TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) of St. Vincent and the Grenadines was established by the Telecommunications Act (Cap 418) of the Revised Laws of St. Vincent and the Grenadines 2009 to efficiently regulate the telecommunications sector in collaboration with the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL). The NTRC was also mandated to manage the Universal Service Fund (USF).

1.1 WHAT IS THE UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND?

The Universal Service Fund (USF) was established under Section 42 of the Telecommunications Act (Cap 418) of the Revised Laws of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 2009. The Fund was set up to compensate any telecommunications provider who is required to provide or to promote Universal Service. Universal Services include: Public voice telephony, Internet access, telecommunication services to schools, hospitals and similar institutions, and to the physically challenged. The USF encourages efficient access to, and the use of telecommunication networks and services throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines, with special focus on rural, underserved and maritime areas. The provision of Universal Service will provide social, educational and economic development for our nation.

The Fund will be used to ensure the reasonable availability and affordability of basic and advanced telecommunication services, where commercial telecommunication markets may be unable to deliver such services in a financially viable manner independently.

The USF is mainly funded by annual payments made by telecommunication providers. The Fund may also receive income from appropriations made by Parliament and official grants, donations, bequests or other contributions if the NTRC considers it consistent with the best interest of the Fund. The annual payment received from telecommunication providers is calculated as a percentage of their gross annual revenue considering the number of years in operation. This payment structure range from 0.25% of gross revenue for the first year of operation, 0.5% of gross revenue for the second year, 1% for the third year, 1.5% for the fourth year, 1.75% for the fifth year and 2 % for the sixth and each subsequent year of its operation.

1.2 REGULATORY INSTRUMENTS OF THE USF

There are several regulatory instruments that govern the Universal Service Fund. They are as follows:

1.2.1 Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund Contribution Order) Regulations S.R.O. #4 of 2017.

This was gazetted in January 2017. This revised Order sets out the method for the calculation of annual payments and the deadline by which they are to be paid. This document can be accessed on the NTRC's website at the following URL:

http://www.ntrc.vc/regulations/USF_contribution_order.pdf

1.2.2 Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations (Cap 418) of the Revised Laws of St. Vincent and the Grenadines 2009

The Regulations were gazetted on September 16, 2008 and the aim of these regulations is to provide a broad framework for the efficient and effective management of the Fund. This document can be accessed on the NTRC's website at the following URL:

http://www.ntrc.vc/regulations/Universal_Service_Fund_regulations_1.pdf

1.2.3 Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Guidelines 2009

This document outlines specific procedures and policies for the management of the USF in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It also outlines the basis for the development and use of the Guidelines derived from the Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations. This document can be accessed on the NTRC's website at the following URL:

http://www.ntrc.vc/usf/USF_guidelines.pdf

1.3   TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT 2009

Section 42 of this Act mandates the establishment of the USF. This document can be accessed on the NTRC's website at the following URL:

http://www.ntrc.vc/regulations/telecom_act_2001_SRO_NO_1.pdf

1.4   USF OPERATING PLAN

The USF Operating Plan is a policy document which outlines the priority objectives of the USF within St. Vincent and the Grenadines on an annual basis. This document summarizes the state of development of telecommunications in the country, and it sets forth the broad objectives, targets and types of projects that the Fund may seek to promote during the year. It also provides a financial status of the fund to stakeholders.

1.5   USF BUDGET

Revenue

For the year ended December 31, 2019, the Universal Service Fund had projected to receive a total of Two Million One Hundred and Ten Thousand, Three Hundred ($2,110,300.00) Dollars from Telecommunications Service Providers, an interest of Nineteen Thousand Dollars ($19,000.00) and other income of Thirty Thousand Nine Hundred Dollars ($30,900). The actual revenue received by the Universal Service Fund in 2019 was One Million Five Hundred and Twenty-Three Thousand, Eight Hundred and Ninety-Three Dollars ($1,523,893.00). The shortfall in revenue arose as one of the major telecommunications providers did not settle their annual USF contribution before the year ended.

Expenditure

Recurrent:

For the year ended December 31, 2019, the USF had projected to spend Three Hundred and Eighty-Three Thousand, Seven Hundred and Sixty-Seven Dollars ($383,767.00) on recurrent expenditure. However, Four Hundred and Seven Thousand, Nine Hundred and Seventy-Five Dollars ($407,975.00) was spent. The additional expenses incurred related to the execution of our annual icode784 competition which allows secondary school students and residents under the age of 35 years to present ideas and/or mobile applications for the improvement of existing systems or the implementation of new systems for both the private and public sectors within our country.

Projects:

For the year ended December 31, 2019, the USF budgeted to spend Three Million, One Hundred and Thirty-Five Thousand, Three Hundred and Ninety-Four Dollars ($3,135,394.00) for payment on projects. However, Two Million Two Hundred and Forty-Seven Thousand, Four Hundred and Eighty Dollars ($2,247,480.00) was spent. This is primarily because some contractual obligations under some of the USF projects were not met and therefore, the payments of the maintenance fees were deferred until the issues were resolved. Furthermore, some of the new contracts were implemented later than planned which led to the rescheduling of their contractual payments.

Figure 1 below shows the projected and actual revenues received by the USF from respective telecommunication operators. The revenue generated by telecommunications operators increased by a margin of 1.51% in 2019.

Figure 1
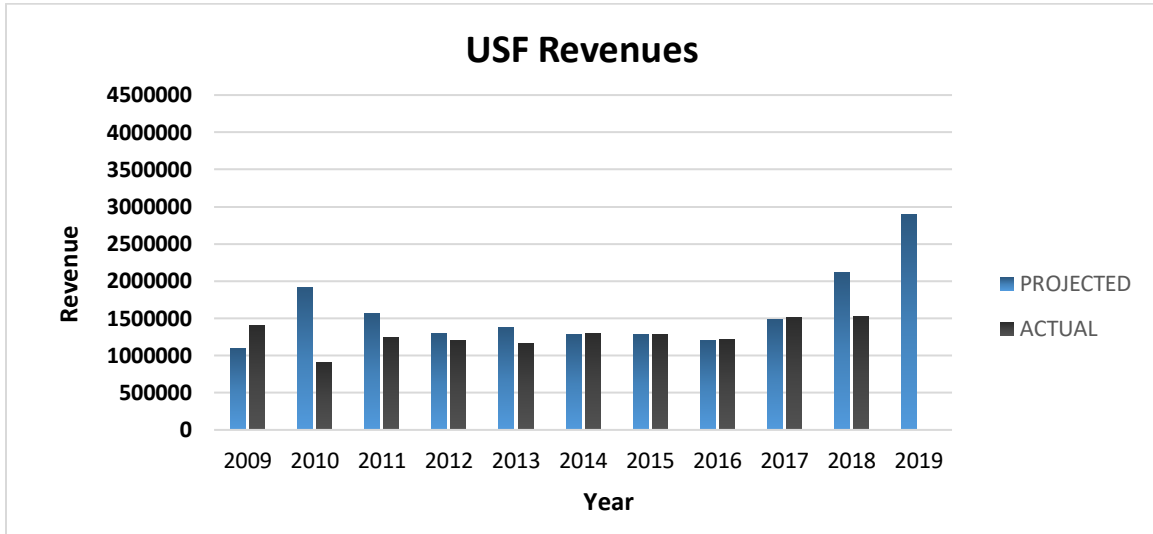
Fig 1. USF Projected and Actual Revenue (Source: NTRC Annual Report 2019)

2 TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

For the year 2019, it was found that a total of 354.76 Terabytes of data was consumed by 45,806 devices via 322 wireless access points across 125 locations nationwide. These are monitored and managed through a central dashboard which is hosted in the cloud Based on data from the dashboard, 67.83% (31,071) were Android devices while 27.67% (12,675) were iOS devices

In addition to providing wireless internet access, in 2019 the NTRC continued with the objective of ICT training in the rural areas with the Myapp Summer Program which provides students, between the ages of 13 and 18, with the ability to get training in software development. In 2019, the program was held at The Emmanuel High School Mesopotamia where a total of twenty (20) students took part. In 2020, the NTRC will be hosting two programs, one will be held at The Canouan Secondary School and the other at The North Union Secondary School where an estimated twenty (20) students will be trained at each location.

2.1 UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND (USF) PROJECT STATUS

The following gives an update of the projects currently being implemented under the USF:

2.1.1 Internet Project

The first project undertaken by the NTRC in SVG was the Internet Project. This project was signed with telecommunications provider Cable and Wireless, at a cost of Four Hundred and Twenty-Seven Thousand, Six Hundred and Eight Dollars (EC$427,608). In the project, twenty-eight (28) rural locations were outfitted with wireless internal and external internet access points with minimum speeds of 8 Mbps. These locations included thirteen (13) Learning Resource Centers, nine (9) rural schools and six (6) Community Centers. This project was commissioned on July 6, 2011 and ran for a period of five (5) years. In 2016 this project was combined with another project, the Community Center Project and was retendered. The contract document for this project was signed on March 8th, 2019 between Cable and Wireless and the NTRC. This new contract will run for two years and will come to an end on March 7th, 2021. The commissioning process for the Community Access Project begun on October 29th, 2019 and was completed on December 19th, 2019 as all the services and equipment were in place at each site under this project.

2.1.2   Payphone Project

The second project is the Payphone Project, and was signed with Cable and Wireless in 2011, at a cost of One Million, Four Hundred Thousand, Five Hundred and Seventy-Five Dollars (EC$1,400,575). Under this project, twenty-five (25) payphones were installed at various locations across SVG, including tourism sites, beaches and at points along the main road. Internet access was also provided at the tourism sites and beaches at a minimal cost. Overt vandal proof security cameras were also installed at selected tourism sites and at the beaches to minimize the threat of vandalism to the payphones, as well as to provide some security for visitors to these locations. This project was commissioned in January of 2017 and will run for a five-year period. The sites under this project are routinely visited to ensure that the services and equipment are functional. During our routine monitoring in 2019, It was observed that three sites are costly to maintain as they are negatively impacted by environmental conditions due to their location. These sites are Cumberland Trail, Rawacou and Fancy. After negotiations with Cable and Wireless, it was agreed that these 3 sites will be removed from the current project and that electricity will be placed at the Mt Wynne beach site for the equipment under this project. This installation of electricity to this site is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2020.

2.1.3   Schools Project

The contract for this project was signed on October 23rd, 2019 for a total of Two Million Five Hundred and Fifty – one Thousand, Fifty – Four Dollars and Eighty-Seven Cents $2,551,054.87. The project will run for five years and would come to an end on October 22nd, 2024. Each school included in the project will now get one internet connection with a minimum download speed of 100 Mbps and an upload speed of 15 Mbps. Other selected locations will also get a minimum download speed of 100 Mbps with an upload speed of 100 Mbps based on the availability of the providers infrastructure to provide these speeds. In addition to this, some of the schools under the project will require the installation of a Cisco network switch to provide the service to the various access points at each school.

A five-year license for a centrally managed content management system which will interface with all existing access points under the project will also be provided. This is to provide content filtering at each location and also to monitor the status of the services at each location. This project is expected to be commissioned by the second quarter of 2020.

2.1.4   Maritime Project

The VHF Maritime Project was initially commissioned on November 20, 2012 and ran for five years. The project was implemented to provide access to both emergency and non-emergency communications in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of St Vincent and the Grenadines and saw the implementation of a Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The project was executed for a total cost of One Million, One Hundred and Twenty-Five Thousand, Seven Hundred and Eighty Dollars (EC$1,125,780) and was maintained for a period of five years. Five Hundred and Forty Thousand Dollars (EC$540,000) of this amount was accessed from the World Bank for the purchase and installation of the equipment. The remaining Five Hundred and Eighty-Five Thousand, Seven Hundred and Eighty-One Dollars (EC$585,781) was paid by the Universal Service Fund for the maintenance of the services and equipment over the five-year period. This system comprises a set of safety procedures, types of equipment and communication protocols used to increase safety and make it easier to rescue distressed ships, boats and even aircrafts. GMDSS provides for distress alerts, distress relays, search and rescue, on scene communication and location services. This system is mandatory for all ships subject to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention of 1974. The basic concept of this system is that the Coast Guard, as well as vessels in the immediate area of a ship in distress, will be rapidly alerted to an emergency so that they can assist with minimum delay time. Digital Selective Calling (DSC) is one of the most important aspects of this GMDSS system and is a standard for sending a pre-defined digital message via the pressing of one button. Noting this, the NTRC identified and implemented this project to improve the VHF maritime coverage around the country.

This project was retendered in 2017 as the contract which was in place came to an end. The NTRC subsequently entered into a contract with Cable and wireless for the continued maintenance of the equipment and system to facilitate the GMDSS System. The contract was signed on March 8th, 2019 for a period of five years for a total cost of Five Hundred and Ninety-One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Forty Dollars and Sixty-Five Cents ($591,840.65)

2.1.5   Police and Health Center Project

This project provides wireless internet access at all twenty-nine (29) Police Stations and forty-two (42) Health Centers throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines at a minimum speed of 8 Mbps. The cost of this project is Seven Hundred and Eleven Thousand, and Fifteen Dollars (EC$711,015), and was implemented by Karib Cable (FLOW)) for a period of two (2) years. Thirty-one (31) computers were installed at various clinics, and fourteen (14) computers installed at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital. The Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines (RSVG) Police Force Training School was also outfitted with ten (10) computers to assist the recruits and other officers with their research work. This project also came to an end in 2017 and a project for the continuation of the maintenance of the services was tendered. The NTRC subsequently entered into a contract with Cable and Wireless on May 14th, 2019 for the continued provision of services at the sites under the project. The contract for this project is Five Hundred and Forty-One Thousand, Three Hundred and Forty Dollars ($541,340.00) and will run for two years.

2.1.6   Community Center Project

The sixth project implemented is the Community Center Project. This project provides wireless internet access at eleven (11) Community Centers in various communities, Learning Resource Centers, and seven (7) group institutions and public venues, throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines with a minimum Internet speed of 20 Mbps. The contract for this project was signed in 2012 with Karib Cable (FLOW), at a cost of One Hundred and Nineteen Thousand, five hundred and Three Dollars (EC$119,503), and was implemented for a period of two (2) years. The project was commissioned on March 4, 2014. Under this project, the newly established Salvation Army Children's Home was outfitted with six (6) computers and internet access to assist with the development of the children's ICT skills. All residents from the various communities, where these project sites are located, have access to the wireless internet on a 24/7 basis.

This project was combined with another project, the internet project and was retendered in the third quarter of 2016.The new contract was signed on March 8th 2019. This new contract will run for two years and will come to an end on March 7th, 2021. The commissioning process for the Community Access Project begun on October 29th, 2019 and was completed on December 19th, 2019. The project was commissioned as at December 19th, 2019 as all the services and equipment were in place at each site under this project.

2.1.7 SMART Project

This project facilitated the necessary infrastructure and platforms at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College (SVGCC) to enable it to offer its existing and new courses online and in real time. Another component of this project is that Three Hundred and Forty (340) households benefitted from subsidized internet access at a price of ten dollars ($10) per month for a maximum of two (2) years. Additionally, a state-of-the-art computer lab containing Thirty-Five (35) high powered computers, including Twenty (20) Apple iMac computers, were handed over to the Division of Technical Education, SVGCC. This project was executed at a total of One Million, Six Hundred and Ninety-Eight Thousand, Nine Hundred and Ninety-Four Dollars (EC$1,698,994) and is being implemented by Cable & Wireless. This project was commissioned on September 25, 2014 and came to an end in September 2019.The project was tendered in July 24th 2019 and the Commission is currently in the process of negotiating the final contract terms with a provider and a contract is expected to be in place by the first quarter of 2020.

2.1.8   St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Broadband Plan

The NTRC developed a draft National Broadband plan in 2016. With funding assistance from the Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure Program (CARCIP) Project, the NTRC in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology alongside a World Bank Consultant conducted public consultations on the draft plan throughout the nation in the first quarter of 2017. With feedback from the consultations, the final draft of the plan was completed in June 2017. The draft National Broadband Plan has not yet been approved by Cabinet for adoption and execution. During 2019, the NTRC met with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology in order to facilitate the submission of the draft plan to Cabinet. One of the main components of the Broadband plan is to bring broadband penetration levels above 90% by 2023.

3 SUMMARY MARKET ASSESSMENT

The USF did not execute any new projects in 2019. However, new contracts were entered into for the continued services under the Maritime project, Community Access Project, Schools Project and the Police and Health Center Project. There were also ongoing negotiations for services under the SMART Project that was retendered during the year. Nevertheless, we continued to maintain Three Hundred and Twenty-Eight (328) free wireless internet access points across the country and other services and equipment which are in place under the seven projects currently being executed under the Fund.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has also been building capacity within the country as it pertains to ICT infrastructure as the Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure Program (CARCIP) has been implemented. CARCIP is a World Bank financed initiative which focuses on the development of a high-speed broadband backbone network to connect major populated areas on the mainland and the Grenadines to existing regional broadband networks, as well as to increase cross-border connectivity with neighboring Grenada. This project also seeks to advance the development of an ICT-enabled service industry in the Caribbean region. CARCIP is structured into two components.

These two components are.

1. Expansion of the Government Wide Area Network (GWAN) and Supply & Installation of an IP PBX.

2. The Installation, Maintenance and Operation of an Undersea Cable System for Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Key deliverables of the Components:

- A dedicated Government Wide Area Network (GWAN) infrastructure.
- GWAN is to be a Fiber based network connecting all Government locations specified.
- GWAN Core has a Primary and Secondary core for geo-diverse redundancy.
- Centralized Security Services to protect the network against complex and malicious threats.
- A new Government IP PBX system & 911 IP PBX System
- Subsea cable system connecting the Grenadine Islands of Bequia, Mustique, Canouan, and Union Island to the mainland of St. Vincent and Grenada.

In March 2018 Digicel OECS Ltd was awarded the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) which was signed on March 31st, 2018 between the Governments of Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Digicel OECS Ltd and Digicel St. Vincent Ltd. The running of the subsea cable system which connects the Grenadine islands to the mainland St. Vincent as well as to Grenada was completed in November 2019.However, the implementation of the other components was extended until December 31, 2020.

With regards to our national broadband network, the two lump-Sum contracts (referred to as Lot 1 and Lot 3), valued at Fifty Million, Seven Hundred and Ninety-One Thousand, Five Hundred and Thirty Nine Dollars (EC$ 50,791,539.00) are in place for the execution, operation and maintenance of the national broadband network for a period of 15 years. Lot 1 is for a total of Twenty-Seven Million, Eight Hundred and Thirty-One Thousand, Seven Hundred and Six Dollars ($27,831,706.00). Lot 3 amounts to Twenty-Two Million, Nine Hundred and Fifty-Nine Thousand, Eight Hundred and Thirty-Three Dollars ($22,959,833.00) and these lots are broken out as follows.

a) Lot 1. Implementation of the Government Wide Area Network (GWAN) and the Installation of a new Government IP-PBX

b) Lot 3. The design, construction, operation and maintenance of an undersea cable system between the main islands of Grenada and St. Vincent with cable landing stations on Carriacou, Union Island, Canouan, Mustique and Bequia.

The basic infrastructural components of the Undersea cable system include approximately 139.8 mi. (225 km) of fiber optic cable which Is laid on the sea floor. Also, a main trunk cable which runs between St. Vincent and Grenada with branching cable segments at intervals to serve Bequia, Union Island, Canouan and Mustique. Construction at each landing site and the running of the submarine cable system was completed in November 2019.The provision of commercial wholesale rates for its use is still outstanding as it was submitted but has not yet been accepted by the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada. The submarine cable will be managed by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). The SPV was established by Digicel Grenada Cable Company Ltd and is also registered in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The new IP PBX system would be located at the Administrative Complex. The total number of overall users will be 1,600 and the total number of concurrent users will be 300.

High- and low-level designs have been completed and Government buildings and surveys were completed in 2019. The Government Wide Area Network was completed in November 2019. 100% of the installation on the network was completed as at November 2019. The core IP PBX was also installed in September 2019. As at December 2019, Seven Hundred and Twenty-one (721) PBX of 1200 were rolled out across the Government. This phase is expected to be completed by May 2020. In addition, the Government has sought additional financing to further extend the G-WAN network infrastructure to seventy (70) sites and procure an additional 400 telephones. The additional financing is also expected to address the implementation of a Government wide Wi-Fi infrastructure. The target completion date for this aspect of the project is December 2020.

Benefits of the interventions:

1. It will significantly improve the quality of internet services offered in the country and thus, eventually, increase the broadband penetration rate in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

2. Meet the growing demands for broadband services as a result of increasing backhaul requirements of 4G and the ever-increasing bandwidth demands from residents, businesses community, government and visitors to our shores.

3. With the Grenadines being tourism oriented, the undersea system will enhance the competitiveness of this segment of our tourism product. Increasingly, visitors expect broadband communications to be comparable with services available at home.

4. The GWAN infrastructure will enhance the provision of e-Government services and create the enabling environment to facilitate the delivery of more easily accessible services, particularly to persons living in the Grenadines.

ICT-Led Innovation under the CARCIP Project

Under the ICT-Led Innovation component of CARCIP, twenty-five (25) businesses have benefited under through the business incubation grant programme.

The training grants sub-component mainly executed by the SVG National Centre of Technological Innovation Inc. (SVGNCTI). The SVGNCTI commenced CARCIP ICT skills development and certification training in April of 2016. Through this initiative, Vincentians were given the opportunity to take advantage of subsidized ICT training. For each person, the CARCIP project subsidizes 80% of the cost of the specific training course in addition to the exam cost.

Over the period, of the project the training programme facilitated over 764 persons in several ICT disciplines both for professional development and for certification purposes. All participants received a certificate of competence from the NCTI. In addition, out of the 764 persons who did the courses 152 persons successfully completed the courses and was awarded an internationally recognised certification.

In Professional Development, the following courses were offered:

- Digital Animation
- Web page Design
- Graphics Design
- Mobile Application Design
- Computer Application for Office
- Cell Phone Repairs
- Computer Fundamentals

For International certification purposes one hundred and seventy-one (171) persons were successful in the exams and will receive a certificate from the testing client (e.g. CISCO, ICDL). The following courses were undertaken:

- ICDL Base
- Cisco Certified Network Associate
- Computer Application for the Office
- Microsoft Office Specialist
- CompTIA A+
- CompTIA Security+
- CompTIA Network+

3.2: CARDTP – Caribbean Digital Transformation Project (Citizen Centric Project)

The project aims to:

- strengthen the digital economy in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU)
- support regional collaboration to create common standards, regulations, policies and shared public investments
- create economies of scale
- ease access to new markets and make the region a more attractive digital investment destination.

The National-level activities will be financed from the national IDA credit of US$20 million dollars. These activities are aimed at building the cross-cutting enablers of digital government, while supporting public sector productivity and extending key digital public services to the citizens of SVG. The following list the national level activities which is expected to be pursued under the project:

1. **Digital Ecosystem**
   1.1. *Cybersecurity:* Support to develop a national cybersecurity strategy and establish a Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) using a hub-and-spokes model that allows for regional coordination and information sharing. Activity will also include cyber awareness raising and capacity building support for civil servants, public officials, and the general public.

2. **Digital Infrastructure, Platforms, and Services**
   2.1. *Cross-cutting enablers of digital government:* The project will support the development of key cross-cutting enablers to facilitate government digitization, productivity improvement, and the development of citizen-facing digital services. Specific activities include –
      - *Digital Government strategy, standards, and protocols:* Development of a government digitalization strategy and implementation roadmap, enterprise architecture, and interoperability framework. The activity will also include training and capacity building of enterprise architects to ensure effective implementation of digital government.
      - *Digitization of identification registries, unique digital identifier and citizen authentication:* Digitization of identification registries (civil registry, national ID, electoral ID etc.) and integrate using a unique digital identifier (leveraging prior efforts in the area) The activity will also support the update of existing legislation around identification and authentication to enable digital identification, and development/ update of the digital identification system used to generate the unique identifier. Activity will support development of authentication infrastructure as necessary, to enable digital identification.

- *Government payment platform:* Support to develop a government payment platform to enable e-payment for government services, licenses, permits etc. by individuals and businesses.
- *Systems integration: D*evelopment of a data exchange platform and integration of key systems, registries, and databases with each other and to the government payment platform to enable end-to-end digitization of citizen facing public services.
- *Capacity building of public sector IT professionals and civil servants:* Support for awareness raising and training program to support technical capacity development of the ICT staff, with potential for additional human resources to augment the ICT unit.

2.2. *Government productivity and efficiency:* Financing support for key productivity enhancement tools, infrastructure, and associated trainings. Specifically: –
- *Data hosting and back-up for resilience*
- *E-Document management system and digital signatures*

2.3. *Citizen-facing services:* The project will support the development of the following specific digital government services –
- *Single window for land/property transactions:* Development of a one-stop-shop for land and property transactions, which includes development of an Integrated Geospatial Infrastructure Framework (IGIF), national multipurpose cadaster, digitization of paper deeds, and design and roll-out of a unified land information system, integrated with key registries (integration budgeted in subcomponent 2.1 activities). The activity will also include support to streamline the transaction workflow, business process re-engineering, and associated legal and regulatory reforms.
- *Single window customs clearance:* Extension of the ASYCUDA World platform and integration with necessary systems for permits and authorizations. Activity will also include support for training, business process re-engineering, and ongoing technical support from the vendor.
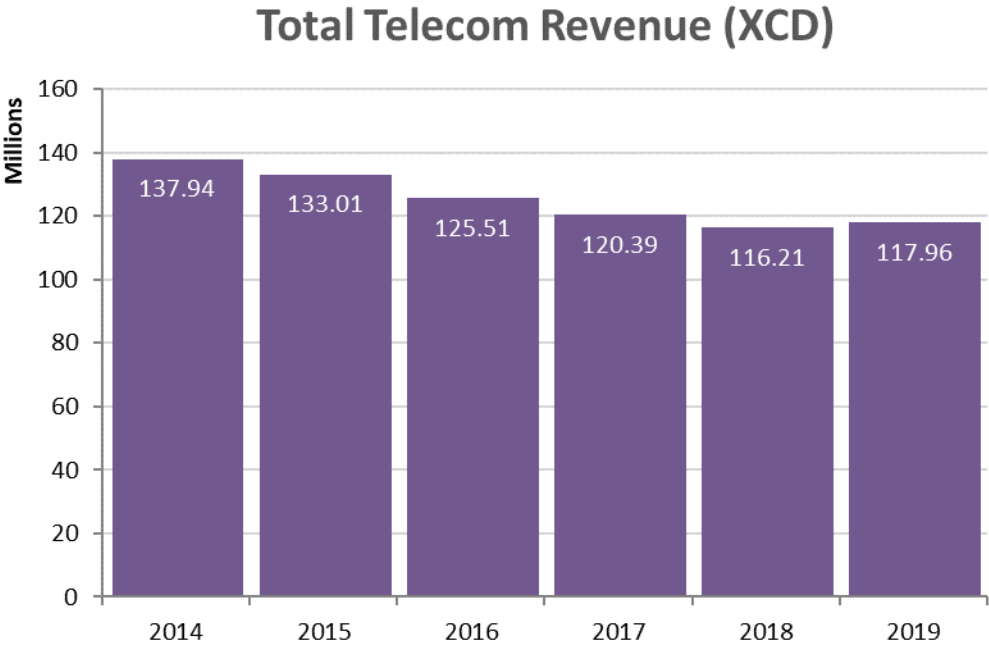
3. **Digital Skills and Entrepreneurship**
    3.1. *Digital skills development:* Financing of a national level program for digital skills development, with linkages to regional program for advanced skills development. Activity will also include matchmaking with domestic private sector to facilitate the development of a skills-to-jobs pipeline.
    3.2. *Digitalization of traditional industries and digital entrepreneurship:* Development of a digital technology adoption program for the private sector, and entrepreneurship support for individuals with dedicated programming for women.
    Both activities 3.1 and 3.2 will be complemented directly by the skills and entrepreneurship program proposed at the regional level.

4. **Project Management Support:** Support to the Project Implementation Unit for implementation and management of national level project activities.

3.1 REVENUE OF TELECOM OPERATORS

Figure 2 below shows the revenues received by the respective telecommunication operators. The revenue generated by telecommunications operators increased by a margin of 1.51% in 2019.
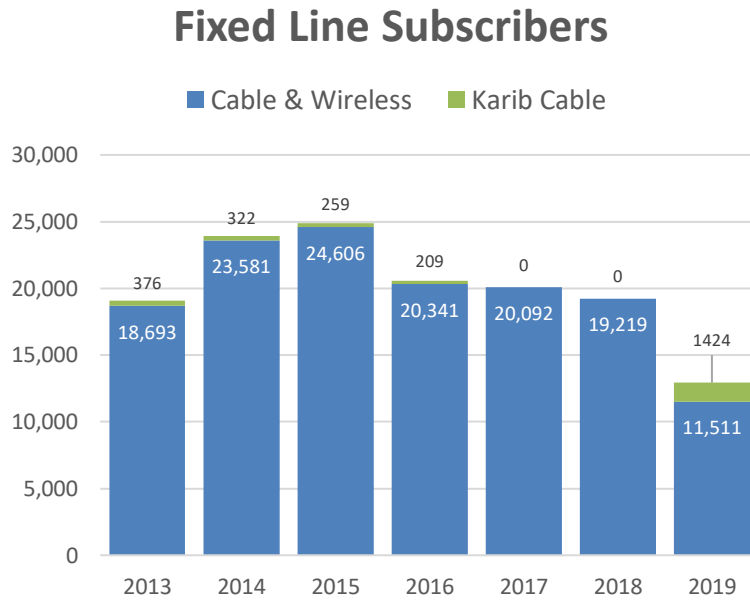
Figure 2

Total Telecom Revenue (XCD)

Year	Revenue (Millions)
2014	137.94
2015	133.01
2016	125.51
2017	120.39
2018	116.21
2019	117.96

Fig 2. Telecom Revenue for the telecommunications providers in SVG (Source: NTRC)

Figure 3 shows Fixed Line Subscribers over the last seven years.

Figure 3

Fixed Line Subscribers

■ Cable & Wireless   ■ Karib Cable

Year	Cable & Wireless	Karib Cable
2013	18,693	376
2014	23,581	322
2015	24,606	259
2016	20,341	209
2017	20,092	0
2018	19,219	0
2019	11,511	1424

Fig 3. Fixed Line Subscribers (Source: NTRC)

Figure 4 below shows the number of Broadband Internet Subscribers from 2013 to 2019 on a whole. There has been an increase in the Broadband Internet Subscribers from 2013 except for 2019.
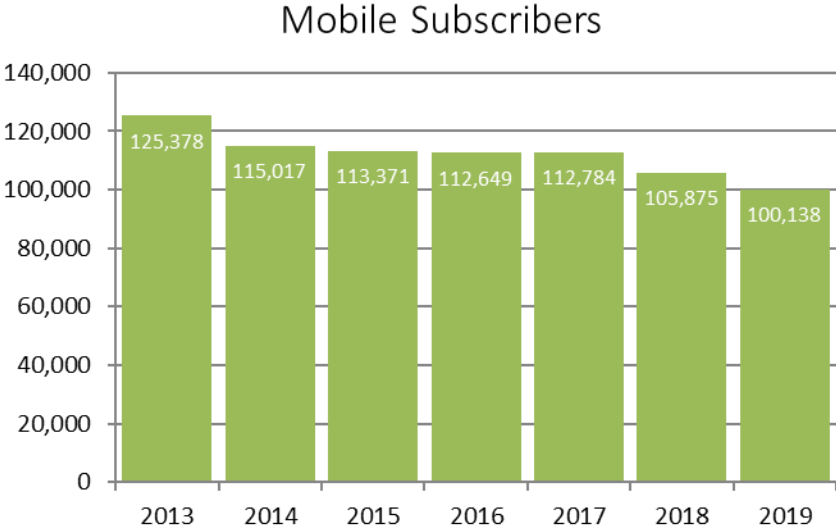
Figure 4

Broadband Internet Subscribers
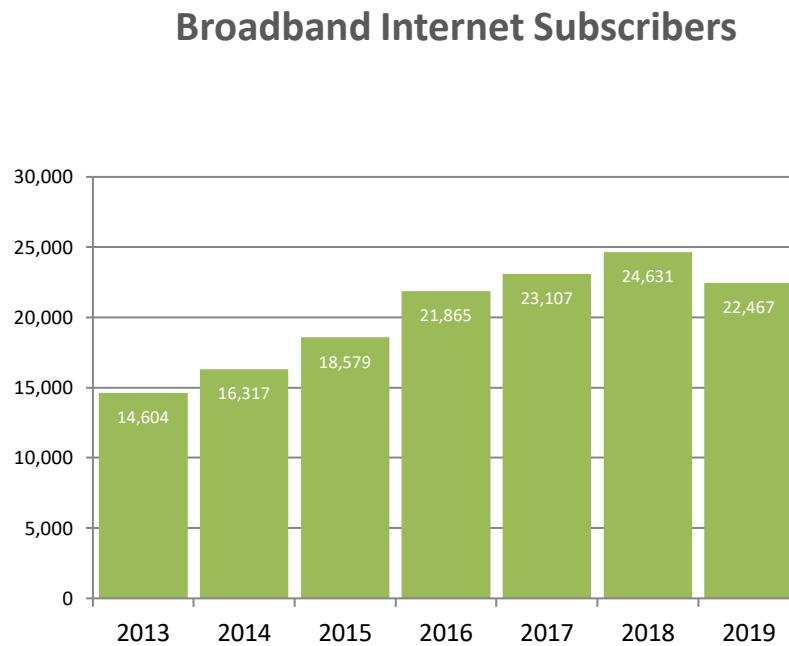
Fig 4. Broadband internet subscribers in SVG (Source: NTRC)

Figure 5 shows the number of mobile subscribers for the years 2013 to 2019. The figure shows a slight decrease in the figure for 2019 as compared to 2018.

Figure 5

Mobile Subscribers

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Subscribers	125,378	115,017	113,371	112,649	112,784	105,875	100,138

Fig 5. Mobile Subscribers (Source: NTRC)

3.2 PORTABLE COMPUTERS ENTERING ST. VINCENT

Figure 6 below depicts the number of portable computers entering St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In 2018, Eleven thousand, Eight Hundred and Nineteen (11,819) portable were imported in SVG while 2019 saw Four Thousand, Seven Hundred and Sixty-One (4,409) devices being imported. This represents a 62.69% decrease from 2018
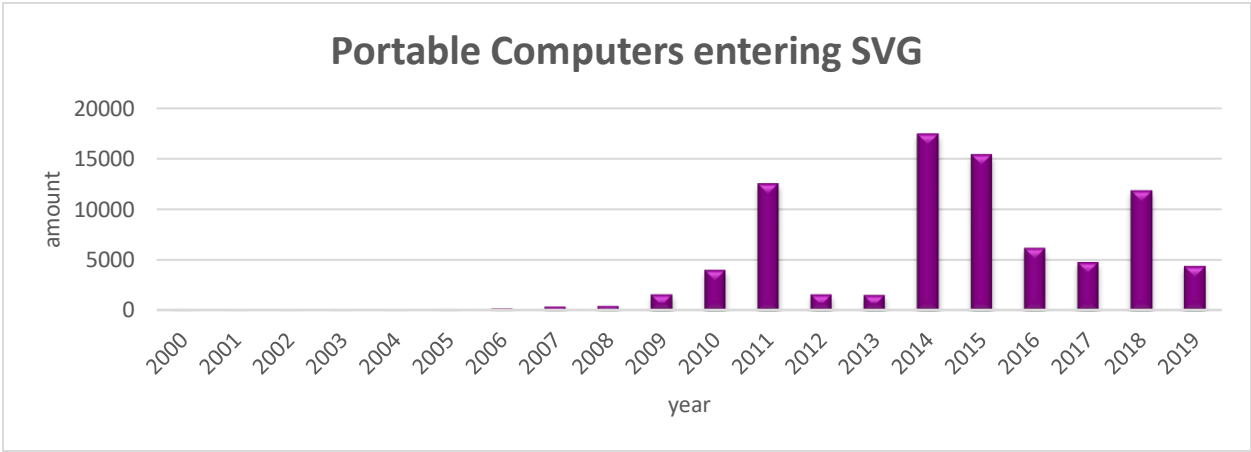
Figure 6

Fig 6. Portable computers entering SVG (Source: *The Customs and Excise Department)*

3.3 DESKTOPS ENTERING ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Figure 7 below shows the number of desktop computers entering the country. The graph shows that there has been an increase in the number of desktops being imported. In 2018, there were Nine Hundred and Forty-Nine (949) units which were imported compared to Nine Hundred and Sixty-Three (963) units for 2019. This represents a 1.47% increase in the figures from 2018.
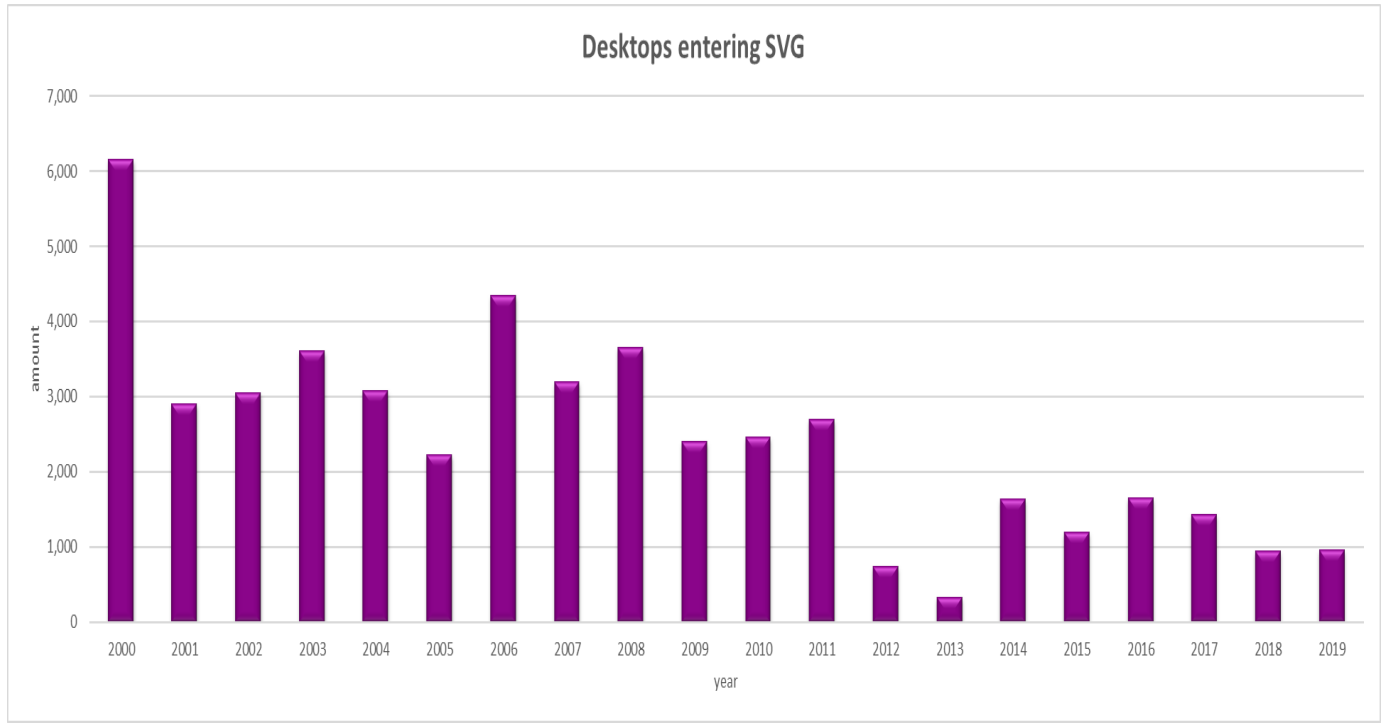
Figure 7

Fig 7. Desktop entering SVG (Source: *Customs and Excise Department)*

3.4 MOBILE PHONES ENTERING ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Figure 8: below shows the number of mobile phones entering the country. The graph shows that there has been a marginal increase in the number of mobile phones being imported. The figure for 2018 was Twenty-Two Thousand, Five Hundred and Eighty-Six (22,586) devices being imported while in 2019, the figure is now Twenty-Two Thousand, Eight Hundred and Nine (22,809).
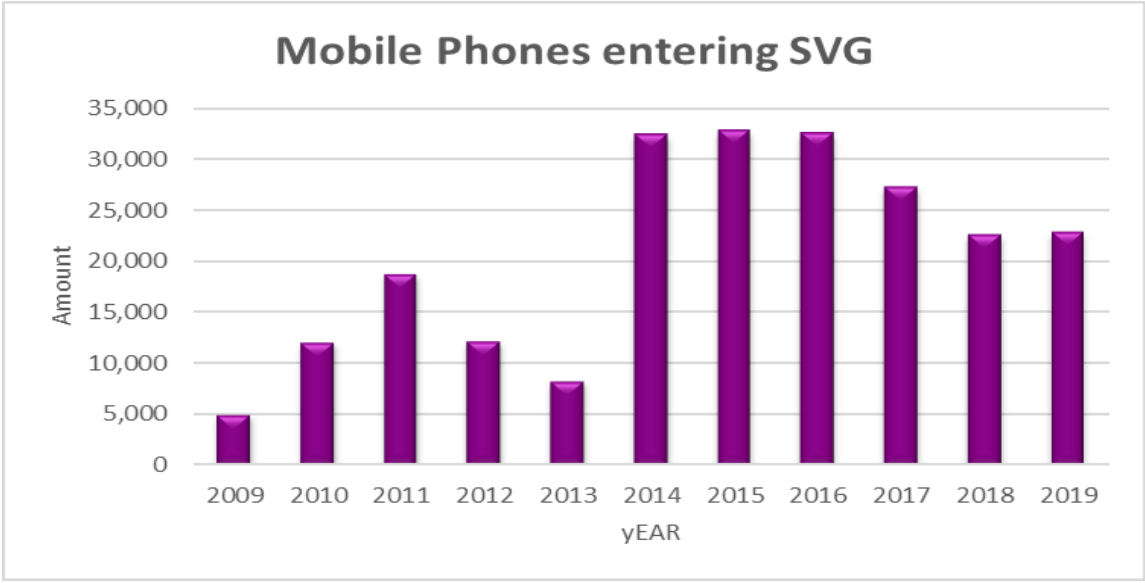
Figure 8

Fig 8. Mobile Phones imported (Source: *The Customs and Excise Department)*

3.5 PENETRATION RATES FOR TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES

Figure 9 below shows the penetration rates for various telecommunications services over the last seven years.
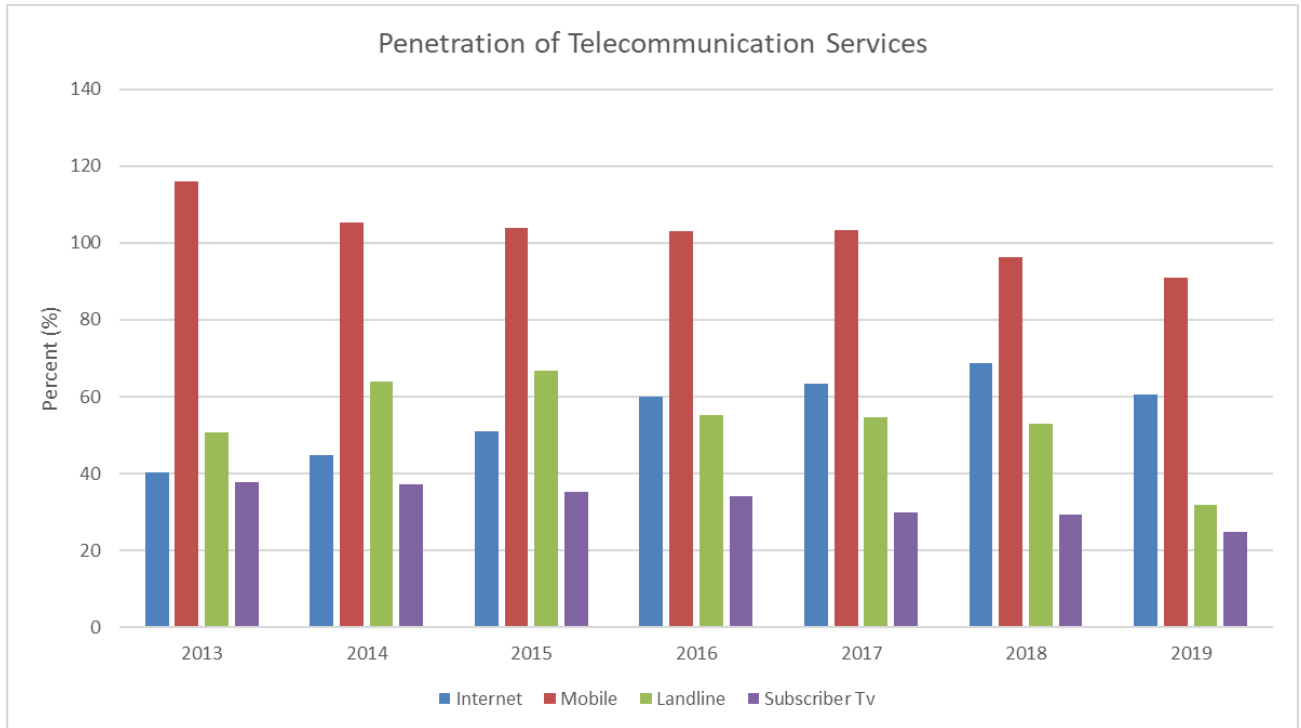

Figure 8: Penetration Rates (Source NTRC)

4   PRIORITY GOALS 2019

The Operating Plan for 2019 identified priority areas requiring the attention of the USF for the year 2019. The status of priority goal and the sub goals are as follows:

1. **The 2019 Operating Plan will be established by March 2019. This plan will set out the objectives of the Fund for the operating year 2019.**

   The objective was incomplete. Although, The USF Operating Plan was scheduled to be completed by March 2019, due to delays in its preparation, the task was completed in September 2019. This plan outlined the priority goals of the USF for 2019, the NTRC opted not to circulate the document to its key stakeholders due to the untimely completion

2. **The USF will seek funding from international donor organizations for two projects which have been developed. The USF will be working along with the regional NTRCs so that we can all benefit from these projects.**

   This task is incomplete as the NTRC began work with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning in trying to source funding for the projects which were developed. The project document however is incomplete as some additional background information is needed before the document can be finalized and submitted to the Ministry for approval. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning has assigned a staff member to assist the NTRC in updating the project document. This project document is expected to be completed and submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Planning for approval by the second quarter of 2020.

3. **The seven projects which have been implemented thus far under the USF will be routinely visited to ensure that the services and equipment being paid for are present at the various locations.**

   This objective was completed. The USF conducted regular checks on all projects which have been implemented by the USF. This includes physical visits to the project sites to ensure that the service and equipment are functional. The NTRC also remotely monitor the services at the selected locations to ensure that the services are functional, and this is done daily.

4. **The USF will ensure that the new contract for the Schools project is entered into by the third quarter of 2019.**

   This objective was completed. The USF entered into contract with Cable and Wireless for this project on October 23rd, 2019.

5. **The USF will ensure that the new contract for the Community Access project is entered into by the first quarter of 2019.**

   This objective was completed. The USF entered into a contract with Cable and Wireless for this project on March 8th, 2019.

6. **The USF will ensure that the new contract for the Police and Health Center Project is entered into by the second quarter of 2019.**

   This objective was completed. The USF entered into a contract with Cable and Wireless for this project on May 14th, 2019.

7. **The USF will ensure that the new contract for the Maritime Project is entered into by the first quarter of 2019.**

   This objective was completed. The USF entered into a contract with Cable and Wireless for this project on March 8th, 2019.

8. **The SMART project will be tendered out in April 2019 as the current contract comes to an end in September 2019.**

   This objective was completed. The SMART project was tendered out in September of 2019.

9. **An ICT survey will be executed in April of 2019.**

   This objective was completed. The USF successfully conducted an ICT survey in 2019. The survey was scheduled to be completed in April for 2019 but was however completed in July due to some unforeseen setbacks. The NTRC conducted this ICT survey with funding from the Caribbean Regional Communication Infrastructure Program (CARCIP) during the period May 2019-July 2019. The survey was conducted using a sample size of Three thousand six hundred and seventy-eight (3678) persons from thirteen census divisions throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines. The data

collected from the respondents were done electronically via tablets to minimize potential errors and to increase the efficiency of the process. Subsequent to the survey, the necessary analysis of the data was done, and the final report submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning on December 31, 2019.

5 USF PRIORITY GOALS 2020

The USF priority goals for 2020 are as follows:

1. The 2020 Operating Plan will be established by March 2020. This plan will set out the objectives of the Fund for the operating year 2020.

2. The USF will seek funding from international donor organizations for two projects which have been developed. The USF will be working along with the regional NTRCs so that we can all benefit from these projects.

3. Monthly site visits would be conducted under the five USF projects to ensure that the equipment is functional, and services are in place at the various locations.

4. The USF will ensure that the new contract for the SMART project is entered into by the first quarter of 2020.

5. The USF will ensure that VHF training is executed for the police at the Owia, Barrouallie, Rose Hall and Paget Farm Police stations.

6. The USF will ensure that electricity is placed at the Mt Wynne Beach under the payphone project to provide power to the equipment.

6 USF BUDGET ESTIMATES

The Fund is projected to receive Two Million, Eight Hundred and Ninety-Two thousand Eight Hundred Dollars ($2,892,800.00) in 2020. Two Million, Eight Hundred and Ninety Thousand, Three Hundred Dollars ($2,890,300) is expected to be collected from the Telecommunications Service Providers and interest of, Two Thousand, Five Hundred Dollars ($2,500.00) is projected on the fund's balance in its saving account.