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CONTRIBUTION BY MINISTRY OF DIGITAL POLICY, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA - GREECE

TITLE: The Hellenic Rural Broadband Project: Fostering the Information Society in Territorial Cohesion to Support the Implementation of Agenda 2030

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Europe Regional Initiative:

□ EUR1: Broadband infrastructure, broadcasting and spectrum management

Year(s) of implementation: □2021

Background [max 300 words]

The Greek Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media is strongly committed to bridge the digital divide and promote the digital cohesion, by assuring and / or improving connectivity across the country and offering broadband services to rural areas, thus supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the UN Agenda 2030. The General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post is the competent National Authority for the preparation and implementation of the **National Broadband Plan**, which encompasses various activities/projects that reflect the vision that



no-one should be left behind, financed by national resources and by European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

Greece has a **particular geomorphology and inhomogeneous population distribution**. It is primarily a mountainous country, with more than 300 larger and smaller mountains extending across the mainland, which covers 80% of the total territory. The rest 20% corresponds to approximately 6,000 islands, islets and rocky islets. Only 117 of them are inhabited, while there are only 79 having a population of over 100 inhabitants and only 53 having a population of over 1,000 inhabitants.

The **Rural Broadband** is a national-wide, large scale project, supported by ESIF and implemented via a Public-Private-Partnership scheme (BOT: Build, Operate, Transfer). It provides broadband infrastructure coverage and affordable connectivity services to the citizens of remote, disadvantageous areas of Greece - previously deprived of the full benefits of broadband. With this project, high-capacity networks reached remote areas where private players would not invest, due to its low commercial value. A mix of technologies (i.e. fiber and Wireless Backhauling, Wireless and VDSL Access) has been used to provide broadband infrastructure availability to NGA-white areas all over the country. The geographical span of the infrastructures covers almost **45% of the Greek territory** (geographically) and provides broadband connectivity to 5,077 villages/settlements and 525,287 inhabitants of rural and insular areas of the country. To date, 2/3 of the project has been completed (LOT1 and LOT3), while LOT2 is due to be completed by the end of 2018. The part of the project that has been received is already commercially available to retailers who have already signed up to date thousands of contracts with subscribers for broadband services. Our Secretariat General monitors the evolution of the exploitation

of the networks implemented within the project in order to ensure the penetration of broadband in rural areas and to achieve the effective design of the Regional Broadband Extension.

Additionally, the General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post successfully **completed** the project aiming to ensure the utilization of the **Fiber Optic Broadband Network** infrastructures from the 68 Metropolitan Municipalities of the country as well as the completion of their connection to the National Networks (eg SYZEFXIS, GDS, GRNET). Since 23/12/2016, the **MAN** maintenance has been contracted, which lasts for four years and is supervised by the relevant department of the Directorate-General.

In 2015, the European Commission approved the National Broadband Plan and our Ministry is currently planning to implement the actions included in it, updated and adapted to the new European targets (Gigabit Society 2025). Specifically, the service plans for the "**Super Fast Broadband**", "**Ultrafast Broadband**" **UFBB** (wholesale NGA services through PPPs) and other actions that all reach a budget of 700M €, with sources of funding the EPANEK, the RDP 2014-2020 and national resources. These actions have been updated, and the updated specialization papers have been approved by the Special Secretariat for the Management of Sectoral Operational Programs of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund.

The main objective of SFBB is to stimulate the demand for ultra-high speed services (100Mbps readily upgradable to 1Gbps) by citizens through a voucher. It concerns a subsidy of €360 for two years, which amounts to a budget of € 50 million to be covered by the Public Investment Program (PIP) and is estimated to benefit about 139 thousands citizens.



The UFBB action, for which a major project file is being prepared, includes public intervention to increase availability for NGA-White rural and peri-urban telecom services, which do not have access to high-speed internet access at least 100 Mbps, and in urban areas do not have high-speed downlink internet access of at least 100 Mbps - upgraded to 1 Gbps. The estimated budget exceeds € 300 million and will be covered by the EPANEK [€35 million from the EAFRD, Rural Development Program 2014-2020].



Proposal [max 400 words]

The ultimate goal of the above-mentioned projects, which are on track and very crucial, is to support our policy for implementing smart sustainable cities. It is obvious that the implementation of smart cities' activities can only be successful if broadband infrastructure and rural extensions bring high speed and quality services to all citizens across Greece.

Wishing to obtain the goal of smart sustainable cities, **the Greek Ministry co-organizes with ITU, UN-ECE and UNESCO a parallel session in the framework of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on July 12th, 2018, in New York.** We are all aware of the leading ITU role as a UN Agency and Greece will contribute in this respect through the above-mentioned co-organization of the parallel event in the HLPF framework. In this parallel session, we tend to present our national standard that our Ministry is developing in collaboration with our National Standardization Organization (NSO), the General Secretariat of the Government, Academia and market stakeholders. It is a National Standard for the Sustainable Development of Cities and it will comprise a set of Key Performance Indicators applicable to the needs of Greek Cities. These KPIs will be consistent with the ITU KPIs in the Y-series recommendations and the international standards of ISO and IEC. It will provide Greek Cities with a standardized method to collect data and measure their performance and progress to become more sustainable cities in the basis of their inclusiveness, smartness, security and resilience. Our national standard will be in public consultation next month. Our goal is to certify very soon one Greek city according to the Y series ITU Recommendations that are incorporated in the National Standard.



Apart from the above mentioned action, another Greek Ministry, the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced its presence in the **Voluntary National Review at the 2018 High Level Political Forum of the United Nations, in July in New York**. The General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post of the Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media, as the competent authority for Telecommunications, has contributed to this Report highlighting the importance of broadband infrastructure.

The Greek General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post is keen to continue to **contribute to the standardization work of the Study Groups in ITU-T** by providing our expertise in all fields of ITU's policies, that is distinguished by our eminent scientists that are eager to participate actively in supporting our National Policy for bridging the digital gap and also supporting ITU's position in the United Nations. We would like to reaffirm that our **dedication and strong commitment to the work of the Union through Council membership**, will assist in promoting ITU's leadership in the sector of telecommunications and ICTs, at a global level.

Finally, along with kindly reminding you the **Greek candidature for an ITU Council Member** in the forthcoming elections during PP-18 in Dubai, I would like to announce that the Greek Ministry has sent an **invitation to ITU in order to host an event for 5G, on 27-28 September 2018 in Athens**, for which we expect ITU's confirmation. You are most welcome to participate and join our efforts in this International Conference.

