CONSULTATION PAPER

Proposed 2026 UAS Projects

Issued on 19 September 2025

Contents

1. Consultation

Pursuant to the provisions of Part V of the National Information and Communications Technology Act 2009 (NICT Act 2009), particularly relating to the implementation of UAS Projects, NICTA commences this public consultation through the issue of this Consultation document to the operator licensees, relevant government agencies, other industry stakeholders and the general public. This Consultation document provides guidance and focuses attention on the proposed UAS Projects for 2026 and sets out the expected outcomes of this consultation.

Under Section 108(1) of the Act, NICTA is engaged amongst other tasks relating to the UAS Projects to:

   (i)   receive from stakeholders' submissions on proposals for UAS Projects; and
   (ii)   undertake public consultation, if NICTA considers it necessary or desirable, to identify UAS Projects and their indicative costing.

In undertaking its tasks, NICTA now presents the Proposed UAS Projects for 2026 and seeks comments and views of all stakeholders. NICTA also invites proposals for potential new project concepts with indicative costing as well as project sites/locations.

1.1   Feedback Submissions

All written comments must be submitted via email only to uas@nicta.gov.pg .

Copies of all submissions received will be published on NICTA's Public Register. Additional procedural information is set out in the Guidelines on the submission of written comments to public consultations and public inquiries, which are available on NICTA's Public Register.

Deadline for submission of written comments is COB Friday, 17th October 2025.

Upon request, NICTA is available to meet with stakeholders including operators, Government departments and agencies to discuss this consultation paper.

Any enquiries relating to this consultation should be addressed to the following persons in the first instance;

Mr. Warren Suti – Manager Project Planning, UAS Secretariat

Email: wsuti@nicta.gov.pg

Phone: 3033279

2. Background

Pursuant to the requirements of Part V of the NICTA Act 2009, the Universal Access and Service (UAS) regime has been implemented by NICTA to fulfil the UAS objectives of the Government as set out in the Act. The UAS regime primarily comprises of the UAS Fund which is managed by NICTA through the UAS Secretariat, with the oversight of the UAS Board.

UAS has an important part to play in the Government's overall digital transformation agenda as demonstrated in key government development policies and plans including the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) IV 2023-2027, the Digital Government Act 2022 and other relevant laws, policies and plans which recognise the need for increased and improved connectivity.

In 2022, NICTA through a consultative process developed the UAS Strategic Plan 2023-2027 which provides a guiding framework for planning purposes and informs stakeholders by delineating the UAS approach, the scope of projects and estimate funding levels required to assist the annual UAS Projects process. It is designed to be flexible and adaptive to accommodate the prevailing technological, regulatory and policy environments.

3. UAS Strategy of the Government

The UAS Strategy, which also fittingly aligns in terms of overall timelines (2023-2027) with the Government's MTDP IV, identifies three (3) UAS Initiatives for implementation by the UAS Board through NICTA namely (i) Broadband Initiative, (ii) Broadcasting Initiative and (iii) Meaningful Connectivity Initiative. These Initiatives provide the basis to derive programs and specific UAS Projects that could form part of the UAS implementation over the five-year period to achieve the Objectives of UAS.

3.1 UAS Initiatives

3.1.1 Broadband Initiative

The purpose of the Broadband Internet Initiative is to facilitate the expansion of broadband network coverage throughout all unserved areas and populations of PNG, toward the goal of Universal Access and Service in broadband.

The objective of this Initiative is to achieve 100% of PNG's population covered by reliable advanced wireless mobile telecommunications network signals (at least 4G+ quality) as well as increased coverage of fixed broadband services.

Current statistics estimate that approximately 79% of the population (11.78 million) is covered by a 2G network, 76% by 3G, and 76% by 4G. The Mobile Broadband Initiative aims to extend 4G mobile services to the remaining 24% of the population that remains uncovered. This uncovered population is unevenly distributed across all 22 provinces, with some provinces having significantly higher coverage gaps than others.

A total of twenty-one (22) new greenfield mobile towers are planned for deployment in 2026 to provide 4G mobile services. Of these, sixteen (16) towers will be subsidized by the NICTA through the Universal Access Service (UAS) Fund. The remaining six (6) towers may be delivered through

a potential partnership with the Manus Provincial Government. The proposed sites are distributed across the four regions of Papua New Guinea. For detailed site locations, refer to **Table 01**.

Fixed broadband also falls under this initiative, which primarily aims to provide high-speed broadband connectivity to key institutions—both government and private. The targeted sectors include education, health, transport, agriculture, business, and other essential public service areas. This initiative supports digital transformation by enabling reliable and efficient internet access for socio-economic development.

Partnership is critical to the success of Fixed Broadband projects, as sustainability largely depends on the recipient's ability to maintain the services. This remains a major challenge. To address this, NICTA has piloted several partnership models across key sectors such as education, agriculture, and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

For the 2026 project, NICTA intends to connect thirty (30) schools, with a higher priority for high schools and secondary schools. Other learning institutions may be included as they become ready and available for integration. For detailed site locations, refer to **Table 02**.

3.1.2 Broadcasting Initiative

Broadcasting services over television and radio which will continue to be important means of increasing access to information for the populace remain a priority of UAS fund support. Programs under this initiative are aimed at the expanding free-to-air/view broadcasting network coverage particularly in rural areas. The initiative also seeks to promote local media/broadcast content of relevance to PNG's social and economic development.

Pending the finalization of the Analogue to Digital (A2D) Policy, NICTA will continue to support the delivery of free-to-air broadcasting services. Current coverage data indicates that approximately 85% of the total population (estimated at 11.78 million) has access to AM radio services, 34% have access to FM radio services, and only 27% have access to analogue television services.

A total of nine (9) districts have been earmarked to be provided with FM radio services in 2026 in accordance with the UAS 5-Year strategic plan. The proposed project sites will target the remaining 66% of the population who currently do not have access to FM radio services, aiming to improve nationwide coverage and ensure more equitable access to broadcast information. For detailed site locations, refer to **Table 03.**

3.1.3 Meaningful Connectivity Initiative

This initiative focuses on the demand side of ICT development objectives, to ensure that citizens, communities and businesses are able to gain the most benefits from the installation and availability of advanced broadband ICT networks and services. Different groups of users will find value in different types of ICT applications, functions, devices, and services, but there will in all cases be a wide scope of potential uses for citizens, businesses and government.

The purpose of this initiative is therefore to help develop a platform for the future, long term development of ICT utilization and opportunities across Papua New Guinea society. Projects under this initiative will support the development of meaningful applications and content, digital skills development, and seek to make devices including computers and smart mobile devices

affordable to all citizens and businesses throughout the country. For detailed site locations, refer to **Table 04**

4. Proposed UAS Projects for 2026

The proposed UAS Projects for 2026 have been identified based on the priorities of Government as set out in the ICT sector policies and plans of the Government including the recently released MTDP IV. The proposed projects are designed to cover priority areas of the Government's digital transformation agenda for PNG and contain a mix of major ICT infrastructure and services, as well as digital literacy projects.

The proposed projects and estimated budgets are tabulated below. The detailed cost breakup for each project site can be made available upon request by contacting the Manager Project Planning, on 3033279 or email: wsuti@nicta.gov.pg.

No.	Province/District	LLG	Proposed Ward/Location	Latitude	Longitude	Indicative Budget (K)
1	Kikori	Baimuru Rural	Ikinu	-7.81099	145.006011	**K25,000,000**
2	Wosera Gawi	Burui/Kunai Rural	Bangwigie/Manja	-3.955418	142.940106	
3	Usino Bundi	Gama Rural	Garisakan/Umerum	-5.233895°	145.177517°	
4	Alotau	Makamaka Rural	Magabara	-9.623528	149.830421	
5	Nipa-Kutubu	Mt Bosavi Rural	Kabulusado	-6.230079	142.673551	
6	Samarai-Murua	Murua Rural	Kauwai	-9.059857	152.604131	
7	Telefomin	Namea Rural	Warkori	-3.923558	141.879066	
8	Goilala	Tapini Rural	Central Ivane	-8.334293	147.143868	
9	Manus	Tetidu	Pitarait	-2.152491	147.063724	
10	South Bougainville	Torokina LLG	Burue	-6.296944	155.198611	
11	South Bougainville	Kunua	Atsinima	-6.101139	154.952384	
12	Ambunti-Drekikier	Tunap/Hustein	Hanasi	-4.551342	142.343271	
13	Vanimo-Green River	Walsa Rural	Tamina 1	-3.198947	141.479718	

14	Wewak	Wewak Islands Rural	Biem 1	-3.599729	144.823343	
15	Samarai-Murua	Yaleyembral	Griffin Point	-11.384176	153.31405	
16	Angoram	Yuat Rural	Sipisipi	-4.552266	143.859014	
17	Manus	Balopa Rural	Lou	-2.390851	147.355404	
18	Manus	Nigoherm Rural	Mal Admin	-1.394310	144.173471	
19	Manus	Nogoherm Rural	Akip High School	-1.541907	145.027986	
20	Manus	Aua-Wuvulu Rural	Aua	-1.474859	143.056442	
21	Manus	Aua-Wuvulu Rural	Wuvulu	-1.746095	142.824703	
22	Manus	Pobuma Rural	Ndraukei	-2.192881	146.640391	

Table 1: Proposed locations for Mobile Broadband

No.	Province	LLG	Institution/School	Latitude	Longitude	Indicative Budget
1	Manus	Pobuma Rural	Lokobou Junior High School	-2.192881	146.640391	
2	North Bougainville	Tinputz	Tinputz Day Highschool	-5.585003	155.050854	
3	Central Bougainville	Wakunai	Rigu St Joseph's High School	-5.997957	155.355542	
4	North Bougainville	Selau/Suir	Tarlena Bishop Wade Technical Secondary School	-5.484442	154.722259	**K10,500,000**
5	Abau	Cloudy bay rural	Moreguina Primary (High) School	-10.016316	148.475650	
6	Markham	Umi Atzera Rural	Markham Valley Secondary School	-6.344488	146.239797	
7	Manus	Balopa	Pisik Adventist Junior	-2.375559	147.356370	

8	Nawaeb	Wain-Erap	Gain Junior High School	-6.4413959	146.749960	
9	Alotau	Weraua	Holy Name Secondary	-10.094215	150.078701	
10	Ialibu Pangia	Ialibu Urban	Ialibu Secondary	-6.2683719	143.986651	
*11-30	Remaining sites to be determine during the consultation					

Table 2: Proposed Fixed Broadband project locations.

*Interested parties to submit request form downloaded from NICTA/UAS website: https://www.nicta.gov.pg/ or https://uas.nicta.gov.pg/

No.	Province/District	Latitude	Longitude	Indicative Budget
1	Abau	-10.29556	149.44164	
2	Rigo	-9.83411	147.61189	
3	Karimui–Nomane	-6.34621	145.10080	**K3,125,000.00**
4	Nakanai	-5.61005	150.69860	
5	Nuku	-3.57221	142.62644	
6	Vanimo-Green	-3.59934	141.21601	
7	Delta Fly	-8.01703	142.75800	
8	Middle Fly	-7.01418	141.49518	
9	Central Bougainville	-5.95008	155.09968	

Table 3: Proposed projects for Radio Broadcasting.

Project	Locations	Indicative Budget
Digital Literacy Training	TBC	K500,000
Smart Devices	TBC	K500,000

Table 4: Proposed projects for Digital Literacy and Smart Devices support projects.

5. Budget Summary for 2026

The proposed budget amount for the proposed UAS Projects is around K K39.625 million with K28.5 million budgeted for the Broadband Initiative Projects. The Broadcasting Initiatives and Meaningful Connectivity projects annually make up K 3.15 million and K1 million respectively.

The budget for projects provides the basis for calculating the UAS Levy for 2026. The UAS Levy calculation takes into account the total cost of projects, industry revenues and other funding sources as stipulated in the Section 100 of the National ICT Act 2009.

Program	Year 2026
Broadband Projects	K35.5 million
Broadcasting Projects	K3.15 million
Meaningful Connectivity Projects	K1 million
	K39.625 million

6. UAS Project Procurement

In accordance with the requirement of Section 109 of the National ICT Act 2009 and the National Procurement Act 2018, NICTA implements a competitive selection process to identify successful bidders to implement UAS Projects ensuring the efficient rollout of projects.

NICTA executes a competitive selection process to identify successful bidders to implement UAS Projects each year, in accordance with the National ICT Act 2009, its regulations, and the regulatory principles promoting transparency and universal ICT access. Crucially, procurement for UAS Projects is subject to the National Procurement Act 2018, which governs the acquisition of goods, services, and works to ensure fairness, accountability, and value for money. While the Public Finances (Management) Act 1995 does not apply to the competitive selection process (to the extent permitted by law), compliance with the National Procurement Act 2018 remains a cornerstone of NICTA's approach, aligning with the Government's digital transformation goals in the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) IV 2023-2027.

Stakeholders are invited to provide feedback on optimizing this procurement framework to enhance project delivery, attract capable operators, and accelerate ICT access in rural Papua New Guinea.

7. Focus Areas of Consultation

To facilitate a focused approach, NICTA encourages stakeholders to pay special heed to the following consultative questions and key aspects of UAS project development process which are highlighted below.

Focus Areas	Questions	Guiding remarks
Needs assessment	What are current ICT needs and challenges in your area?	NICTA seeks your views and comments to identify needs and challenges relating to ICT.
Project feedback	What are your views on the proposed ICT projects? UAS Projects - Mobile Broadband - Fixed Broadband - Broadcasting services - Digital literacy training	NICTA seeks your views and comments on the scope and scale of UAS projects to improve the roll out of ICT infrastructure and services in rural PNG. Include any technologies most suitable for PNG context.
	What are your views on the proposed UAS projects budget for 2026?	NICTA seeks your views and comments on the proposed budgets for the projects for 2026 for NICTA's consideration.
Project Cost	What are your view on the project cost?	NICTA requests your input on the proposed project cost.
Prioritisation	Which projects should be prioritised and why?	
Additional suggestions	Do you have any other suggestions for improving ICT services in rural areas? Project area or site identification	NICTA seeks your views, comments and proposals on potential projects for NICTA and the UAS Board's consideration.
	Partnership Opportunities	NICTA encourages public and private organisations to submit comments and proposals on potential partnership opportunities with NICTA to help roll our digital infrastructure and services to rural areas.

8. Annexure

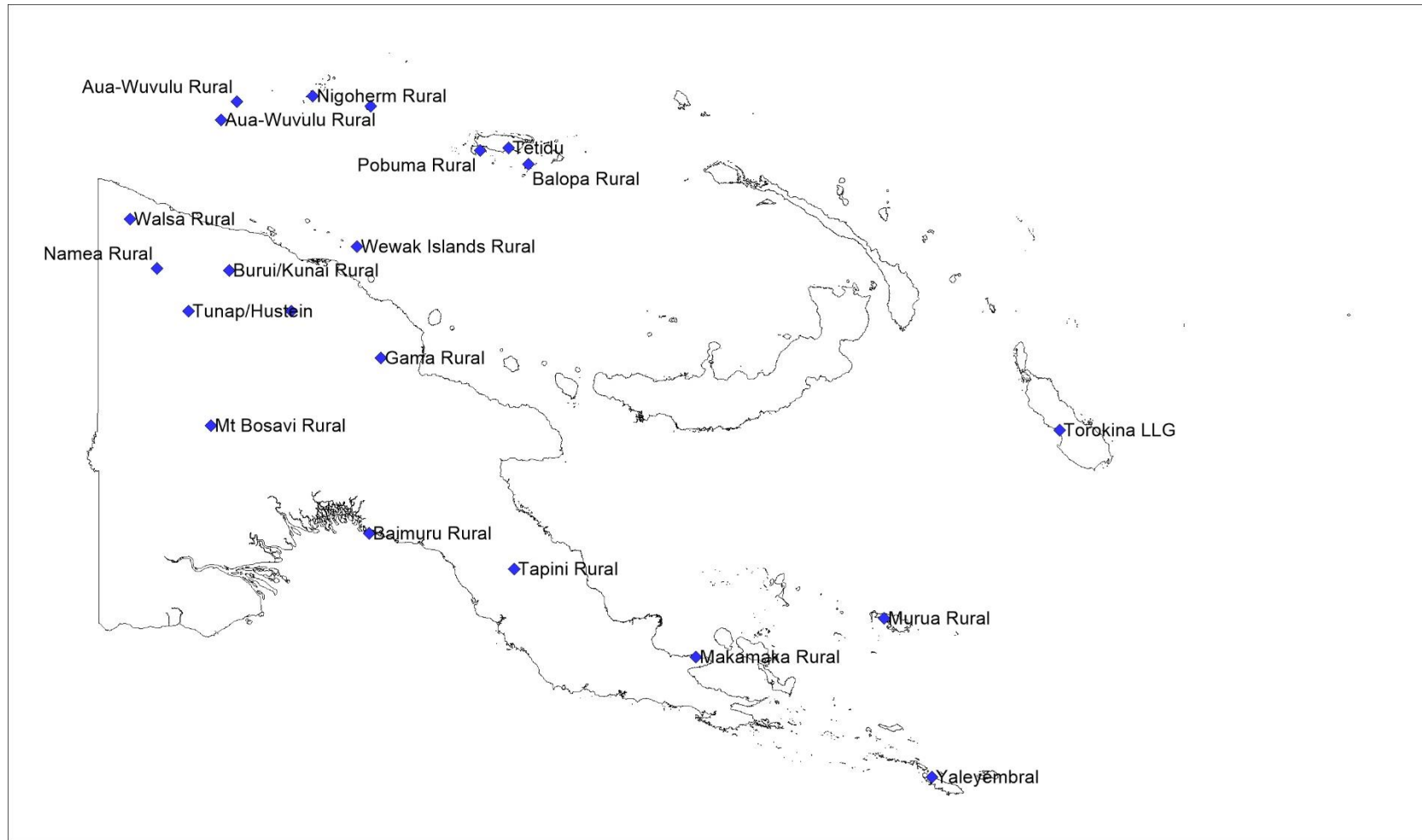## 8.1 Maps of Proposed Projects

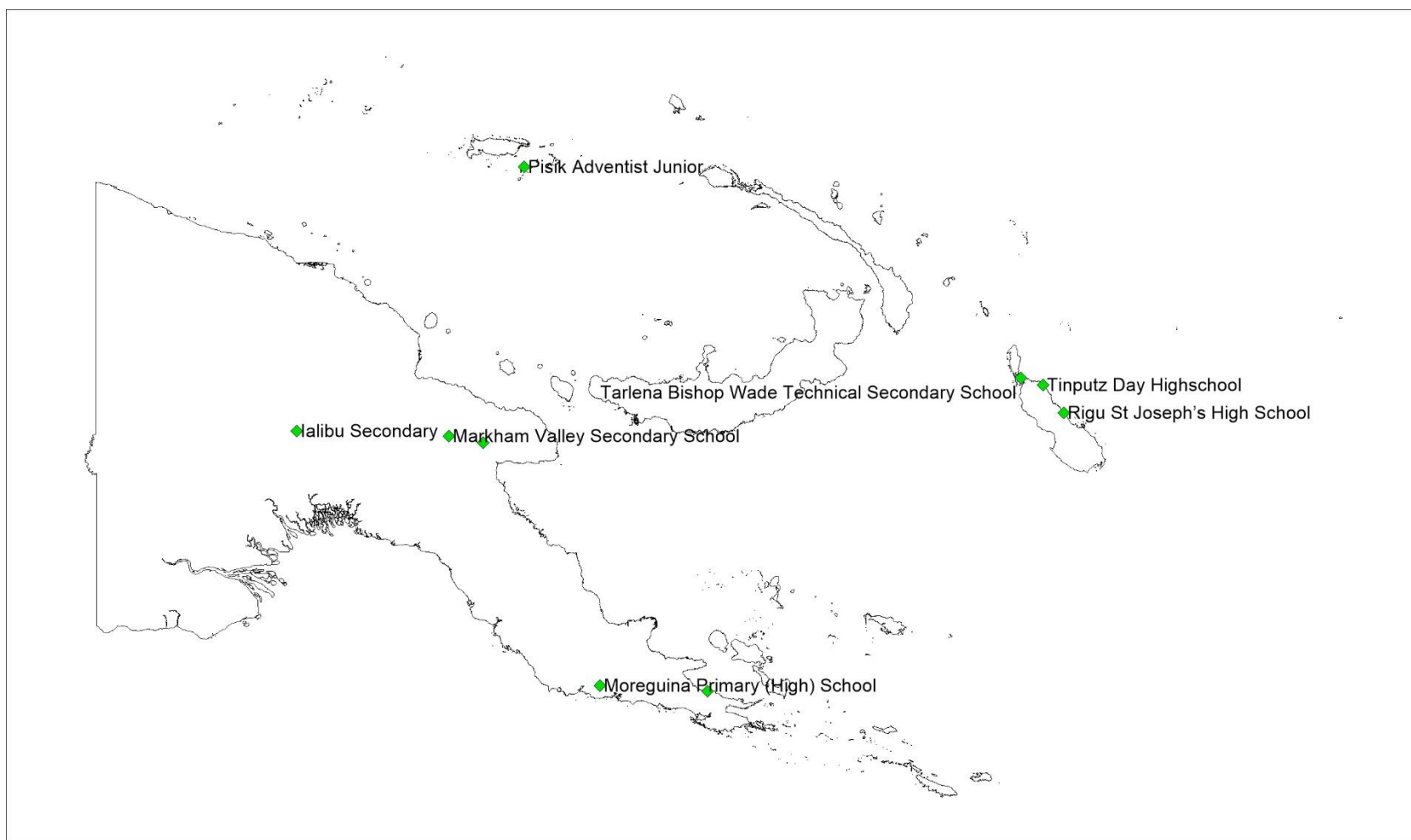**Figure 1: Map of proposed Mobile Broadband Projects locations.**

I

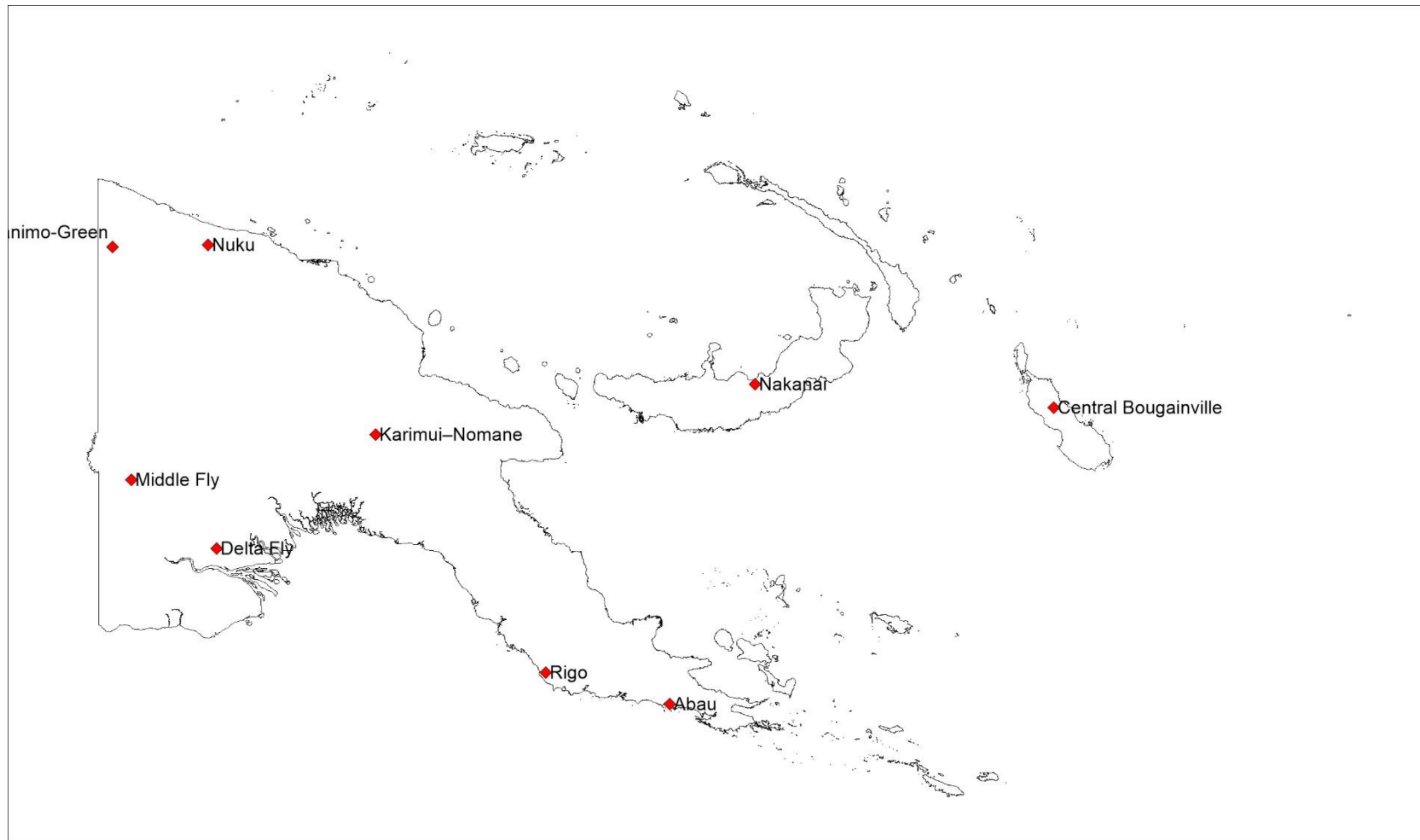**Figure 2: Map of proposed locations for Fixed Broadband Project.**
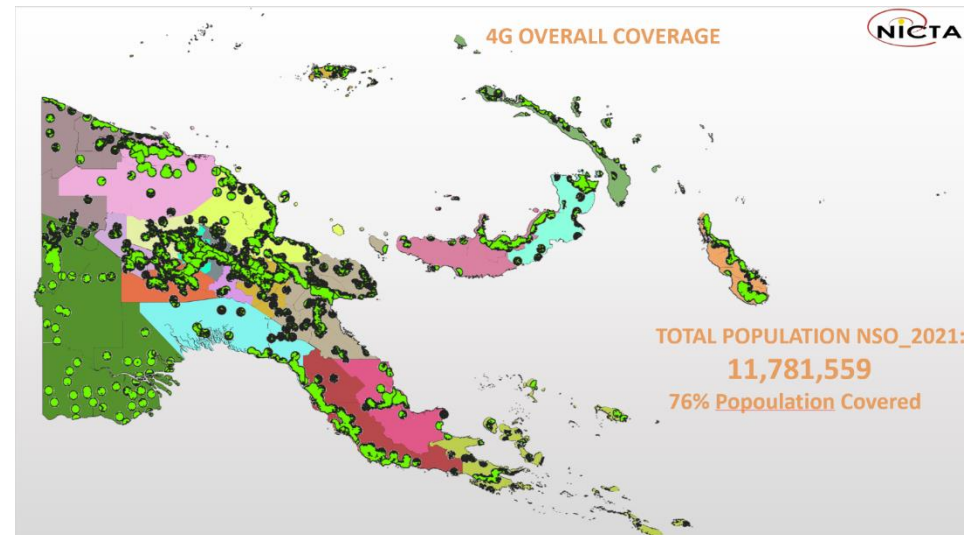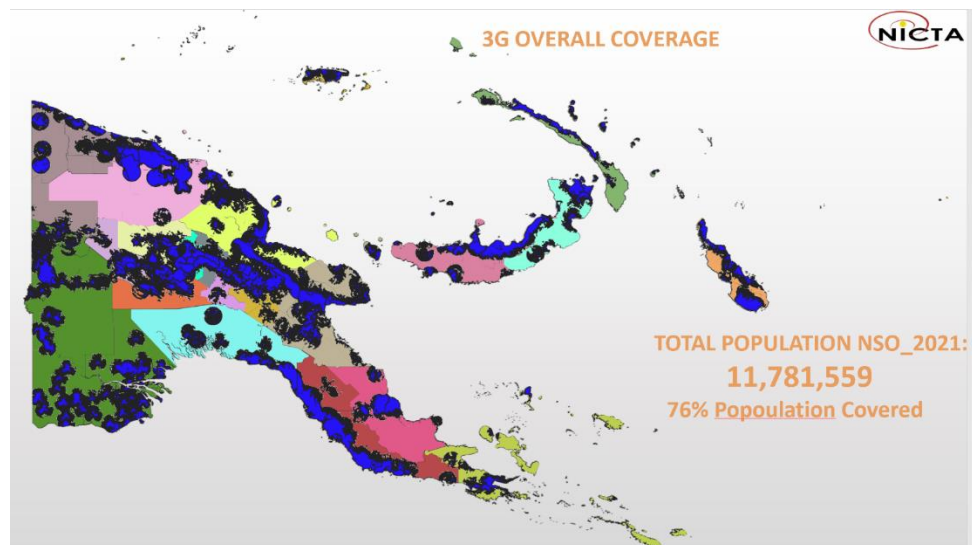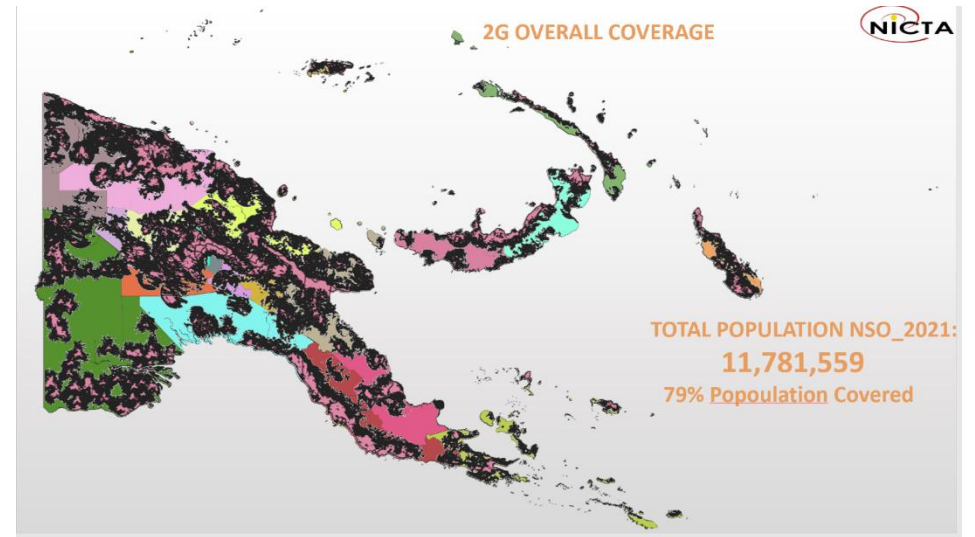
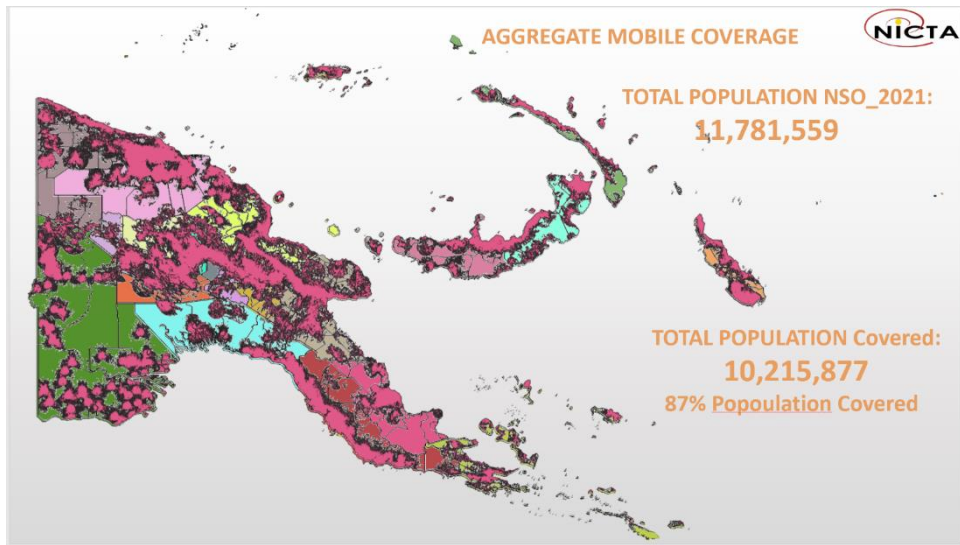**Figure 3: Map of proposed Radio Broadcasting Project locations.**

8.2 Current Coverage

- Mobile coverage maps

- Broadcasting coverage maps