



Digital access across cultures

HOW DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY IN THE PACIFIC CAN BE IMPLEMENTED THROUGH A 'PACIFIC LENS' (A PRIORITY POST COVID-19)

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Executive Summary

The measures put in place globally to stop the spread of Covid-19 has challenged accepted norms in the aid, development and humanitarian sector when it comes to programme design and programme delivery. As a result, many of the international non-government organisations (iNGOs) that are members of the Council for International Development (CID) are looking to renew their approaches to programme delivery and in some cases their operating model to continue to provide needed assistance to the communities they serve.

An avenue open to these organisations is digital access. While action on digital access is largely missing from recent agendas, the Lancet Covid-19 Commission statement to the 75th UN General Assembly notes that *achieving universal digital access as a key to inclusion*¹.

Digital access opens up an opportunity to connect without needing to be in the same place as the community being connected with. The opportunity also brings a challenge, how to continue to deliver programmes when the people delivering the programmes cannot be there. The localisation agenda², a framework for shifting engagement models where local organisations deliver programmes funded through iNGOs is considered in this report. A multidomestic engagement approach.

Many of the programmes delivered by these organisations are in the states in the Pacific region bounded by the membership of the Pacific Islands Association of non-government organisations (PIANGO). A sparsely populated, large geographic area. Digital access varies across these states from fast fibre optic connections and developed mobile phone networks offering near real time video call capability to satellite connections with underdeveloped digital foundations where email, static information or record keeping uploads is possible.

Everyone needs connection, to learn, to grow and to challenge their status quo. This is the challenge and the core thesis of this research report. Covid-19 may have changed the way this currently happens, though there are alternatives worth considering.

Connection is being in the same space as another party, to be in relationship with them. Aid, development and humanitarian organisations come to the space with their own strategic lens. This is often in a long chain of the giver of assistance and the receiver of assistance. This chain is currently broken by Covid-19 responses. Organisations, such as: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Aotearoa, New Zealand (MFAT) are considering how they move from a classical strategic model, iNGOs and regional non-government organisations (NGOs) are considering if an adaptive strategic model still fits how they need to operate and CSOs in PIANGO member states are responding to need in a shaping strategic model. Each of these organisation types are in a cycle of strategic renewal³.

This is where the opportunities of digital access and localisation come into the renewal conversation. What is the strategic opportunity that a conversation bridging digital access across cultures and localisation brings these parties as we navigate through Covid-19? It is

¹ <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2820%2931927-9>

² <https://charter4change.org>

³ <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2012/your-strategy-needs-a-strategy>

the opportunity for people, CSOs and NGOs in PIANGO member states to pull resources and share ideas for investment. To do this the research introduces the concept of a virtual tapestry, a digital space / place where interested parties can engage in the Talanoa (inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue) that may have started in the physical world and needs to find a space to continue. Engaging on the virtual tapestry opens the opportunity to explore the *va*⁴ (the space between) together and find a way forward in partnership. Exploring, experiencing, growing and learning together brings the conversation into contribution and away from us and them. A place of mutual respect. The question then becomes how do we partner in an equal, transparent, results-oriented, responsible and complimentary way? An approach is engaging using a multidomestic engagement model where responsiveness to local needs, cohesiveness, trust, equality and respect speak to realising operational commitments⁵.

For iNGOs engaging in digital access is an avenue to enter the localisation Talanoa and to take steps to begin a shift in engagement models from international engagement to multidomestic engagement. iNGOs looking to engage may apply these three digital access principles:

Relationship Engaging each other with the type of digital access available to all participants.

Programme Co-designing programmes to suit the digital access applicable to the peoples engaging in the Talanoa.

Donor / funder access and value Respectfully engaging donors / funders in the story of the Talanoa.

MFAT, governments and other international supranational organisations, such as the United Nations, are global engagement organisations where time engaging in the Talanoa on the virtual tapestry brings the opportunities for parties to challenge the status quo and provides an avenue to shift attention, policy and funding structures.

It is also necessary to explore the digital foundations that this virtual tapestry sits on. Finding information and indicators to explore these foundations has proven challenging as “global” indicators and statistics do not include many of the PIANGO member states. This both illustrates the problem and the opportunity of digital foundations in these states. Collating information from alternate sources has provided insights that show the variety of digital foundations across these states, their relative affordability / unaffordability and how peoples of the Pacific are connecting to the virtual tapestry. These insights can inform approaches to the three digital access principles noted earlier.

The information shows that Vanuatu is well connected with fast, fibre optic cable connections to other countries, the cost of 1GB (gigabyte) of mobile data is almost double that of data in Aotearoa, New Zealand and is becoming a state where mobile access is the first choice for digital access. However, the relative affordability of data is magnitudes beyond the reach of the average person. Video calling may be possible though it may be

⁴ <http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/wendt/tatauing.asp>

⁵ Strategy and Organizational Culture in International Business Matrix, from Daniels J.D., Radebaugh L.H., Sullivan D.P. - International Business Environments and Operations, Fifteenth Edition: Figure 16.7 (ISBN: 978-1-292-01679-5)

limited to only a few people or organisations in Vanuatu. Interpreting the information in this way for all PIANGO states provides insights into how to engage on the virtual tapestry.

Consideration needs to be given to both the platform, tool or application (app) chosen to engage with and how safe people using it will be when it comes to programme design and holding Talanoa on the virtual tapestry so that there is a safe, rich, meaningful and useful va. Digital staff capability and capacity shapes digital access programme design and engagement toward generally available tools and apps, not into software development where the risk and uncertainty are much higher.

Governments and civil society in PIANGO member states have been grappling with how to respond to people's new behaviours as these possibilities have emerged. Responses have included temporary bans on generally available apps at various times. This may affect accessibility and needs to be factored into any approach to digital access.

In conclusion, everyone needs connection, to learn, to grow and to challenge their status quo. Digital access provides connection when we cannot be face-to-face. It is an opportunity to shift the status quo, to explore the va of digital access and the localisation agenda: to challenge strategic lenses, to grow engagement and to learn more about each other through the access provided by digital foundations. This Talanoa can shape new ways of engaging at a relationship, a programme and at a donor / funder access and value level.

Since Covid-19 has shaped where we can come together, the virtual tapestry provided by digital access has made this alternative a "go to" reality. It connects us so that we can be together, even when we are apart. It can also be a leveller, a place to sit on the virtual tapestry and engage in the Talanoa, to learn and grow until it is time to be face-to-face again. It may also continue the Talanoa when the time to be face-to-face has passed. At this time, choosing not to engage using digital access means choosing not to connect.

Digital access is a reality across PIANGO member states, the quality and type of access shapes engagement with the virtual tapestry. The need to engage in digital access is evident though the majority of PIANGO member organisations (and their members) are underserved or priced out of meaningfully engaging in the Talanoa on the virtual tapestry. International funding and attention to improve digital foundations will assist in aligning cost and benefit.

Importantly, digital access needs to stay open in the same way that trade routes need to stay open. In the times of Covid-19 and possibly beyond, it is the conduit for the Talanoa to continue.

The recommendation to the CID is to champion the adoption of a PIANGO statement of intent across all PIANGO members to fully utilise digital access as a virtual tapestry for Talanoa. Serving as a companion statement alongside the Localisation Agenda.

The recommendation to CID members is to stay in conversation by engaging in the Talanoa on the virtual tapestry, accelerating localisation goals, continuing the delivery of programmes and lobbying / influencing for digital access to be included as an enabler in all conversations at all levels.

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1 Context and approach

1.1 Context

The United Nations Development Programme⁶ and Pacific communities have identified digital connectivity and affordable internet access as a critical enabler post Covid-19. Digital not only assists citizens, it also enables societies both civil, business and social enterprises. Pacific nations internet penetration is low with Vanuatu having only 25.72% of individuals using the Internet in 2017⁷ and other Pacific nations with comparable penetration.

Vanuatu had US\$ 289m in international tourism receipts in 2017⁸ which was ~33% of the US\$ 880m in GDP that year⁹. Adding 2017 development funds of US\$ 132m¹⁰ to the tourism receipts accounts for nearly 50% of GDP that year. Much of this income and the expertise that comes with development funds will not reach the population of Vanuatu in 2020 as movement restrictions in place globally due to Covid-19 impact both the flow of people and the flow of funds. These restrictions have also devastated the tourism sector and the livelihoods that depend on it. A similar scenario is re-shaping societies across the Pacific. Pacific societies are also progressing the Localisation Agenda¹¹, this “means local and national actors at the forefront, lead the action and receive larger share of funding directly (more support and funding tools for local and national respondents), Koenraad Van Brabant”. This reflects a global movement to transform the international humanitarian system¹².

Improving digital access is an integral part of realising the Localisation Agenda. Shifts in strategic lenses, engagement models and digital foundations need to be explored with the focus on better digital access. It could see Aotearoa, New Zealand doctors ‘sit over the shoulder’ of doctors and surgeons in the Pacific, for diagnostic and treatment advice and support. It would enable schools in isolated islands to keep learning, even in lockdowns. It would support communities to pivot from tourism to primary produce, get advice, source markets and become digital exporters.

Everyone needs connection, to learn, to grow and to challenge their status quo¹³.

1.2 Research boundaries

This research explores digital access across cultures in the Pacific. The exploration focuses on engagement with communities and partners in the Pacific who work with CID members and are recipients of New Zealand aid, development and humanitarian assistance. This includes engagement with the implementers and the benefactors who may be CID members

⁶ <https://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/blog/2020/eight-months-in--we-need-three-wins--vaccine--digital-and-renewa.html>

⁷ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?locations=VU>

⁸ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.RCPT.CD?locations=VU&view=chart>

⁹ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/vanuatu>

¹⁰ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.CD?locations=VU>

¹¹ https://www.cid.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Discussion-Papers/542e7c5730/Appendix-1_Piango-Presentation_30-May-19.pdf

¹² <http://www.piango.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Istanbul-CSO-Development-Effectiveness-Principles.pdf>

¹³ <https://startnetwork.org/news-and-blogs/five-reasons-why-“localisation”-agenda-has-failed-past>

– predominantly government departments, international non-government organisations (iNGOs), social enterprises, civil society organisations (CSOs), commercial entities or the UN system.

The geographic region explored, and the candidate research pool includes the locations of representative members of the PIANGO organisation¹⁴.

Digital access for the purposes of this research means both:

- Access to information and communications technology connected to a reliable power source. A reliable power source is either a continuous supply of electricity, a generator, renewable energy sources or batteries.
- Access to places to share information, such as a website or virtual meeting facilities.

The Localisation Agenda (2019) <https://charter4change.org> sets the principles informing this report.

1.3 Research Approach

The original research intent was to consider first person experiences and perspectives through interviews and survey responses, Covid-19 has placed people's attention elsewhere.

The avenues for engaging interested parties were shifted to attendance at virtual conferences and plenaries over the period this research was conducted where engaged voices came together to discuss connection and digital access. Direct introductions from the CID and calls for interview participants through four requests in the weekly CID newsletter did not bring a representative interviewee group together. Also, further enquiries and requests outside of the CID did not bring further interview candidates. Conversations were held with interested respondents and their input is included in the themes of this report.

The annual CID Sector Survey 2019-20¹⁵ that was completed during the period of this research was chosen in favour of the proposed research survey. The survey captures localisation and partnership data that directly impacts the research in this report.

This research approach is favoured over interviews and direct surveys in the current environment. It shows that, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic is consuming most of the time at CID and PIANGO member organisations as they focus on survival, meeting the needs of their partners, their communities and overcoming immediate challenges.

¹⁴ <http://www.piango.org>

¹⁵ <https://www.cid.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Surveys/5f30181e/Sector-Survey-2019.pdf>

2 Analysis

The Covid-19 pandemic has seen many international organisations, including international non-government organisations (iNGOs), regionally focused non-government organisations (NGOs) and some governments pull their people out of PIANGO member states as a pandemic risk response measure¹⁶. A difficult choice, perhaps even necessary. This choice has created a gap in programme delivery and this has affected relationships that have taken time to build. Pacific peoples in these states are resorting to community led responses to unfinished programmes, disaster response and pandemic related challenges. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) such as community organisations, social enterprises and commercial organisations serving the community are also filling this gap. Now is the time to challenge the perceived requirement for international oversight, connection, delivery and reporting.

Not being there and engaged in the Talanoa (inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue) as an iNGO has accelerated trends toward locally run programmes across PIANGO member states. These organisations are now looking at ways to engage from afar and have identified digital access as an enabler to rebuild this engagement.

How would Talanoa work in a digital world? Would the va (te wa, in Māori)¹⁷, the space between be strong? What are the possibilities? When will this be a reality? These are the questions that are the foundation of this report.

Other questions that need to be asked are, do we need to engage using digital access, why is digital access important, what if we choose not to engage using digital access? The report also seeks to explore these questions and to propose a way forward. A crafted implementation plan will be explored in another section.

2.1 Strategic lenses

An aid, development or humanitarian assistance conversation between two parties will always start from two different places. The first party being the giver of assistance. The second party being the receiver of assistance, this may form a long chain as many parties become involved in the conversation. Each of these parties approach the conversation with a different lens. Let's consider a simplified view of the current model for this assistance in an Aotearoa, New Zealand context.



Figure 1, Simplified funding model

Now let's consider what strategic lens each party may bring to the conversation on a scale of malleability and predictability. Let's also rename communities to civil society organisations (CSO) so that we have consistency across this report.

¹⁶ <https://vsa.org.nz/about-vsa/news/vsa-update-a-message-from-the-ceo-stephen-goodman-kia-ora>

¹⁷ <http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/wendt/tatauing.asp>

	Malleability	Predictability
MFAT	Low	High
iNGO	Low	Low
CSO	High	Low

Table 1, Strategic styles assessment

MFAT is a government ministry that follows policy settings and reports into the SDGs global framework; this means that it is not very malleable and is predictable. An iNGO or NGO works within an agreed framework for funding and reporting and is responsive to the needs of the communities it engages in; this means that it is not malleable and is not predictable. A CSO is shaped by its community and responds to the needs of the community that it forms around; this means that it is malleable and is not predictable.

Based on this scale, each party maps into a distinct strategic style¹⁸ which influences the strategic lens they use. MFAT is a classical strategic style, the iNGO or NGO is an adaptive strategic style and the CSO is a shaping strategic style. The matrix below illustrates the strategic lens each party could bring to a conversation on development or humanitarian assistance and where there is potential for connection.

		MFAT (classical)	iNGO (adaptive)	CSO (shaping)
		We have funds and want results	We need funds to help communities and can show how we did it	We need to help our people, what options to we have?
MFAT (classical)	We have funds and want results		Some connection	Little connection
iNGO (adaptive)	We need funds to help communities and can show you how we did it	Some connection		Some connection
CSO (shaping)	We need to help our people, what options to we have?	Little connection	Some connection	

Table 2, Comparing strategic styles

Covid-19 has challenged these strategic styles as borders have closed, people have been relocated, economies have been impacted and the virus has spread around the world. Many organisations are fighting for their existence or seeing strategy being tested to breaking point. This includes MFAT, iNGOs / NGOs and CSOs. Each of these organisation types are entering into a survival strategy where *they should therefore look ahead, readying*

¹⁸ <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2012/your-strategy-needs-a-strategy>

themselves to assess the conditions of the new environment and to adopt an appropriate ... strategy once the crisis ends¹⁹. This opens up the exploration of strategic renewal.

This is where the opportunities of digital access and localisation come into the renewal conversation. What is the strategic opportunity that a conversation bridging digital access across cultures and localisation brings these parties as we navigate through Covid-19? Answering this question may open up shifts in relationships, shifts in ways of operating, opportunities for collaboration / innovation and a closer, engaged development and humanitarian assistance community across PIANGO member states.

2.2 Shifting engagement models

Engaging in Talanoa during and post Covid-19 will be different to engaging in Talanoa in the pre Covid-19 world. Digital access can help shift this engagement. Adding a localisation agenda lens provides a direction to this shift. The figure below shows how engagement could shift if all people engaged in the Talanoa with a localisation lens.

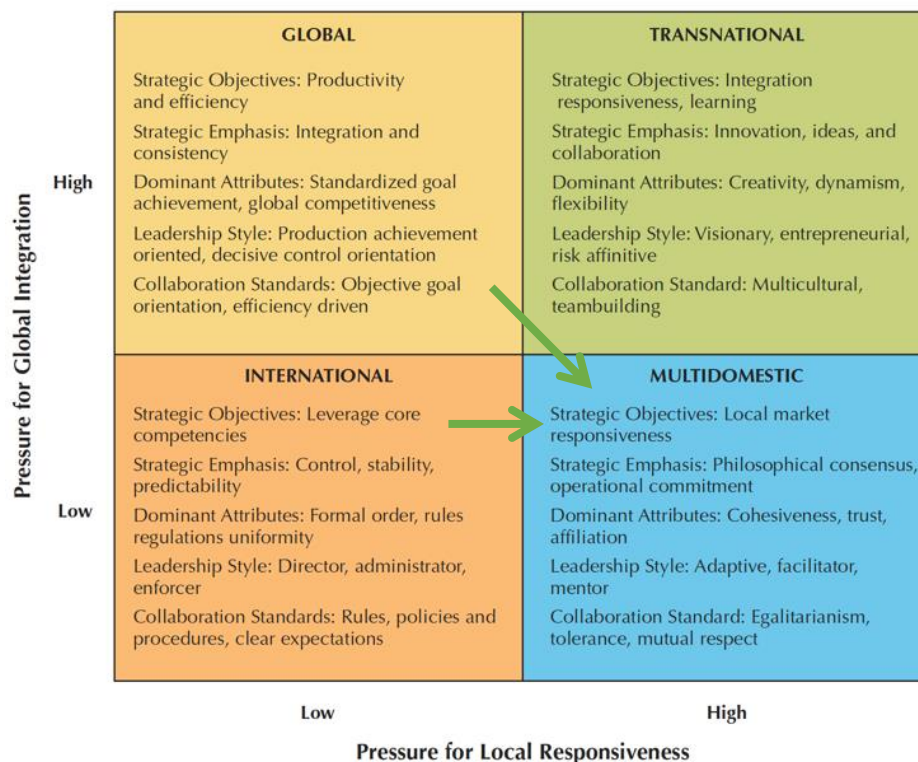


Figure 2, Engagement Strategy Types²⁰

In an international setting civil society has high pressure for local responsiveness and is effectively the roots of localisation, iNGOs have low pressure for local responsiveness and varying pressures for global integration, government and international organisations have high pressure for global integration. This section explores what contributes to these pressures and the opportunities for iNGOs and CSOs to leverage digital access to open opportunities and shift engagement.

¹⁹ <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2012/your-strategy-needs-a-strategy#collapsible--0>

²⁰ Strategy and Organizational Culture in International Business Matrix, from Daniels J.D., Radebaugh L.H., Sullivan D.P. - International Business Environments and Operations, Fifteenth Edition: Figure 16.7 (ISBN: 978-1-292-01679-5)

2.2.1 Civil society and localisation

Covid-19 has accelerated action on the localisation agenda. This acceleration has caught all parties in this conversation off-guard. Covid-19 has seen iNGOs, regional NGOs, Government organisations and civil society organisations relocating people back to their home countries and out of countries receiving funding / expertise as borders closed and movement restrictions were put into place. Countries receiving funding / expertise have needed to respond to this unforeseen change. This section draws heavily from Talanoa and wisdom shared by the participants in the Oceania Connect conference in late October 2020²¹.

Participants from the Pacific in the recent Oceania Connect conference noted that all that Covid-19 really did was reveal even further the current burdens. The stories are of local people stepping out, stepping up and responding to local needs. This opportunity to have the space to take the lead has shown how, with space, leaders engage, motivate and affect change. It talks to *stop undermining local capacity* in the localisation agenda.

The shift to a decolonised model²², which Covid-19 has opened, cannot come fast enough for conference participants in PIANGO member states in Oceania. They are eager, have the power and the energy for their organisation purposes. Covid-19 can be a catalyst, in line with the localisation agenda for these relationship dynamics to change²³.

This is where messy, deliberate action speaks directly to localisation and provides an opening for a conversation on digital access across cultures.

Digital opportunity is the opportunity for people, CSOs and NGOs in PIANGO member states to pull resources and share ideas for investment. For international organisations, being surprised when more trust is placed in national actors because international actors cannot be on the ground to deliver programmes is not pull. It does, however, open up the Talanoa to the value of local competency, the value of local capacity to deliver and what funding / impact value looks like.

Digital access is seen as a way to be together when we cannot be face-to-face (kanohi ki te kanohi²⁴). Participants state that digital does not replace the Talanoa where we can sit on a mat and share our stories. Talanoa takes time and does not fit neatly into a scheduled call, funding window or external outcome deadline. Engaging in Talanoa digitally may mean conversation that starts in email, or in a call, wanders across many digital mediums and continues even as the opportunity to connect face-to-face again arrives. In this way digital access becomes another mat to come together on, to listen as we each tell our stories. A virtual tapestry.

This tapestry brings the opportunity for people from local, regional and international organisations to come together for Talanoa. A CSO could sit with an NGO, iNGO and / or Government organisation to explore the va and find a way forward in partnership. Exploring and experiencing the va together brings the conversation into contribution and away from

²¹ <https://oceaniaconnect.delegateconnect.co>

²² http://www.piango.org/programs/decolonisation/decolonization-self-determination/#_ftn1

²³ <https://www.devex.com/news/covid-19-is-just-part-of-the-story-for-ngos-in-the-pacific-98454>

²⁴ https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10289/12259/Language_Culture_Technology_2017_v011.pdf?sequence=12&isAllowed=y
Chapter 23, p178 - 182

us and them. A place of mutual respect. The question then becomes how do we partner in an equal, transparent, results-oriented, responsible and complimentary way?

Viktor Frankl discusses an approach to finding the meaning of life in his description on the essence of experience²⁵: by creating a work or doing a deed, by experiencing something or encountering someone, by the attitude we take towards unavoidable suffering. The va is the experience we create when we sit together on the digital tapestry in Talanoa.

This is the localisation opportunity. To come together to experience each other through the tapestry of digital access equally, with transparency and entering the space between us that is the va. In doing so partnership can be decolonised and opportunity can be explored.

Localisation honours a multidomestic engagement model where responsiveness to local needs, cohesiveness, trust, equality and respect speak to realising operational commitments. Partnerships founded on, continued in, or delivered through digital access are created and led locally. Local organisations honouring culture, language, tradition and deciding when / what to pull of expertise, funding, networks or practices from international sources. At this point the international organisations become nothing more than a portfolio holder unless they are on the mat in Talanoa and experiencing the va (or in other terminology, co-designing in partnership).

2.2.2 International Non-Government Organisations

Four publications from the CID in 2020 discuss both the challenges and the opportunities for the iNGO sector in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Each of these publications challenge the sector to transform.

The localisation baseline report²⁶ challenges the sector to shift the system toward localisation, find urgency and to transform business as usual operating models. Adding to this, the Advocacy Snapshot Jan - Apr 2020²⁷ shows a shift to supporting from home, adapting to the new realities necessitated by Covid-19. The Health of the Sector report²⁸ also recommends action to shape culture and operating models to show unique value alongside shifting the core focus to impact and to partnering to deliver the impact.

Most recently the CID Annual Survey²⁹ notes that *COVID-19 has reversed 30 years of progress on extreme poverty* and that it threatens existing business models. It also shows a proportional shift of funding into the Pacific, mirroring MFAT's aid priorities, with 23% (~NZ\$ 44m) of annual funding for the sector coming from MFAT / government. The survey also questions whether there will be *an increase in programming work and partnerships with local, in-country NGOs* which could *signal a new way for NZ iNGOs to work as a funder of locally-driven and locally-implemented projects and programming*.

²⁵ Man's Search for Meaning, Viktor E. Frankl, The Essence of Existence, p111

²⁶ <https://www.cid.org.nz/connect/news/localisation-baseline-report>

²⁷ <https://www.cid.org.nz/assets/7645bc6b53/CID-Advocacy-Snapshot-Jan-Apr-2020.pdf>

²⁸ <https://www.cid.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Discussion-Papers/b9706c3087/Health-of-the-Sector-Report-Sept-8.pdf>

²⁹ <https://www.cid.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Surveys/5fcf30181e/Sector-Survey-2019.pdf>

Digital access is notably absent in this reporting, other than as an avenue to engage in fundraising, using technology to support / empower local resources and public accountability Skype calls.

The use of terms such as public accountability, a lack of urgency, adapting to new realities and the challenge to shift focus to impact and partnering in these publications shows that there is a perception of low pressure for local responsiveness in the sector. This low pressure places iNGOs into an international engagement model. The emphasis on control, stability and predictability is a disconnect with the multidomestic engagement that brings localisation to life. Adopting the four considerations for Talanoa explored in a recently released case study, focusing on nurturing the va and voyaging the audacious ocean together, author 'Ofa-Ki-Levuka Louise Guttenbeil-Likiliki, may start to bridge this disconnect: Nurturing the va (Space) that relates; Decolonization and shared power; Enable global south power, agency and autonomy; Contextual sensitivity³⁰.

Maintaining an international or even a global engagement model may promise consistency, efficiency, stability, predictability and results though it doesn't necessarily offer an opportunity for impact, urgency and showing unique value. Impact, urgency and showing unique value talk to a multidomestic engagement approach.

Engaging in digital access is an avenue to enter the localisation Talanoa and to take steps to begin a shift in engagement models. iNGOs looking to engage may apply these three digital access principles:

Relationship Engaging each other with the type of digital access available to all participants.

Exploring the concept

If a party joining the virtual tapestry can only use text-based messaging, then all parties in the Talanoa engage using text-based messaging. Conversely, if all parties can engage on the virtual tapestry using video calling then they can engage in Talanoa using video. Each of the above examples opens opportunity to explore the va without compromising relationship.

Programme Co-designing programmes to suit the digital access applicable to the peoples engaging in the Talanoa.

Exploring the concept

An example is the Oceania Connect virtual conference hosted by PIANGO, the CID and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID); bringing peoples from NGOs, CSOs, Academia and Government from across the Pacific together in Talanoa on the virtual tapestry to explore the va. VSA volunteers have also connected on the virtual tapestry to e-volunteer after assignments in

³⁰ <https://iwda.org.au/resource/creating-equitable-south-north-partnerships>

country had been cut short, in one case mentoring a local resource to build and deliver a Covid-19 update programme in Timor-Leste³¹.

Donor / funder access and value Respectfully engaging donors / funders in the story of the Talanoa.

Exploring the concept

A donor / funder may engage in the Talanoa taking place on the virtual tapestry and add their presence to the va. Collection of digital information / markers making use of digital access can be used to show value. An example may be the collection of water flow rate and volume information in a freshwater WASH programme, which in turn contributes to the story of the Talanoa.

In a multidomestic engagement these digital access principles assisting iNGOs to engage CSOs and NGOs in other states also applies to engagement with CSOs and NGOs in the state that the iNGO calls home.

2.2.3 Governments and engagement

The New Zealand government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) funds development and humanitarian aid through the New Zealand Aid Programme (NZAid). In 2018 NZAid responded to a shift in foreign policy to a Pacific strategy called the Pacific Reset³² with a renewed focus on funding in the region. This shift coincided with a re-oriented Partnering for Impact funding programme³³ *to develop shared prosperity and stability in the Pacific and beyond* which provides significant annual partnership funding to CID members to deliver programmes. This funding needs to be reported on using the Managing for Results performance system³⁴ that is mapped across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the strategic results framework³⁵.

Digital access is tracked under the Performance section of the above results framework in the ICT indicator section with indicators, such as: Proportion of individuals using the Internet [SDG], number of people provided with new or improved ICT services (telecommunications and / or Internet), Proportion of population covered by a mobile network [SDG], and International internet bandwidth (bit/s per Internet user). These indicators, though worthwhile measures suffer from a lack of timely / cyclical measurement across PIANGO member states as noted in the MFAT Annual Report 2018 – 2019³⁶.

NZAid does list *Information Communications Technology (ICT) - expand ICT connectivity, access and use in the Pacific* as one of its twelve investment priorities³⁷. The above annual report notes no expenditure on this priority in the period it covers. It does note that there is

³¹ <https://vsa.org.nz/about-vsa/news/mentoring-in-timor-leste>

³² <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/first-steps>

³³ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/working-with-us/funding-opportunities>

³⁴ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/our-approach-to-aid/managing-for-results>

³⁵ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Aid-Prog-docs/Policy/STRATEGIC-RESULTS-FRAMEWORK-A3-2018-20.pdf>

³⁶ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/About-us-Corporate/MFAT-corporate-publications/MFAT-Annual-Report-2019/Annual-report-2019-Web-Edition.pdf>

³⁷ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/our-approach-to-aid/our-priorities>

a commitment to co-fund a high-speed internet cable into Tokelau as part of development funding in 2018 - 2021³⁸.

Although possibly out of date, the strategic development plan 2015 – 2019³⁹ on the MFAT website notes a focus on building e-resilience in ICT assets and capability in the Pacific. It also notes efficiency and value for money informing results. This focus on frameworks, results, efficiency and value places NZAid in a global engagement model. The high pressure for global integration and low pressure for local responsiveness is in line with its role in representing Aotearoa, New Zealand globally.

Here is the opportunity for CID members in MFAT's partnership model by being the translator between the multidomestic engagement model of localisation and the global engagement model of NZAid. As CID members shift toward a multidomestic engagement model engaging in Talanoa on the virtual tapestry, opportunities can be explored and formed with CSO and NGO organisations in PIANGO member states. This exploration of the va can shape programme and engagement Talanoa with MFAT to inform policy and priority setting post 2021. MFAT may also choose to participate in the Talanoa and fund the strengthening of the digital access virtual tapestry to maintain civil society and government cooperation across the Pacific. Exploration of funding models / programmes such as micro-finance / innovation incubators⁴⁰ may need to be explored to accelerate this strengthening into underserved, vulnerable populations.

As noted above, a particular challenge to monitoring the effectiveness / efficiency of digital indicators and measures is *the lack of comprehensive, up-to-date legislative and institutional frameworks for ICT and digital adoption in Small Island Developing States across the Pacific*⁴¹. This information is generally not collected in PIANGO member states. The graph below (from the United Nations Public Administration e-Government knowledgebase) shows how far states in Oceania lag other nations in e-Government digital engagement.

³⁸ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Aid-Prog-docs/IATI-PDFs/PACPF/Tokelau.pdf>

³⁹ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Aid-Prog-docs/New-Zealand-Aid-Programme-Strategic-Plan-2015-19.pdf>

⁴⁰ <https://www.ggateway.tech>

⁴¹ [https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2020-Survey/2020%20UN%20E-Government%20Survey%20\(Full%20Report\).pdf](https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2020-Survey/2020%20UN%20E-Government%20Survey%20(Full%20Report).pdf)

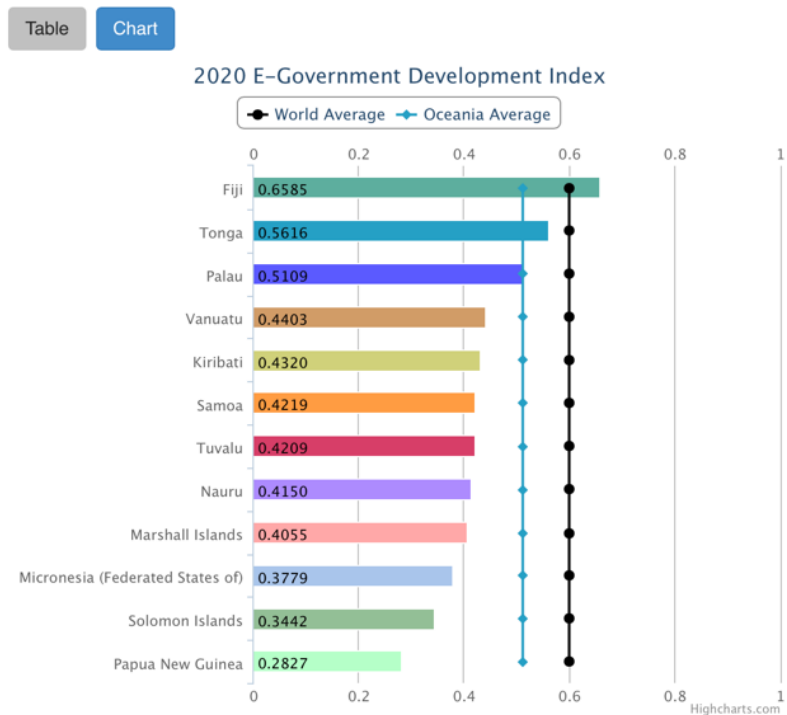


Figure 3, e-Government Development Index⁴²

The index is a comparison of each of the United Nations (UN) member state's digital presence *which assesses national websites and how e-government policies and strategies are applied in general and in specific sectors for delivery of essential services*⁴³. The scale is how states perform relative to one another. The states included in the graph do not perform well, most are below the world average and many are below the Oceania average.

This shows that governments in these states are also adjusting to the Talanoa on the virtual tapestry with an opportunity to explore the va with other governments on the same journey. The Pacific Public Service fale, *a Pacific-led hub that will strengthen public services across the region*⁴⁴ based in Aotearoa, New Zealand and engaged with governments across the Pacific is a step toward improving this performance.

A lack of indicator collection need not stop the improvement of digital access across PIANGO member states. Indicator collection can be included in programme design, either as the provision of a service or as an automated collection approach in line with appropriate legal frameworks in each state. Civil society in each PIANGO member state has the opportunity to bring improved digital access into the Talanoa with their governments, including exploring how to demonstrate improvements in digital access in ways that automatically feed global indicators.

⁴² <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Data-Center>

⁴³ <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/About/Methodology>

⁴⁴ <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealand-support-pacific-public-sector-hub>

2.2.4 The international / supranational engagement model

The majority of PIANGO member states are in the international grouping of small island developing states (SIDS), a grouping in the UN system having “their own peculiar vulnerabilities and characteristics”⁴⁵.

The SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway is a 10-year plan adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2014 to address the sustainable development of small island developing States with a “broad alliance of people, governments, civil society and the private sector all working together to achieve the future we want for present and future generations”⁴⁶. The plan lays out sustainability priority areas. These areas include information and telecommunications technology (digital access). In the section titled “Sustained and sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth with decent work for all” the pathway calls for more public and private investment in digital access, digital access for education / employment and calls on developed countries to increase digital access capability building. This is backed up in the section titled “Technology” with the pathway calling for the need to “increase connectivity and the use of information and communications technology through improved infrastructure, training and national legislation”.

None of the above are included in the Political declaration⁴⁷ following the high-level 2019 Midterm review of the SAMOA Pathway. While the overarching pathway is endorsed there is no mention of digital access in the declaration. Each of the areas that are addressed are warranted and many are reaffirmed in the 2020 follow up to the above declaration and implementation of the SAMOA Pathway statement⁴⁸ to the 75th United Nations General Assembly with the inclusion of Covid-19 responses, though again digital access is not included. Digital access is an enabler for many of the goals of the pathway though is not seen as a priority at the supranational level when it is compared with the impact achieving other Sustainable Development Goals such as goal 13, Climate Action, *take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts* that PIANGO member states have signed up to.

The opportunity for PIANGO members is to bring Digital Access back to the conversation with supranational organisations. Civil society is part of the SAMOA pathway plan. Digital Access needs to become an “and” rather than an “or” in the conversation.

Exploring the concept

A conversation discussing SDG goal 13, Climate Action, *Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*⁴⁹ could be enhanced with ...and improved digital access may mean that monitoring of tide levels could be automated and feed into an early warning system to provide vulnerable populations with alerts to move to higher ground or save objects of value. The Republic of Mauritius has implemented an early

⁴⁵ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sids>

⁴⁶ https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/15

⁴⁷ https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/74/L.3

⁴⁸ https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3887806/files/A_C.2_75_L.21-EN.pdf

⁴⁹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13>

warning system for storm surges to protect its population⁵⁰. Indonesia has also done so for flooding warnings in Jakarta and connected the system to Twitter⁵¹.

The true value of bringing digital access into the localisation Talanoa is that the virtual tapestry where each party engages is a leveller. It shifts the power to a conversation and provides the opportunity to engage in the va together.

2.3 Digital foundations

Digital Access is an opportunity that is often promoted by world experts as the enabler for engagement when we cannot share in the same space. The Lancet Covid-19 Commission statement to the 75th UN General Assembly notes that *achieving universal digital access as a key to inclusion*⁵². Jeffrey Sachs the Chair, Commissioners, Task Force Chairs and Commission Secretariat reiterated digital access as key to inclusion in his keynote at the Oceania Connect 2020 conference.

For PIANGO member states, this opportunity directly relies on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 9.c, *Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020*⁵³.

What has become clear in preparing the analysis for this section of the report is that PIANGO member states are not included in many Global reports. The Network Readiness Index 2020⁵⁴ does not include any PIANGO member states, the data collected from visual capitalist site on “What Does 1GB of Mobile Data Cost in Every Country?”⁵⁵ only included Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Australia and Aotearoa, New Zealand. The remainder of the research below has been completed by finding source information and collating the data where it is not available in a report or database. It is as if many PIANGO member states do not exist in the wider digital world.

Increased, affordable internet (digital) access is not a reality for many communities in these states and will not be by the end of 2020. For these peoples and communities’ digital access is not an enabler. There are a growing number of states that are making digital access available and affordable to their communities and peoples. There is opportunity to grow with these communities and work together to build a way to share space on the virtual tapestry of digital access.

⁵⁰ <https://www.deltares.nl/app/uploads/2015/11/Implementation-of-an-Early-Warning-System-for-incoming-storm-surge-and-tide-in-Mauritius.pdf>

⁵¹ <https://www.deltares.nl/en/projects/delft-fews-linked-twitter-jakarta>

⁵² <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2820%2931927-9>

⁵³ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal9>

⁵⁴ <https://networkreadinessindex.org>

⁵⁵ <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/cost-of-mobile-data-worldwide>

2.3.1 A digital, virtual tapestry

A conversation about strands of glass linking community is both strong and fragile. Adding light, water and air into the conversation brings an elemental gravity. A binding force that strengthens the virtual tapestry.

The tapestry of digital foundations that weaves through community across the Pacific is gaining strength. Fibre optic cables connect or are about to connect many countries / territories / islands to each other and the world. Satellite networks such as the O3B⁵⁶ medium earth orbit constellation and the Kacific1⁵⁷ geostationary satellite provide digital coverage across all geographies in this research. There is no place in the region where digital access is not possible. The trade routes of digital access.



These digital foundations are always on, though not always accessible. Barriers to accessibility include the type and cost of these foundations, the access method and their social acceptability. Other barriers include weather events, censorship and global trends. These global trends include climate change and, in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic. Social acceptability foundations and other barriers / opportunities build on the strategic lenses and shifting engagement models sections.

Bandwidth and latency are the measures of digital foundations. Latency is how long it takes to get a response from something you are connecting to across a digital foundation. Bandwidth is how much can be pushed into a digital foundation at any one time. This can be thought of as the size and strength of a strand in our tapestry. A thin, strong strand could be a fibre optic cable: limited bandwidth but fast response times. While a satellite link may be a flattened, weak strand: some shared bandwidth and slow response times.

Distance is the biggest contributor to latency. PIANGO member states are spread across vast distances. A country digitally connected by fibre sends requests using flashing lights under water, across the sea floor, directly to countries at the other end of the connection. If a country is digitally connected by geo-stationary satellite, such as Kacific1, then the request is beamed 38,000kms up to the satellite and 38,000kms back down to the connected country. This is the case with countries connected to the Kacific satellite network through the air in our atmosphere.

Latency drives decision making on how NGOs, CSOs, Governments and UN organisations digitally connect with organisations across PIANGO. A longer latency means less effective real-time communication. It could be thought of as the longer the latency, the bigger the hole in the digital tapestry we weave together.

The following graph shows the latency for connections from PIANGO member states to Aotearoa, New Zealand and the USA. The data is taken from a December 2019 report on Internet connectivity presented to UNESCAP⁵⁸. It clearly shows the advantage of a fibre

⁵⁶ <https://www.ses.com/networks/networks-and-platforms/o3b-meo>

⁵⁷ <https://kacific.com/technology#kacific1-satellite>

⁵⁸ https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Pacific_IXP_ISOC_FINAL_0.pdf

optic connection to a country or state over a satellite connection. Fiji is the model state in this graph with low latency to both the USA and Aotearoa, New Zealand. Tuvalu, Niue, Nauru, and Kiribati lag with satellite only connectivity.

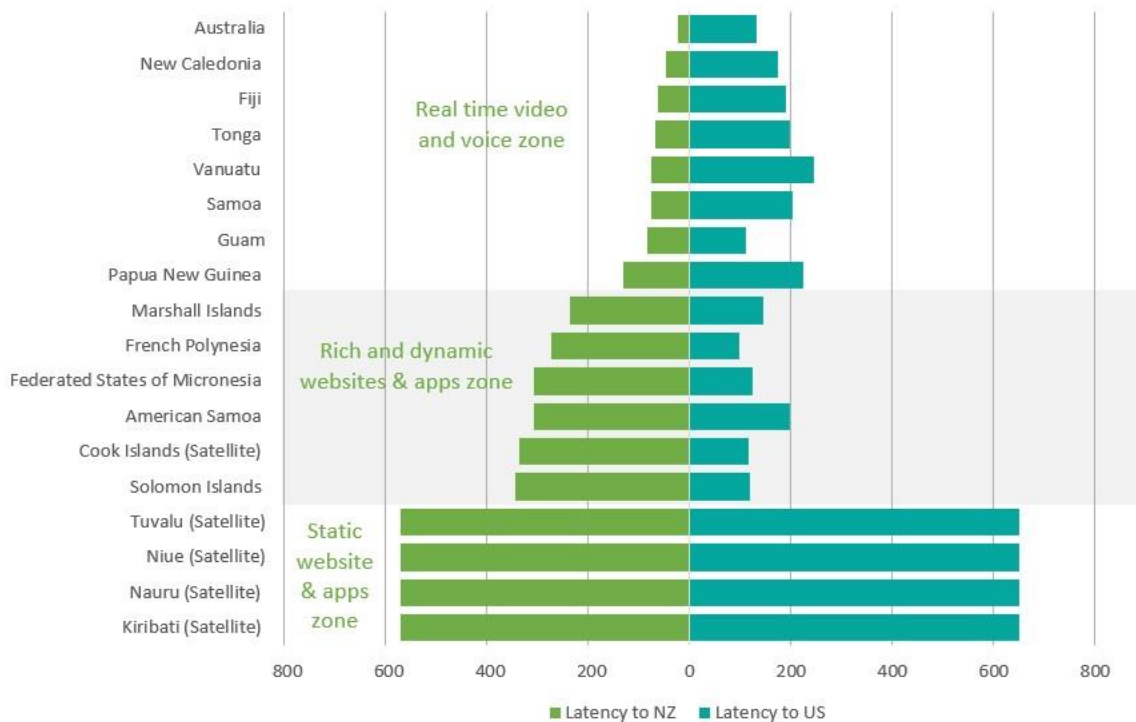


Figure 4, The impact of long latency across PIANGO member states

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) has committed to boost the capacity of digital connectivity to Pacific Island states and remote islands / remote areas in Pacific Island states that are not served by existing digital networks using the Kacific satellite network⁵⁹. The states that are connected to this satellite network appear at the bottom of the above graphic as a long latency and low bandwidth shape the opportunity for digital access and digital engagement. This connectivity enables the transfer of small amounts of information that is not time critical, such as: email, text-based learning materials or the updating of information in records keeping systems.

The ITU recommendation for transmission quality of telephone connections⁶⁰ proposes a latency of <= 400ms for any network and a latency of <= 150ms to create the best environment a conversation. This is what the ITU calls an interactive experience. CID and PIANGO member organisations can forecast the effectiveness and appropriateness of real time digital programmes using these figures.

The following cables are either planned, laid or ready for service and being made live. Covid-19 and further negotiations between states may push the planned live dates out.

⁵⁹ <https://news.itu.int/how-kacific-works-to-boost-connectivity-in-pacific-island-states>

⁶⁰ <https://www.itu.int/rec/T-REC-G.114/en>

Connects	Cable	Cost US\$	Ready for service	Live?
Samoa, American Samoa, Niue, Cook Islands, French Polynesia	Manatua	65m	July 2020	No
Tokelau (within Tokelau)	Tokelau Submarine Cable	??m	2021	No
Australia, Samoa, Kiribati, Tokelau, Fiji, New Zealand	Southern Cross NEXT	350m	Q2, 2022	No
Vanuatu, Solomon Islands	Interchange Network Cable 2	??m	2021	No
New Caledonia, Fiji	Gondwana-2/Picot-2	45m	2022	No

Table 3, Planned / ready for service fibre optic cables

Many of these planned connections are branches of new cables. These branches are capped at the bandwidth that is delivered with no opportunity to expand the bandwidth in the future. There is also no plan for reinstatement of comparable digital access if the cable is damaged. They may become precious to the people who come to rely on them and digital resilience (e-resilience) needs to be considered. These thin, strong strands are a digital lifeline that, once used, will weave into a vast digital tapestry that spans PIANGO members and the globe.

The member states with the highest probability of connecting the digital tapestry using real time voice or video conversations to / from Aotearoa, New Zealand (<= 150ms) are:

Currently live	Planned and underway
Australia	Cook Islands
Fiji	French Polynesia
Guam	Kiribati
New Caledonia	Niue
Papua New Guinea	Tokelau
Samoa	
Tonga	
Vanuatu	

Table 4, Highest likelihood of real time engagement with Aotearoa, New Zealand

PIANGO members, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands have a low latency (<= 150 ms) connection to the USA and real-time digital access may be better served through in country USA partners.

A notable exception: There are no planned fibre optic submarine cable connections for Tuvalu or Nauru. These states will need to rely on digital access via high latency satellite links for the foreseeable future.

2.3.2 In country foundations

Each of the PIANGO member states tethers to the digital tapestry with a mobile or fixed line internet network. This tether point is the in-country foundation, the last few kilometres of digital connectivity. The place where the network meets the digitally connected device that a person is holding, typing on or viewing. In most states this will be a mobile network, in some it will be a fixed line network of copper or fibre wires and in the outlying islands of a few member states it will be a direct satellite link.

Almost all the PIANGO member states have a mobile network that offers publicly available data plans for connections to the digital tapestry. The notable exceptions are Nauru and the Marshall Islands. There is significant variation in the cost of these connections' dependent on the type of connection the state has to the digital tapestry, how much competition there is in the market and whether there is government financial support for the network. The following graph shows the fluctuation in the average price of 1GB of data across Pacific nations (see appendix xxxx) with the size of each box showing the relative cost compared to the cost in the other states:

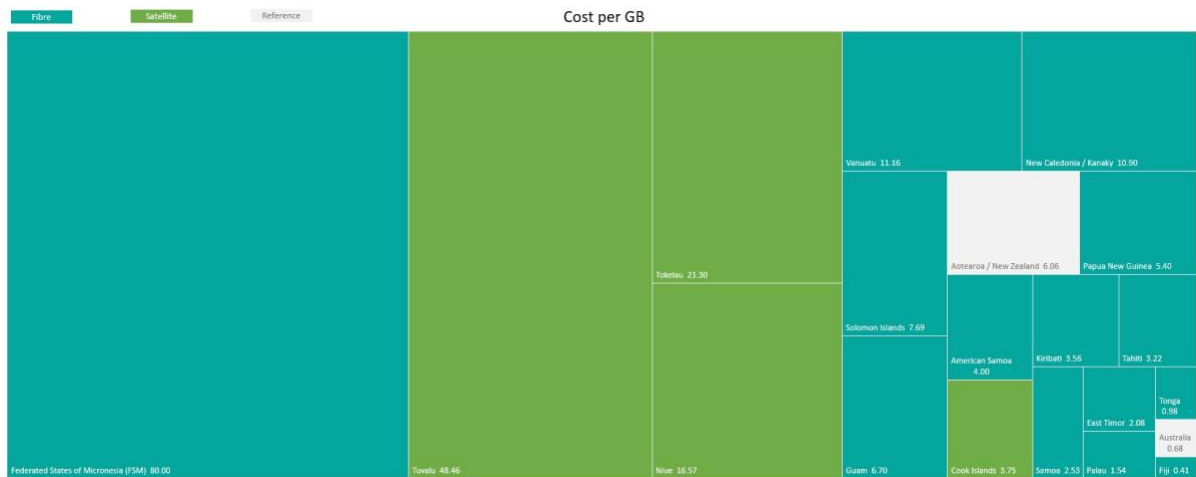


Figure 5, Cost of data per gigabyte (GB) in PIANGO member states

This difference in cost displays the opportunities and challenges facing the NGO, CSO sectors in each of these member states. An NGO, CSO in the Federated States of Micronesia would consider digital engagement an unnecessary drain on costs that could be channelled into development or humanitarian assistance for greater direct benefit. Where an NGO, CSO in Tonga or Fiji may consider digital engagement as a cost-effective enabler for development or humanitarian assistance delivery.

2.3.3 Connecting to the digital tapestry

A connection to the digital tapestry can open the world to the person who makes that connection. This world is shaped by the type of device being connected, what the device is capable of accessing, availability of the device and the underlying digital foundations.

There is little appetite for pull digital engagement, as noted in [Section 2.2](#). This is potentially a barrier that is in place due to a lack of infrastructure, a lack of education and respect for cultural pathways. The type of device accessing the digital tapestry varies across PIANGO member states and could be seen as a barrier or opportunity.

The Pacific is a magnet for Tourism. Tourists bring their digital devices with them on holiday, which would mean in a normal year that these devices connect to the tapestry and skew the data away from the types of devices that the peoples of the Pacific use. Covid-19 has brought an unexpected, unique opportunity. A view of device types Pacific peoples connect with can be gathered as there has been no tourism since late March.

Analysing internet activity over the last seven months shows that more than 50% of PIANGO member states are mobile first. For the purposes of this research, “mobile first” means that more than 50% of connections to the virtual tapestry are from mobile devices. While other member states are not mobile first there are still mobile connections being made, the majority of connections are however made using computers or laptops. A recent study by the University of Western Sydney of digital access across three nations in the Pacific also noted that the vast majority of respondents most often access the virtual tapestry using mobile devices⁶¹.

Exploring the concept

Timor-Leste (East Timor) is a mobile first state with a large, dispersed population, Niue is not a mobile first state having a concentrated population with a high density of digital connectivity. At face value it looks like Niue is not technologically advanced when it comes to mobile technology, though the population lives close to each other and can walk to each other to talk to each other limiting the need to use a mobile device. Timor-Leste on the other hand is a new state that started its digital journey as mobile networks gained prevalence.

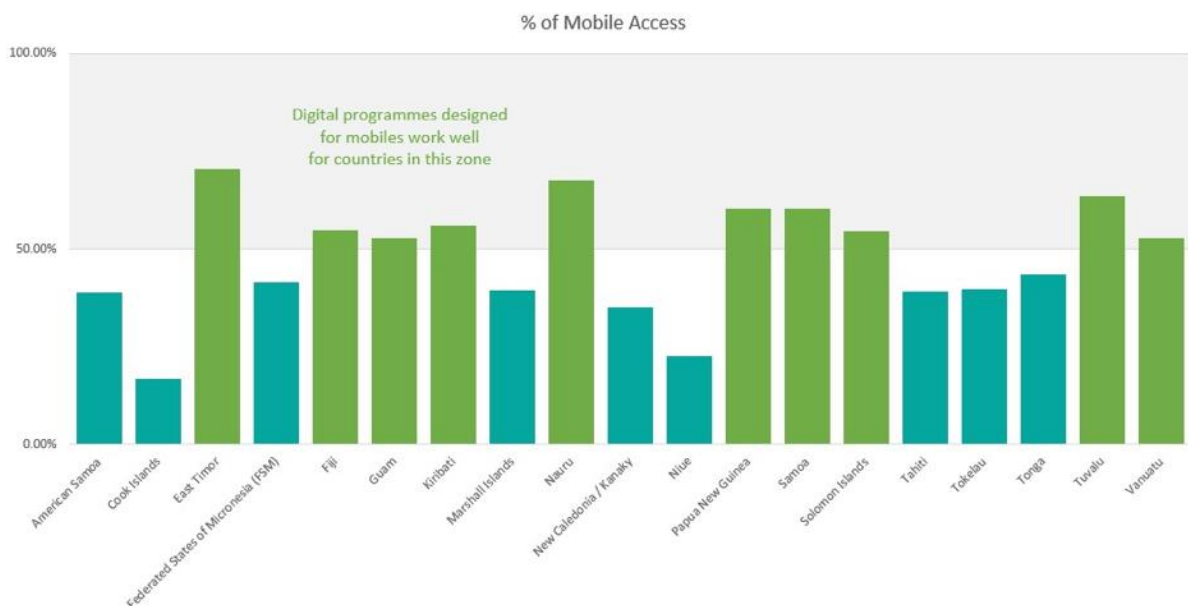


Figure 6, Percentage of mobile phone usage in PIANGO member states

When engaging digitally the type of device being used to connect becomes important.

Exploring the concept

Consider supporting a digital education programme in a mobile first state. The programme may favour a live video, teacher led, natural environment engagement / pedagogical approach where a student interacts with the environment in their

⁶¹ https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1760221/PacificOnlineSafetyReport.pdf

learning. Consider a similar programme in a non-mobile first state, the programme may favour a web based, downloadable materials, offline engagement / pedagogical approach with intermittent live teacher engagement.

Another factor to consider is the percentage of the population actively engaged in digital access. Collation of this information is not regular / annual in PIANGO member states though results from the last collection of information in the World Bank DataBank World Development Indicators⁶² show that ~42% of the population (2017 data) in the graph below is engaged in Talanoa on the virtual tapestry. Mobile phone usage by comparison is much higher as a percentage of the population with four PIANGO member states recording more than one connection per person. As a result, short message service (SMS) communication that is available on every mobile phone may also form part of digital access in many states. Data for the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau was not available in this data set.

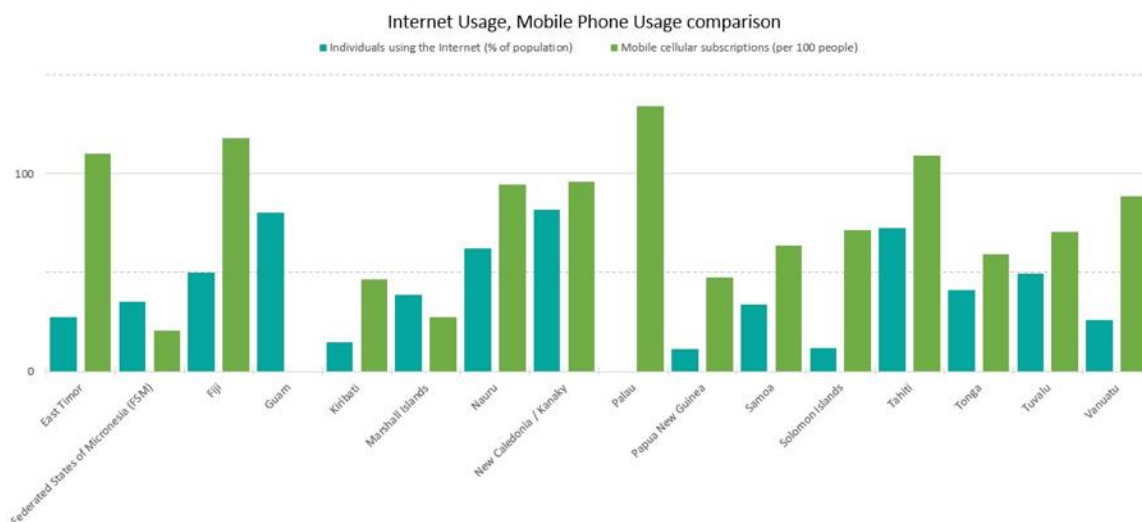


Figure 7, Internet usage / Mobile phone usage comparison

Exploring the concept

A tsunami preparedness programme may use an internet server to collate potential tsunami information from international sources across the Pacific using the virtual tapestry and calculate the likelihood and arrival times to island coastlines in a PIANGO member state. The server could then issue both a warning onto an appropriate Facebook page and an SMS message to phones in the affected areas.

2.3.4 Economic considerations

While digital access is possible across PIANGO member states, it is also varied and covers a sparsely populated part of the world. The indicators and information above have come from diverse sources and are not found in global statistics that purport to give a global picture.

Importantly gross national income (GNI) is not high in the states that receive official development assistance (ODA) and devices that enable digital access in these states are a

⁶² <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>

significant proportion of income. This is without adding in the cost to use the devices on the virtual tapestry by using data.

This cost can be illustrated using the average daily in-home data usage in a well-served state, the USA, which is 16.6GB (giga bytes) [sampled over three days in 2020]⁶³. This makes the annual average data usage in USA home 6,059GB. PIANGO member states are mobile first and the above information has shown that most are underserved when it comes to digital access. If these states were well-served the average in-home data usage could be used as a baseline for determining the mobile data usage cost in each state. For example, in Tuvalu a state with Satellite digital access the total cost for a year’s worth of data would be US\$ 293,619.14, in Fiji a state served with fibre optic digital access it would be US\$ 2,484.19.

The graph below shows how affordable this amount of data usage would be mapped against states GNI (where available). The GNI of most the states in the graph below is under US\$10,000. The cost of this amount of data would consume all this income and, in some cases, magnitudes more.

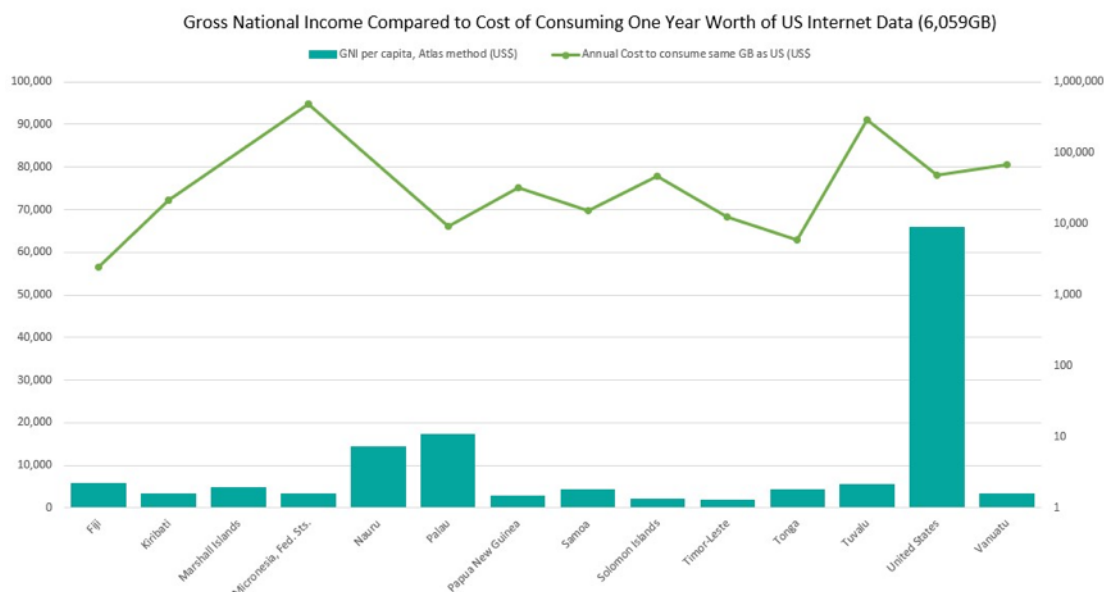


Figure 8, GNI versus the cost of Internet Data

There is contention and ongoing debate about whether data is a commodity⁶⁴. It could be argued that a value can be placed on data as the cost of engaging in digital access and that there is an endless supply that is limited by the delivery mechanism (satellite, fibre, etc..). In this way some states view data as cheap and others view data as expensive. If this view is taken then data, and by extension digital access is a commodity.

This creates a new market for iNGOs, NGOs and CSOs in PIANGO member states. Digital aid could become a funding source, opening up new donor pathways and wider the donor demographic. Similar to existing sources, such as child sponsorship (education aid, shelter aid) and disaster relief (food aid, shelter aid).

⁶³ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1106863/covid-19-daily-in-home-data-usage-change-us-2020>

⁶⁴ <https://telecoms.com/486808/the-most-important-question-today-is-data-a-commodity>

Exploring the concept

A partnership with Vodafone in the PIANGO member states where it has a presence could fund digital access for an education programme.

Package total (GB)	10
Package gift (GB)	1

	Donor Aotearoa / New Zealand
Country	
Cost per GB	6.06
Package Cost	60.60
Gift Cost	6.06
Margin loss	10.00%
Total value remaining	54.54

Beneficiary					
Cook Islands	Fiji	Samoa	Tahiti	Vanuatu	
3.75	0.41	2.53	3.22	11.16	
3.75	0.41	2.53	3.22	11.16	
6.19%	0.67%	4.17%	5.31%	18.42%	
56.85	60.19	58.07	57.38	49.44	

Value difference		2.31	5.65	3.53	2.84	5.10
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Table 5, Vodafone partnership exploration (US\$) in states with a Vodafone presence

A Vodafone Aotearoa, New Zealand customer may choose to gift 10% of their data into the Pacific in a “Give 10% of data to good” campaign at US\$ 6.06 per GB (10% margin). This data in turn could be allocated to Samoa where the cost is US\$ 2.53 per GB (4.17% margin). The customer sees the value of 10% margin in data gifting that only costs Vodafone 4.17% margin. So, for the cost of the data to the customer, US\$6.06 Vodafone in Aotearoa, New Zealand builds reputation that retains customers and funds needed education programmes in the Pacific and only makes an internal group transfer of US\$ 2.53 to Vodafone Samoa in doing so.

Choosing the states where this applies is important as investing in Vanuatu in this way will currently cost Vodafone more (18.42% margin) than the value the customer perceives (10% margin).

2.3.5 Protection and social acceptability

Digital access opens up new worlds of possibilities for people as fibre optic cables bring more bandwidth, less latency and cheaper prices to the peoples in the PIANGO Member states. Along with these new possibilities come new behaviours.

Governments and civil society in PIANGO member states have been grappling with how to respond to people’s new behaviours as these possibilities have emerged. Many states have considered banning or have banned Facebook for a period of time as they have responded to this growth in access as cultural and social norms are challenged. These bans are often

stop-gaps to buy time to draft and socialise guidelines about digital access and what is expected of Talanoa on the virtual tapestry. This ban works both ways, the Australian example in the graph below is Facebook banning Australian News media as the state looks to impose a fee for Facebook accessing news from Australia.

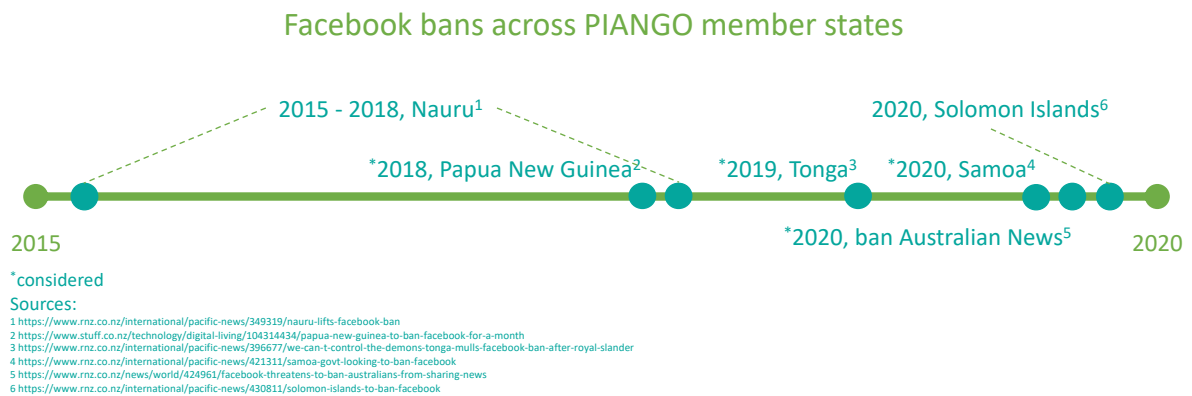


Figure 9, Timeline of social media bans (Facebook)

The University of Western Sydney, Young & Resilient Research Centre has recently published a study on *Online Safety in the Pacific* that explores protection in a way that this report does not seek to build on. The report provides considerations for action on *policy and regulation, quality programs and services* and a *whole of community approach*⁶⁵ that would be an excellent companion to this report.

Consideration needs to be given to both the platform and how safe people will be using the platform when it comes to programme design and holding Talanoa on the virtual tapestry so that there is a safe, rich, meaningful and useful va.

The recent survey of CID membership notes that 74% of members have 17 full time equivalent (FTE) staff or less⁶⁶ and also notes that 60% of funding is from public sources. It is fair to assume that this focus on maintaining public funding may engage ~3 FTEs in each member organisation. This leaves the effective running of the organisation, relationship management, programme development and programme delivery to ~14FTEs. This is a broad workload and unless there is a specific focus on developing digital access tools in programme development these organisations are best placed to use digital access applications (apps) and tools to engage in relationship, deliver programmes and show donor / funder access and value.

These apps and tools need to be widely available and socially acceptable in all the places that member organisations work. They also need to be popular with the people who will be joining the virtual tapestry and engaging in Talanoa. If these tools are not used and new apps or tools are developed, then there is a risk of alienating the peoples who are being encouraged to use them. This is the opportunity and the challenge, to engage at a local level with what is already there and to build innovation by utilising the tools and the systems at hand. Both social and digital.

⁶⁵ https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1760221/PacificOnlineSafetyReport.pdf

⁶⁶ <https://www.cid.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Surveys/5fcf30181e/Sector-Survey-2019.pdf>

2.4 Conclusion

Everyone needs connection, to learn, to grow and to challenge their status quo. Digital access provides connection when we cannot be face-to-face.

Since Covid-19 has shaped where we can *come* together, the virtual tapestry provided by digital access has made this alternative a “go to” reality. It connects us so that we can *be* together, even when we are apart. It can also be a leveller, a place to sit on the virtual tapestry and engage in the Talanoa, to learn and grow until it is time to be face-to-face again. It may also continue the Talanoa when the time to be face-to-face has passed. At this time, choosing not to engage using digital access means choosing not to connect.

Digital access is a reality across PIANGO member states, the quality and type of access shapes engagement with the virtual tapestry. Peoples in some member states benefit from fast, reliable digital access on the device that they choose without being restricted by cultural norms or laws. These peoples are the exception rather than the rule. In reality, the cost of engaging in the virtual tapestry is prohibitive for most peoples in these states.

The cost may be counted in economic terms: it is too costly to buy a device, to buy data. It may be counted in social terms: it is too costly to say what I think, to be caught using the virtual tapestry, to our way of living to engage. It may be counted in terms of time: it is too costly to spend all this time on the virtual tapestry, the time spent engaging does not provide the needed outcomes. Each of these are valid costs.

The benefit also needs to be weighed. Benefit value may be in economic terms: continued funding, commoditisation of data, protection of people or resources, contribution to the SDGs, different opportunity. The value may be in social terms: continuing programmes to help people, staying connected, being engaged, bringing voice. It may also be valued in terms of time: faster more nuanced decision making, quicker / reliable collection of indicators.

These costs and benefits do not easily align. Although it is not an economic panacea, digital access does enable continued economic and social activity.

Here is the opportunity. The need to engage in digital access is evident though the majority of PIANGO member organisations (and their members) are underserved or priced out of meaningfully engaging in the Talanoa on the virtual tapestry. International funding and attention to improve digital foundations will assist in aligning cost and benefit.

Bringing digital access back into the conversations on achieving the SDGs as an “and” enabler will also assist with alignment. CSOs, NGOs and iNGOs have a responsibility to keep bringing digital access to the table in every conversation, to push for the alignment of cost and benefit.

Importantly, digital access needs to stay open in the same way that trade routes need to stay open. In the times of Covid-19 and possibly beyond, it is the conduit for the Talanoa to continue.

Covid-19 also presents an opportunity to shift the status quo, to explore the value of digital access and the localisation agenda: to challenge strategic lenses, to grow engagement and to learn more about each other through the access provided by digital foundations. This Talanoa can shape new ways of engaging at a relationship, a programme and at a donor / funder access and value level.

3 Recommendation

The recommendation to the CID is to champion the adoption of a PIANGO statement of intent across all PIANGO members to fully utilise digital access as a virtual tapestry for Talanoa. Serving as a companion statement alongside the Localisation Agenda.

The recommendation to CID members is to stay in conversation by engaging in the Talanoa on the virtual tapestry, accelerating localisation goals, continuing the delivery of programmes and lobbying / influencing for digital access to be included as an enabler in all conversations at all levels.

The three digital access principles inform the CID recommendation and frame the recommendation to CID members:

Relationship Engaging each other with the type of digital access available to all participants.

- Assess internal capability / needs to engage digitally, including engaging in a localisation oriented multidomestic model
- Reach out to external participants and build a picture of their digital access capability / needs
- Sit in the va (co-create) and agree what digital access, the virtual tapestry and the Talanoa are
- Acknowledge any power imbalances that may influence a localisation Talanoa
- Agree to sign a PIANGO statement of intent to fully utilise digital access, when it is required and available.

Programme Co-designing programmes to suit the digital access applicable to the peoples engaging in the Talanoa.

- Review current programmes and identify opportunities for digital access and engagement to support localisation and continued programme delivery
- Where possible, engage in Talanoa on the virtual tapestry to explore the need and the pull for the programme from PIANGO member states where the programme is being delivered
- Start small, take a test and learn approach to refine any changes to programmes
- Think “and digital”, “digital first” with any new programme design, what platform for change can existing tools or apps offer to accelerate, tailor or enhance programme delivery / programme administration.

Donor / funder access and value Respectfully engaging donors / funders in the story of the Talanoa.

- Lobby for / influence the principles of “and digital”, “digital first” in future policy and funding pathways with government organisations.
- Bring “and digital” back to the conversation, influencing for a commitment from leaders in the next SAMOA pathway declaration
- Invite donors and funders into the Talanoa on the virtual tapestry so that there is opportunity for all parties to explore the va together

- Advocate for shifts in funding models for Civil Society Organisations that may not be formal entities though may be leading change in digital access across PIANGO member states
- Design for the automated collation of information using digital access to meet the needs of monitoring and evaluation indicators.

4 Implementation plan

The pathway for implementing the above recommendations has an element of being time critical to respond to the realities of Covid-19 alongside the long term need to shift behaviours, processes and funding models toward localisation.

A strategic taskforce is proposed to champion and monitor the implementation of these recommendations. The goal of the taskforce is to guide organisations to “fully utilise digital access as a virtual tapestry for Talanoa” in PIANGO member states. The taskforce will be accountable for the development and adoption of the statement of intent that informs this goal across PIANGO. Initially chaired by the Executive Director to the CID with membership comprising PIANGO, CID members, CSOs from PIANGO member states, government funders, academia and potentially UNESCAP. The chair will rotate on an agreed basis to maintain energy to achieve the goal and to build governance depth in the sector.

Proposing that the taskforce would comprise of three working groups, each accountable for a digital access principle: relationship, programme, donor funding / access and value. The terms of reference for the working groups will be guided by the analysis in this report, the localisation agenda and the SAMOA pathway. The working groups to be made up of CID members and parties with an interest in the successful achievement of the taskforce goal. Each of these working groups be accountable for engaging iNGOs, regional NGOs, CSOs, government and supranational organisations to explore the value of any further guidance, models and Talanoa required to bring the recommendations into reality for CID members to benefit the peoples of PIANGO member states.

The taskforce is strategic in nature so needs to have delivered on its goal within a three-year timeframe. The statement of intent may take time to be formed, negotiated and signed. This does not need to stop the more immediately implementable recommendations of the digital access principles, many of which are an assessment of current capability or the building / strengthening of relationships on the virtual tapestry.

4.1 Risk profile assessment

These responses and shifts all challenge existing business models / models of engagement that bring increased implementation risk. The assessment below is based on the New Zealand Treasury risk profile assessment template⁶⁷. It places this implementation plan in the **Medium** risk category.

External impact	Medium
Scope and complexity	Medium
Delivery capability and approach	Medium

Table 6, Implementation Risk Profile

Some of this risk is reduced by further investment in fibre optic digital foundations and building further e-resilience into these foundations. This investment is a multi-year, supranational led conversation that may lead to this risk being reduced. The CID, PIANGO

⁶⁷ <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/guide/risk-profile-assessment-template>

and their member organisations can leverage the recommendation to lobby / influence to keep this “and digital” investment in the conversation.

4.2 Key activities / milestones

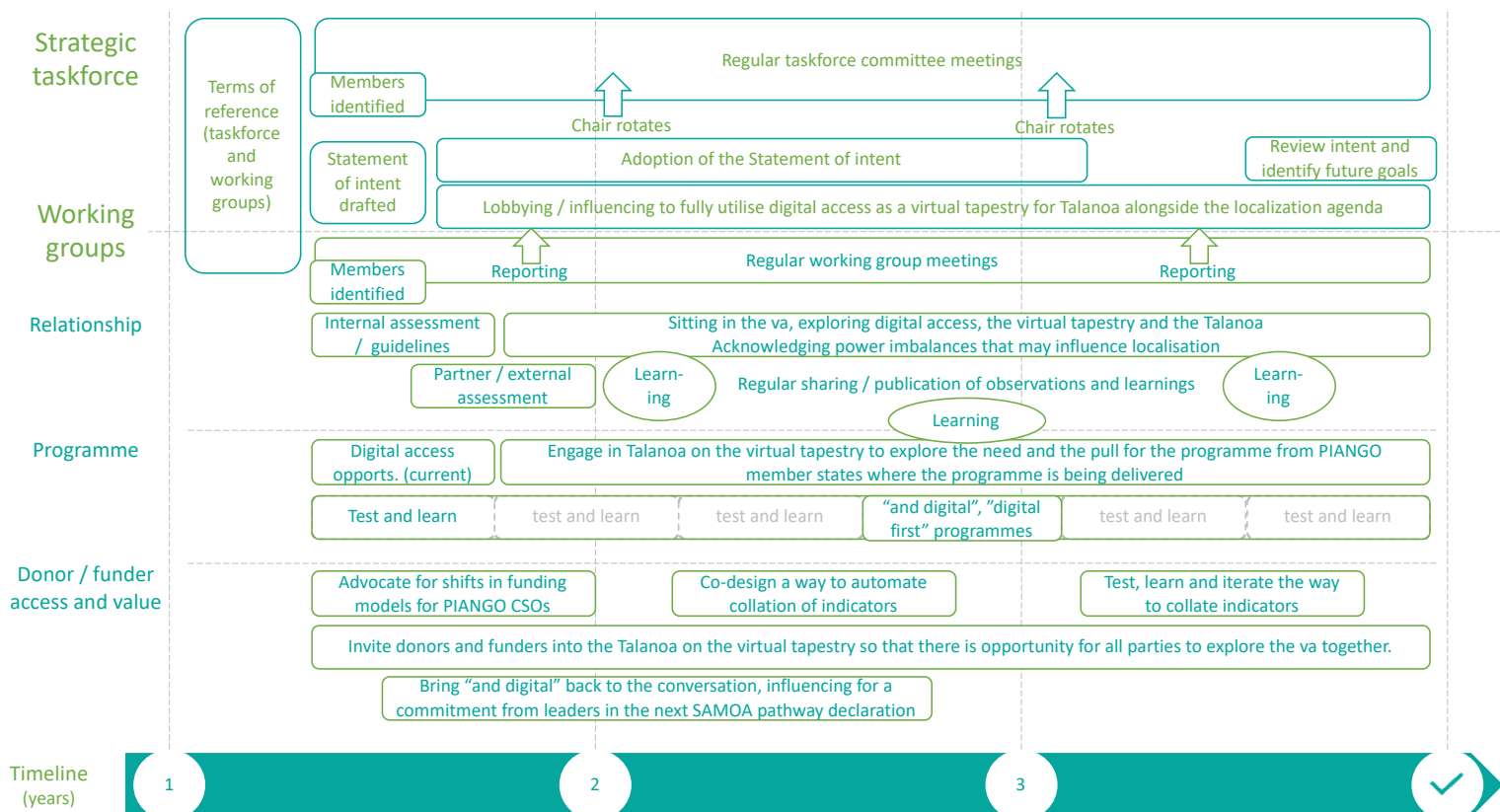


Figure 10, Key Activities and Milestones

4.3 Case for change

The analysis in this report is the basis for the case for change. As noted previously, the change itself will not be economically neutral or bring a positive economic contribution. This is not the intent.

The intent of this change is to continue relationships and programmes that benefit PIANGO member states in the face of Covid-19. To consider digital access and the localisation agenda as a potential way through the challenges of Covid-19 that have presented themselves and as a possible continued way forward once Covid-19 no longer affects us.

The case for this strategic taskforce could also be made to government / international funding organisations for funding. To accelerate the completion of recommendations, formalise the goal or create an underlying centre of excellence similar to the Pacific Public Service fale model. The benefit to these organisations could be in terms of continued flow of official development assistance (ODA) to continue to meet ODA-GNI ratio trends⁶⁸ and

⁶⁸ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/our-approach-to-aid/where-our-funding-goes>

funding to improve contribution to digital access indicators such as in the strategic results framework⁶⁹.

4.4 Assurance

Quality assurance is an important aspect of any taskforce, the multi-organisation membership nature of the taskforce serves as a quality checkpoint as collateral and ideas are shared by taskforce members with the organisation they are from.

An additional assurance mechanism may be a cyclical academic study of the taskforce, its relationship influence and the collateral it produces. Further assurance methods may be agreed with any funder organisations engaged with the Taskforce.

⁶⁹ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Aid-Prog-docs/Policy/STRATEGIC-RESULTS-FRAMEWORK-A3-2018-20.pdf>

Appendices

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Appendix A – Observations of proceedings at the Oceania Connect Conference

The following observations are from five sessions attended at the Oceania Connect conference in October 2020. The sessions were:

- **OPENING KEYNOTE - Shifting the Power**, In conversation with Degan Ali
- **PLENARY PANEL - Shift the Power**, Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki, Rita Thapa, Vani Catanasiga, Dumiso Gatsha, Nanette Antequisa
- **Creating Equitable South-North Partnerships: Nurturing the Va and Voyaging the Audacious Ocean Together**, 'Ofa Guttenbeil Likiliki, Yvonne Te Ruki Rangi O Tangaroa Underhill-Sem, Bronwyn Tilbury, Anne Pakoa, Stella Mulder, Bettina Baldeschi, IWDA)
- **KEYNOTE Jeffrey Sachs**, Jeffrey Sachs, John Thwaites, Josie Pagani
- **PLENARY PANEL, COVID-19's Impact on Development**, Shamal Dass, Craig Fisher, Jeffrey Sachs, Siale Ilolahia

Observations are themed into the questions asked in this report:

How would Talanoa work in a digital world?

- Seeking support for seamless regional digital connectivity
- There is a sense of urgency, this is what we have done all our lives
- It takes trust, transparency and care
- The power needs to be shifted, from everyone equally
- How can we globalise care, love and values that are for everyone? This comment is about making these qualities universal
- Drop the fear, need to be closer to the local community, to be more engaged
- Walk with the knowing and power and trust
- Calling for a total overhaul of global aid funding
- The need is to engage in a multi-stakeholder environment
- Need to have the time and the space to have the Talanoa
- We need to reflect on our own de-colonising lens and positioning on power, including the decolonisation of naming
- Need to be seen as practitioners, not victimised
- We need strengthened relationships before we even enter partnership, and then the money
- Digital is a good proxy, but does not replace face-to-face
- Talanoa needs space for stories, stories in our own language, stories that do not fit into boxes of time
- Talanoa is more than a meeting, it has relational positionality and is the process of nurturing the va
- Localisation is key, the power building and the knowledge building in the right hands
- What is the basis on which we organise the Pacific? Is it borders, identity, connection or something else
- Our cultural setup and our traditional governance are not being considered / seen as a model. It is worth investing in
- Give women the space to learn, give the space to lead, give the space to translate what they do in the family into governance.

Would the va (te wa, in Māori), the space between be strong?

- Do INGOs completely have to get out of the way? There is a role, but it has to be a different role, become smaller, don't implement directly
- How do I become a facilitator, an enabler of my local partners, take up less air in the room, get out of the way of local partners
- Observing the lateral relationships, relationships of solidarity
- Who isn't in the room
- Moving away from neutrality and other limiting mind frames
- Space, to heal, to rest
- Space to creatively imagine and challenge to exercise agency and autonomy
- Come to us, sit with us, we need to talk. "We can weave our mats, we can sing it, we can draw it on the sand, this is what you can take with you" and this is what needs to translate into a virtual tapestry
- Learn the language
- What does this mean in our space?
- Other ways to nurture the va over being there, diaspora. Be in our spaces: sport, religion, education
- Time is seen differently
- Understand that you know very little. Listen, Listen, Listen. You are not an expert if you haven't been there. Takes a lifetime. Requires a lot of self-reflection.

What are the possibilities?

- There is no one size fits all model, way of engagement or way of doing things. Let's respect each other. What can we learn from each other. What can we build on from what we have
- How we can be respectfully audacious
- What we want is we want is meaningful research
- An exemplary description of what meaningful engagement is
- It's a transition from localisation through to decolonisation
- Capacity enhancement is critical
- Roots continue to be active and revitalised
- Creating the spaces for all
- The power source is in funding for humanitarian change
- Island nations noting what they need
- No one from the outside can imagine what is going on for a nation, be clear, state facts, show what is happening, what is needed
- Everybody is overwhelmed
- No-one will hear unless the message is clear
- Covid-19 has impacted SDG implementation
- Pandemics have been signalled for years, we need to learn to listen. To the environment, the expertise and to other sources of wisdom.

When will this be a reality?

- We want to move forward
- Do we engage mandates
- We have the eagerness, the power and the energy to do this.

Do we need to engage using Digital Access?

- In Oceania, we want to see togetherness. Equitable togetherness
- Who is asking? Who is collecting? For who
- It is not only a relationship issue, the current structure keeps it the same. Perhaps digital access may shift this sameness
- There is increased heat and increased pressure on existing issues, perhaps we can continue work if we engage in the Talanoa on the virtual tapestry that digital access provides
- Localisation is critical, digital access assists in developing relationships
- Do we have the right model for foreign aid, how could engaging using digital access shift this
- Digital is good, in person is great.

Why is digital access important?

- Engaging with our realities
- Opportunity to engage in many different languages
- Can shift historical power imbalances
- Power to the survivor and the community to lead responses to crisis
- Initiates devolutionary action
- The need is not where the money is going, invest in grass roots civil society
- Part of building back better.

What if we choose not to engage using digital access?

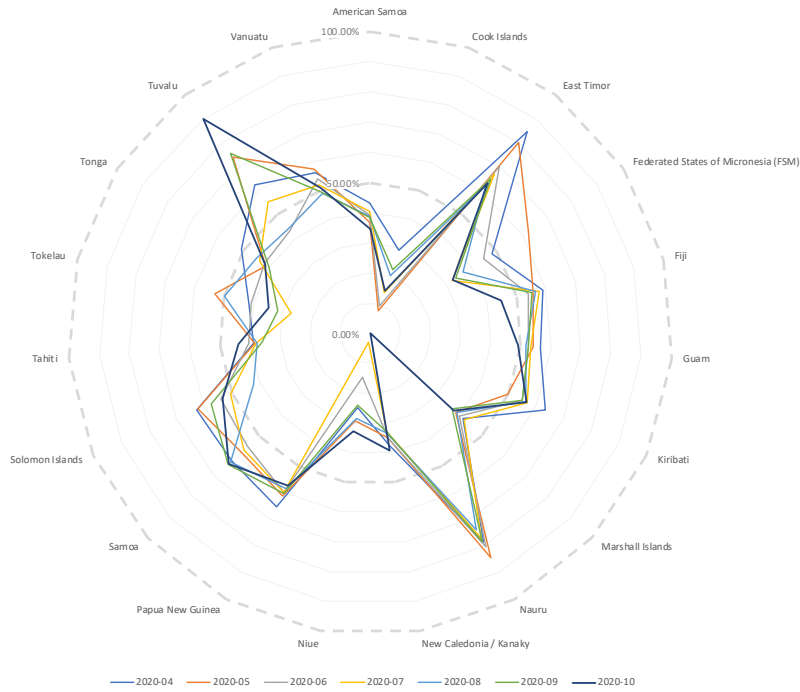
- Continue with the “this is what is on offer” behaviours
- Closed borders means no movement and no connection
- Risk. iNGOs: monetary. Local actors: people, change
- The world is filled with injustice and this will continue without connection. Small countries are vulnerable to the big / powerful countries.

Appendix B – Analysis of desktop and mobile share in PIANGO member states

The data shows percentage of mobile users as a proportion of all internet usage in a PIANGO member states. The seven months between April 2020 and October 2020 were used to collate this information. This gives a reliable view of baseline population mobile device behaviours as Covid-19 had closed borders to tourism across this timeframe. No internet data was collected for Nauru in October, showing a 0.00% result.

Member State	2020-04	2020-05	2020-06	2020-07	2020-08	2020-09	2020-10
American Samoa	43.26%	36.99%	39.34%	40.33%	38.61%	38.33%	34.49%
Cook Islands	29.20%	7.79%	9.51%	14.18%	20.11%	22.51%	14.94%
East Timor	84.91%	80.21%	69.74%	66.86%	62.23%	65.12%	63.36%
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	48.26%	62.32%	45.01%	32.34%	36.92%	33.67%	32.66%
Fiji	59.01%	55.84%	53.82%	57.56%	56.44%	55.29%	44.75%
Guam	56.72%	53.96%	52.45%	53.17%	51.76%	52.42%	49.06%
Kiribati	63.43%	49.84%	54.80%	56.91%	56.39%	54.81%	56.36%
Marshall Islands	41.73%	38.63%	40.17%	42.10%	38.77%	36.64%	37.80%
Nauru	78.59%	84.27%	80.35%	77.04%	73.73%	78.36%	0.00%
New Caledonia / Kanaky	37.34%	35.05%	34.89%	33.17%	33.51%	32.94%	39.16%
Niue	25.00%	29.36%	14.55%	2.76%	28.69%	24.14%	32.94%
Papua New Guinea	65.43%	60.95%	59.70%	59.76%	58.29%	60.45%	57.29%
Samoa	62.44%	58.02%	54.96%	56.94%	63.11%	64.01%	63.68%
Solomon Islands	62.85%	62.24%	54.00%	50.50%	42.10%	57.63%	53.18%
Tahiti	38.88%	38.54%	40.52%	37.89%	37.37%	36.14%	43.86%
Tokelau	41.67%	52.91%	40.77%	26.85%	49.67%	31.40%	34.86%
Tonga	51.03%	41.21%	42.06%	43.57%	45.18%	39.79%	41.77%
Tuvalu	62.42%	73.92%	43.11%	55.32%	44.23%	75.52%	89.82%
Vanuatu	56.43%	57.60%	54.12%	52.09%	49.01%	49.50%	50.95%

The radar view of this data shows consistency of use across months for most states that are mobile first (above the first dotted line radiating from the middle of the graph). An assumption is that variations in data consistency across months in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu are due to a small population in these states.



Averaging out this data provides a % per state across multiple months that smooths out seasonal or event-based anomalies. This view is presented graphically and discussed further in the above report.

Country	% of Mobile Access
American Samoa	38.76%
Cook Islands	16.89%
East Timor	70.35%
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	41.60%
Fiji	54.67%
Guam	52.79%
Kiribati	56.08%
Marshall Islands	39.41%
Nauru	67.48%
New Caledonia / Kanaky	35.15%
Niue	22.49%
Papua New Guinea	60.27%
Samoa	60.45%
Solomon Islands	54.64%
Tahiti	39.03%
Tokelau	39.73%
Tonga	43.52%
Tuvalu	63.48%
Vanuatu	52.81%

Further analysis on this data is available on request.

Appendix C – Cost of 1GB of data across PIANGO member states

The following table is the source table for the cost of 1GB calculations used in the report. All costs are in US\$. The data comes from multiple sources, the first being a Visual Capitalist article noting the cost of mobile data worldwide <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/cost-of-mobile-data-worldwide>. Unfortunately, this does not include all PIANGO member states so another column was added once data was found from source websites. This view is presented graphically and discussed further in the above report.

Country	Cost per GB	Visual Capitalist	National Average based on post-pay and pre-pay
American Samoa	4.00		4.00
Aotearoa / New Zealand	6.06	6.06	
Australia	0.68	0.68	
Cook Islands	3.75		3.75
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	80.00		80.00
Fiji	0.41		0.41
Guam	6.70		6.70
Kiribati	3.56		3.56
Marshall Islands	N/A		
Nauru	N/A		
New Caledonia / Kanaky	10.90		10.90
Niue	16.57		16.57
Papua New Guinea	5.40	5.40	
Samoa	2.53		2.53
Solomon Islands	7.69		7.69
Tahiti	3.22		3.22
Tonga	0.98		0.98
Tuvalu	48.46		48.46
Vanuatu	11.16		11.16
East Timor	2.08	2.08	
Palau	1.54		1.54
Tokelau	21.30		21.30
United States of America	8.00	8.00	-

The summary table below shows the data collated from source websites. This data was then averaged, as noted in the methodology in the Visual Capitalist article to arrive at the cost of 1GB in these states.

Country	Network	US\$	Source
American Samoa	Blue Sky Communications	6.12	http://www.bluesky.as/blueskyweb/?page_id=162
	ASTCA	1.88	https://www.astca.net/prepaid-mobile/
Cook Islands	Vodafone Cook Islands	3.75	https://www.vodafone.co.ck/prepay

Country	Network	US\$	Source
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	FSM Telecom	80.00	https://fsmtc.fm/internet/prepaid
Fiji	Vodafone	0.30	https://www.vodafone.com.fj/personal/price-plans/rates-price-plan/mobile-internet-rates
	Digicel	0.52	https://www.digicelgroup.com/fj/en/bundles.html
Guam	IT&E	6.50	https://store.ite.net/prepaid-plans/
	Docomo Pacific	1.98	https://www.docomopacific.com/shop/mobile/prepaid
	GTA	15.81	https://www.gta.net/mobile/prepaid/
	iConnect	2.50	https://www.icconnectguam.com/mobile/postpaid-plans
Kiribati	Government	3.56	https://www.micttd.gov.ki/article/ict/athkl-new-data-plan
Marshall Islands	NTA		http://ntamar.net
Nauru	Digicel		https://www.digicelgroup.com/nr/en/bundles.html
New Caledonia / Kanaky	Mobilis	10.90	https://www.opt.nc/particuliers/mobile/quel-forfait-choisir/kit-prepaye-liberte
Niue	Telecom Niue	16.57	http://telecomniue.com/price-plans/
Samoa	Vodafone Samoa	3.10	https://www.vodafone.com.ws/mobile/prepaid/
	Digicel	1.96	https://www.digicelgroup.com/ws/en/bundles.html#Prepaid
Solomon Islands	Our Telekom	7.69	https://www.ourtelekom.com.sb/products2/mobile/mobile-plans/pre-pay-mobile-plans/
Tahiti	VINI	4.85	https://www.vini.pf/internet/internet-mobile/internet-mobile-only
	Vodafone	3.04	https://www.vodafone.pf/fr/vodasurf-pocket
	Ora Mobile	1.77	https://www.ora.pf/ora-mobile/
Tonga	Digicel	0.98	https://www.digicelgroup.com/to/en/bundles.html#Prepaid
	TCC	0.98	http://www.tcc.to/data
Tuvalu	TTC	48.46	https://www.finder.com/best-prepaid-sim-card-tuvalu
Vanuatu	Digicel	10.04	https://www.digicelgroup.com/vu/en/bundles.html
	Vodafone (Telecom Vanuatu)	12.28	https://www.tvl.vu/pages/mobile-wao-data
Palau	PNCC	1.54	https://www.pnccpalau.com/docs/pages/products-and-services/palaucel/palaucel-prepaid-plans-082619.pdf
Tokelau	Teletok	21.30	https://www.teletokco.tk/calls-and-sms

Additional contributing data and further analysis is available on request.