section gives the **Minister** responsible for Telecommunications the authority to give final approval to the Universal Service projects recommended by the Board. The Minister is required to ensure that the Universal Service initiatives suggested by the Board are consistent with the Universal Service Policy and the government's overall National Policy for the development of Trinidad and Tobago.

1.4.2 Role of the Board

According to Sections 28 and 53 of the Telecommunications Act, the Authority shall determine the Universal Service initiatives to be implemented. As a result, the **Board** is a significant party in the decision-making process and shall comprise appointed members serving the Authority. They will have oversight over the USF operations and the projects to be implemented.

The Board will be responsible for:

- a) setting the overall policy for the administration of all the Universal Service projects and the Funds collected and distributed from the USF;
- b) approving annual plans and budgets for the implementation of Universal Service projects and making recommendations to the Universal Service Committee regarding projects and USF matters;

- c) approving project and Fund annual reports and audits; and
- d) seeking authorization from the Minister responsible for Telecommunications and other relevant government bodies to ensure Universal Service projects are in line with national government policies.

1.4.3 Role of the Universal Service Committee

The **Universal Service Committee** shall be responsible for the selection and implementation of the Universal Service projects authorised by the Board as well as responsible for the management and administration of the USF. It should comprise the Chief Executive Officer and divisional members of the departments of the Authority which should include at minimum persons with experience and qualifications in the areas of law, accounting, economics and engineering. The Authority is proposing that the Universal Service Committee have responsibility for:

- a) identifying the underserved communities and population groups in Trinidad and Tobago in need of access to affordable basic telecommunications services;
- b) organising and coordinating stakeholder input group meetings to provide ideas and feedback when there is deliberation on Universal Service projects to be implemented;
- c) providing cost estimates for the proposed Universal Service projects;
- d) providing recommendations to the Board with respect to the selection of Universal Service projects and the priority to be given to Universal Service initiatives to be undertaken annually;
- e) seeking approval from the Board for the implementation of USF projects;
- f) developing objectives, budgets and operational plans for the management of the USF;
- g) ensuring the authorisation process for the award of concessions/ and or Universal Service obligation contracts to service providers;
- h) ensuring the Fund remains financially sound such that monies are available for the implementation of projects;
- i) collecting the contributions from telecommunications providers in accordance with the percentages stated in the Universal Service Regulations;
- j) reviewing the adequacy of Fund contributions received every three (3) years and submitting any recommended changes, if any, to the Board for approval;
- k) recommending the amounts that should be disbursed from the Fund within a timely manner and to whom the Funds should be disbursed in accordance with the Authority's tendering rules and the Universal Service contracts signed with the service providers;
- l) ensuring that financial accounts, reports and records are prepared and published;
- m) managing the competitive tendering process for the allocation of projects; and
- n) monitoring and overseeing the implementation of all Universal Service projects to ensure that all obligations are fulfilled within the required timeframes.

The Authority shall set up ***Stakeholder Input Groups*** from time to time to seek advice from stakeholders in the industry when the need arises. The Stakeholder Input groups may comprise

stakeholders relevant to the Universal Service projects under consideration by the Universal Service Committee. Such stakeholders may include representatives from various service providers, community and social development, residents of underserved communities, representatives of the relevant Non-governmental agencies, representatives of population groups that fall within the access gap (e.g. differently-abled persons), or any other group determined by the Universal Service Committee to have a key interest.

It must be noted that members of the Stakeholder Input Group will be selected based on the nature of the proposed projects under consideration at that point in time.

The **Monitoring Officers** shall be employees of the Authority identified by the Universal Service Committee. The Monitoring Officers shall have responsibility for:

- a) monitoring Universal Service projects being implemented by the service providers on an on-going basis to ensure compliance with contracts awarded by the Authority; and
- b) preparing reports on the progress and the status of Universal Service projects to the Universal Service Committee; and
- c) advising on any proposed changes to the costs, deliverables or to the output of the Universal Service projects under implementation;
- d) identifying Universal Service projects that have become sustainable and no longer require financing from the USF; and
- e) measuring the uptake of basic telecommunications services in areas when Universal Service projects are rolled out.

Statement on Universal Service Project Administration:

The selection and implementation of the Universal Service projects will be administered by the Universal Service Committee. The Minister responsible for Telecommunications will be required to provide approval for projects before implementation.

1.5 Operating Principles for Determining the Universal Service Projects

A key determinant of the success of any Universal Service project will depend on the creation of sound decision-making principles. All stakeholders involved, inclusive of contributors and beneficiaries of the USF, must perceive the process for the award of projects as being fair and transparent. Therefore the principles that would be upheld by the Authority during the process for choosing and implementing Universal Service projects include:

1.5.1 Accountability

Important drivers associated with determining and funding projects are proper financial management and accountability to all stakeholders involved. As a result, provisions must be put in place to uphold the financial integrity of the USF. Such provisions include:

1.1.1.1 Separate Universal Service Account

Section 53 (6) of the Telecommunications Act states:

‘The Authority shall keep and maintain a separate account opened with the approval of the Minister of Finance for the purpose of depositing funds collected in respect of the funding of the services referred to in section 28 and such funds shall not be used for any other purpose.’

Consistent with the above, the Authority has established a stand-alone account for the USF where monies are designated for the purpose of promoting Universal Service. The budget for the USF will also be shown separately within the Authority’s annual budget⁴ in order to ensure transparency and proper recording of the collection and disbursement of Universal Service Funds.

For the operations of the USF, accounting procedures established in accordance with the Authority’s Financial Rules and the Telecommunications Act, shall be followed for collecting, tabulating and distributing monies.

1.1.1.2 Establishment of Process for Selection of Projects

There should be guidelines in place to govern the operations of the fund and the decision-making process of the Universal Service Committee who will be responsible for the selection of Universal Service projects and the collection and distribution of monies from the USF to Fund these projects. Such guidelines as listed in Section 7.4, will promote accountability and transparency as stakeholders will be aware of the process followed for the determination of the projects and for the operations of the USF.

1.1.1.3 Public Reports

The Authority considers that in order for there to be confidence by concessionaires and key stakeholders in the determination of Universal Service projects, the process for the periodic review of the projects selected by the Committee and the allocation of Universal Service Funds must be a transparent one. In order to facilitate this, the Authority shall publish a biennial Universal Service Implementation Report and an annual Universal Service Fund Accounting Report.

As referred to in Section 6.1.3, the Universal Service Implementation Report shall be published biennially in June and shall contain information on:

⁴ The Authority’s annual budget is published in the GoRTT Draft Estimates of Expenditure

- the description and details of a two (2) year implementation plan of Universal Service projects to be undertaken and the proposed budget for these initiatives;
- A report on the progress of Universal Service projects currently being funded by the USF; and
- Any revisions of the USF objectives that may be necessary for the period following the current financial year.

Also previously mentioned, a Fund Accounting report should be published annually three (3) months after the end of the Authority's financial year and shall contain information on the collection and disbursement of Funds from the USF.

1.1.1.4 Independent Auditing

The accounts published in the Fund Accounting Report are public accounts and will be audited by the Auditor General of Trinidad and Tobago pursuant to section 57 (2) of the Act, which states:

“On completion of an audit of the Authority, the Auditor General or an auditor authorised by him to undertake the audit, as the case may be, shall immediately draw to the attention of the Minister and the Board any irregularity disclosed by the audit which in the opinion of the Auditor General or the auditor is of sufficient importance to justify so doing.”

1.5.2 Impartiality and Transparency

Another significant characteristic of the selection and implementation of projects is that of transparency and impartiality among service providers and other stakeholders in the industry. In particular, the integrity of the project decision-making process should not be compromised by the impression of favouritism or bias being displayed towards any one service provider or stakeholder in the industry. Impartiality and transparency however can be supported through the establishment of proper operating processes and procedures. Therefore, in accordance with Section 28 of the Telecommunications Act, the Board will forward recommendations on the Universal Service projects to be undertaken to the Minister responsible for Telecommunications for approval.

While the Universal Service Committee will be responsible for the management and project implementation of the Universal Service initiatives, the Board will provide oversight and generally an advisory and monitoring role.

1.5.3 Efficiency

Another key operating principle in the selection and implementation of Universal Service projects is that of efficiency. The Universal Service Committee must ensure that monies in the USF are efficiently used for the implementation of Universal Service initiatives to reduce the digital divide. Efficiency may be promoted through:

- The establishment and monitoring of targets for the implementation of the Universal Service projects; and
- Allocation of the required human resources to carry out the tasks required by the Universal Service Committee and other members of the decision-making and implementation process is important so as to not cause any unjust delays in the carrying out of projects.

1.6 Selection of Universal Service Projects

1.6.1 Submission of Universal Service Projects

At the beginning of each operating period the Universal Service Committee shall initiate the process of identifying projects to be considered for funding. This process will include:

- Consideration of GoRTT's national and medium term development policy and plans;
- solicitation of proposals from telecommunications service providers;
- solicitation of proposals from relevant Ministries and other stakeholder groups;
- identification of projects through conducting digital divide surveys and other data gathering exercises.

This process does not preclude the Universal Service Committee from identifying and soliciting projects at any other time during the operating period. However any implementation of identified projects must be approved by the Board and ultimately the Minister responsible for Telecommunications.

The process of soliciting project proposals from telecommunications service providers and other interested parties may include the following:

- a) public meetings and consultations;
- b) face to face meetings with specific stakeholder groups;
- c) online advertisement/solicitation through the Authority's website;
- d) public announcements/advertisements on the newspapers or the broadcasting media for the invitation of proposed projects; or
- e) any other information-gathering exercises to inform the identification of projects.

1.7 Project Appraisal and Selection

The Universal Service Committee shall review the project proposals and shall make recommendations to the Board of the Authority for approval and to be financed by the USF according to the procedures established.

The Universal Service Committee should not comprise any individuals involved in the Universal Service projects who may have foreseeable economic interests in the outcome of a decision to be taken on any fund-related matter.

1.7.1 Complete Assessment of Projects

The Universal Service Committee shall conduct complete assessments for all project proposals submitted for consideration within the given operating period. On completion of the assessments, selected project proposals will be used to determine which projects will be recommended to the Board for funding from the USF.

In conducting these project assessments, the Universal Service Committee may rely upon input and assistance from technical and other staff from the Authority, and any other external sources that can assist in the decision-making process. The Universal Service Committee may also conduct any necessary public inquiries to obtain further information about the scope, nature, benefits and costs of any proposed project, in particular through requests for information or public consultations with relevant stakeholders.

In assessing the proposed projects, the Universal Service Committee should consider the following criteria in its evaluations:

- a) Policy Priorities – Determines whether the objectives of the project are in keeping with the objectives and priorities of national policy.
- b) Technical Feasibility and Requirements - Evaluate and identify the technical and all other essential components of the project to define the potential scope of work that would be required for a telecommunications service provider to implement the project as defined. While various technologies may be proposed by different providers, a baseline set of assumptions as to the basic approaches likely to be used should be determined, to serve as a basis for assessing the economic and financial structure of the project.
- c) Financial Analysis - Estimate the initial capital investment and other, start-up expenditures necessary to launch the project. Provide a breakdown of these costs in as much detail as possible. Estimate annual recurring expenses for operations, maintenance, and support needed to maintain the ongoing delivery of the services over a 5 year period. Prepare estimated forecasts of the annual service revenues that will be

generated by the project and will offset some of its costs. Forecasts should consider expected revenue growth for a period of at least 5 years.

- d) Economic and Social Cost-Benefit Analysis - Prepare an assessment of the economic and social benefits to the communities or population group, and to the country as a whole, that would be likely to result from implementing the proposed project.
- e) Risk Analysis - Identify the most likely threats to the project and analyze the impact of such scenarios on the project.

1.7.2 Final Project Selection

Based on the results of the above project assessment, the Universal Service Committee shall prepare recommendations to the Board as to the priority projects to be financed during the operating period. The recommendations shall be subject to the constraint that the total cost of the combined recommended projects shall not exceed the available USF Project Budget amount for the relevant time period.

The final set of project proposals and recommendations will be presented to the Board for review and consideration in the selection of projects to be financed under the current Operating Plan.

The projects approved by the Board shall then be submitted to the Minister responsible for Telecommunications for approval. The Universal Service Committee shall publicly announce the projects approved.

Appendix IV

Universal Service Fund (USF) Claim Form



TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (TATT)

UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND (USF) CLAIM FORM

Project Information

- 1) Name of Concessionaire
- 2) Project Name
- 3) Project Number
- 4) Start Date of Project
- 5) Estimated Completion Date of Project
- 6) Project Phase (if applicable)
- 7) Project Location
- 8) Total Approved Funding \$.....
- 9) Total Claim Amount \$.....

10) Details of Claim:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Designation: _____

Date: _____

For official use only

	Name in Block Letters	Signature	Date
Claim certified by			
Claim checked by			
Payment approved by			







Please attach claim form to your original invoice for the amount claimed together with all relevant documentation to support the claim

Appendix V Service Provider Packages and Rates




Table 9: Service provider packages and rates as of July 2022

Service Provider	Package Speed	Cost (TT\$)	Type of Solution
Flow	100 Mbps DI/25 Mbps UI	\$284.65	Wired
Flow	300 Mbps DI/25 Mbps UI	\$465.75	Wired
Flow	500 Mbps DI/50 Mbps UI	\$675.00	Wired
Digicel	100 Mbps DI/100 Mbps UI	\$285.00	Wired
Digicel	250 Mbps DI/125 Mbps UI	\$560.00	Wired
Digicel	500 Mbps DI/250 Mbps UI	\$865.00	Wired
Amplia	150 Mbps DI/150 Mbps UI	\$260.00	Wired
Amplia	300 Mbps DI/300 Mbps UI	\$450.00	Wired
Amplia	500 Mbps DI/350 Mbps UI	\$625.00	Wired
Amplia	1000 Mbps DI/500 Mbps UI	\$750.00	Wired
Lisa Communications	2 Mbps DI/768 kbps UI	\$336.38	Wireless
Lisa Communications	3 Mbps DI/1 Mbps UI	\$448.88	Wireless
Lisa Communications	5 Mbps DI/1.5 Mbps UI	\$561.38	Wireless
Lisa Communications	7 Mbps DI/2 Mbps UI	\$673.88	Wireless
Green Dot	3 Mbps DI	\$145.13 (Install \$1687.50)	Wireless
Green Dot	10 Mbps DI	\$178.88 (Install \$1687.50)	Wireless
Green Dot	15 Mbps DI	\$223.88 (Install \$1687.50)	Wireless
Green Dot	20 Mbps DI	\$336.38 (Install \$1687.50)	Wireless

Flow Packages and Rates Snapshots

STANDARD	SELECT	PREMIUM
\$284.65/mo	\$465.75/mo	\$675/mo
 100 Mbps Max download speed	 300 Mbps Max download speed	 500 Mbps Max download speed
 25 Mbps Max upload speed	 25 Mbps Max upload speed	 50 Mbps Max upload speed

Digicel Packages and Rates Snapshots

SPEED	DETAILS	PRICE (VAT INCL.)
100 Mbps	Upload/Download For Basic Home Use 	\$285
250 Mbps	Upload/Download For Gamers and Online School work 	\$560
500 Mbps	Download/Upload for Family and Heavy internet users 	\$865

Amplia Packages and Rates Snapshot

Essential Internet 150	Select Internet 300	Premium Internet 500	Ultra Internet 1 GIG
Features: (Download / Upload) (Up to) 150Mbps / 150Mbps	Features: (Download / Upload) (Up to) 300Mbps / 300Mbps	Features: (Download / Upload) (Up to) 500Mbps / 350Mbps	Features: (Download / Upload) (Up to) 1GB / 500Mbps
\$260.00 Vat Incl.	\$450.00 Vat Incl.	\$625.00 Vat Incl.	\$750.00 Vat Incl.
Sign Up	Sign Up	Sign Up	Sign Up

Lisa Communications Packages and Rates Snapshot

Service	Rate	VAT 12.5%	Total
2Mb Residential Circuit (2Mbps/768kbps)	\$299.00	\$37.38	\$336.38
3Mb Residential Circuit (3Mbps/1Mbps)	\$399.00	\$49.88	\$448.88
5Mb Residential Circuit (5Mbps/1.5Mbps)	\$499.00	\$62.38	\$561.38
7Mb Residential Circuit (7Mbps/2Mbps)	\$599.00	\$74.88	\$673.88

Green Dot Packages and Rates Snapshot



Up to 3 Mbps
Month to Month
Install: \$1,687.50



Up to 3 Mbps
One (1) Year Contract
Install: \$843.75



Up to 3 Mbps
Three (3) Year Contract
Install: \$421.88



Up to 3 Mbps
Year in Advance
Install: \$843.75



Up to 10 Mbps
Month to Month
Install: \$1,687.50
TT \$178.88 per month



Up to 10 Mbps
One (1) Year Contract
Install: \$843.75
TT \$178.88 per month



Up to 10 Mbps
Three (3) Year Contract
Install: \$421.88
TT \$178.88 per month



Up to 10 Mbps
Year in Advance
Install: \$843.75
TT \$1,609.92 per year



Up to 15 Mbps
Month to Month
Install: \$1,687.50
TT \$223.88 per month



Up to 15 Mbps
One (1) Year Contract
Install: \$843.75
TT \$223.88 per month



Up to 15 Mbps
Three (3) Year Contract
Install: \$421.88
TT \$223.88 per month



Up to 15 Mbps
Year in Advance
Install: \$843.75
TT \$2,014.92 per year



Up to 20 Mbps
Month to Month
Install: \$1,687.50
TT \$336.38 per month



Up to 20 Mbps
One (1) Year Contract
Install: \$843.75
TT \$336.38 per month



Up to 20 Mbps
Three (3) Year Contract
Install: \$421.88
TT \$336.38 per month



Up to 20 Mbps
Year in Advance
Install: \$843.75
TT \$3,027.42 per year