



# The Asia Pacific information superhighway and regional cooperation for better ICT connectivity

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## Theme 4: Broadband for Underserved Areas

- Digital divide within nations as **rural areas often underserved** by ICT
- This large segment of the Asia-Pacific population remains unconnected and is **excluded** from the many social and economic **opportunities** available online.
- **Regional dialogue on rural and access** may help promote:
  - Good practices (universal funds, PPPs, national plans for deployment of infrastructure in rural areas)
  - Synergies and shared investments in border areas
  - Increased funding for rural access to ICT



## Inclusive Access

- The Asia Pacific region suffers from several key aspects of the digital divide:
  - Availability
  - Cost
  - Quality
- This is in large part driven by **cost of broadband**. Cost of a monthly subscription to fixed broadband as a % of monthly GNI:
  - less than 1% in ESCAP developed countries
  - Over 18% in ESCAP developing countries (39% in LDCs, 46% in Pacific SIDS).  
**Official target is 5%**



## Providing Access – Bridge the Divide with Wireless

- Previously, broadband was understood as a fixed connection, terminating at a household.
- This model is no longer realistic. Mobile broadband, a variety of forms is showing the most growth (wifi, 3g, 4g).
- Giving people a connection is not enough, we must understand what they want to do – is it fit for purpose?



## Understanding user behavior

- Users in South East Asia tend to use more social media applications than other areas of the world.
- Tend to be more open about sharing personal information
- Are likely to want to use streaming video and enhanced telephony applications



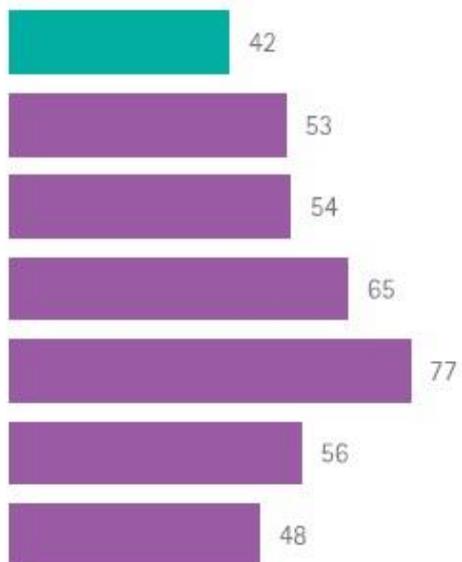
## Connection Quality Influences Adoption

Many Southeast Asian consumers are all-too ready for digital adoption as soon as access costs fall and infrastructure improves.

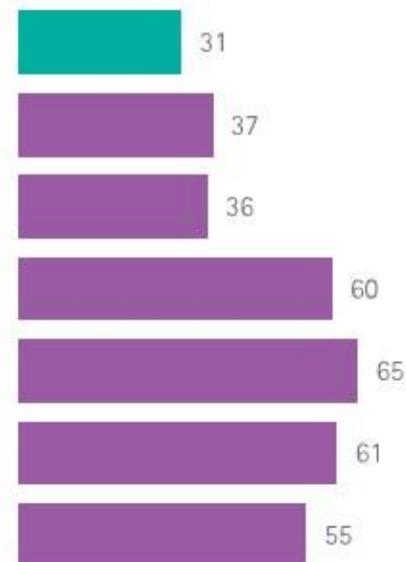
"...like to use the internet more, if it were not so expensive"



"...like to access the internet more on my mobile phone, if it were more convenient or had higher speed or connectivity"



"...be happy doing all my internet surfing with my mobile phone"



Source: TNS Digital Life, 2011, as quoted in Surfing Southeast Asia's Powerful Digital Wave, Accenture, 2014



## Asian Information Superhighway - Mobile Broadband

- Advantages:
  - Cheaper infrastructure to install than fixed broadband
  - Provides advantages of portability
  - Consumers value mobile platforms
- Disadvantages:
  - PCs are still necessary
  - Speeds for wireless technology are more limited than fixed broadband
  - Network diversity is important



## Connection Quality Can Vary Significantly

- Even when connections are present, the quality of service can vary significantly.
- Metrics such as delivered download speed and latency offer some insight into user experiences with these services.
- Some national data is available to examine these issues

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