

COVER BRIEFING

2.24 Regional Digital Hubs

Purpose

The purpose of this cover briefing is to provide context for the ^{Comme} individual Regional Digital Hub proposals on the Senior Regional Official (SRO) 28 November 2019 meeting agenda.

Background

In October 2018 CAB-18-MIN-0516, Cabinet approved an allocation of \$100 million for investment in digital connectivity.

This \$100m allocation has three parts. The first is \$40m for expanding the Rural Broadband Initiative Phase 2 (RBI2) and Mobile Blackspot Fund (MBSF). This will support people living in remote areas of surge regions and the tourism sector. A further \$40m is to help improve the broadband performance available to businesses and households in Milford Sound and the West Coast, where the level of broadband investment through government broadband programmes has not been as strong relevant to other regions.

The remaining \$20m of the allocation is for local digital connectivity to improve the accessibility of digital connectivity to support jobs, skills development and social inclusion. Local digital connectivity is made up of two initiatives and sub-allocations of funding: Marae Digital Connectivity (\$13m) and Regional Digital Hubs (\$7m). This sub-allocation of funding for local digital connectivity was agreed by RED Ministers on 24 January [2159 18-19].

In the same October Cabinet paper, Cabinet also approved a position paper on the PGF approach to investment in digital connectivity. It includes four principles for local connectivity investment which will be applied when considering applications that relate to local connectivity. As such, evaluations of Regional Digital Hub applications are based on four principles: accessibility, criticality, economically sustainable, and local based priorities.

Proposals

^{Com} of the Regional Digital Hub proposals were discussed and noted at the SRO meeting on 31 October 2019. An evaluation process has now been implemented to ensure alignment with the Cabinet Digital Connectivity Principles. These ^{Commercia} proposals, along with an additional ^{Commerci} new proposals, are now included in the 28 November 2019 SRO meeting agenda and seeking SRO approval.

The below table sets out where the Regional Digital Hubs are proposed to be located, the total project value and the recommended PGF Funding.

Regional Digital Hub Location (Region)	Total Project Value	Amount of PGF funding
Wairoa (Hawke's Bay)	\$ Commercial Information	\$400,000
Commercial Information	\$ Commercial Information	\$ Commercial Information
Opotiki (Bay of Plenty)	\$ Commercial Information	\$400,000
Commercial Information	\$ Commercial Information	\$ Commercial Information
Westport (West Coast)	\$ Commercial Information	\$400,000
Greymouth and the 'Outreach' Hub (West Coast)	\$ Commercial Information	\$800,000

PROACTIVELY RELEASED