



NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS
REGULATORY COMMISSION
ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

2019

UNIVERSAL SERVICE
FUND ANNUAL REPORT



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1. BACKGROUND

The Universal Service Fund was established under Section 42 of Telecommunications Act (Cap 418) of the Revised Laws of St. Vincent and the Grenadines 2009. The Fund is managed by the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) – which collects, disburses, and makes relevant decisions with regards to the proper and effective management of the Fund.

1.1 What is the Universal Service Fund?

The Universal Service Fund (USF) is a fund which is used by the NTRC to compensate any telecommunications provider that is required to provide or promote Universal Service.

Universal Service includes the provision of:

- Public voice telephony
- Internet access
- Telecommunications services to schools, hospitals, similar institutions and the physically challenged
- Other services by which people access efficient, affordable, and modern telecommunications

The Fund will encourage efficient access to and use of telecommunications networks and services throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines with special focus on rural, under-served and maritime areas, and with the goal to help promote social, educational, and economic development.

The Fund will also ensure the reasonable availability and affordability of basic and advanced telecommunications services, where the commercial telecommunications market is unable to deliver such services in a financially viable manner independently; and also, to the physically challenged, elderly and indigent communities.

The Fund will also provide support for the introduction and expansion of telecommunications services to schools, health facilities and other organizations serving public needs.

1.2 Who contributes to the Universal Service Fund?

As set forth in the Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund Contribution) Order 2017, all telecommunications providers shall contribute to the Universal Service Fund (USF). In terms of due dates for payments of these contributions, Section 4 of the Contribution Order states that within forty-five (45) days of the reporting year, the contributor must pay and provide supporting documents used in the calculations. Parliament may also appropriate funds for use by the USF. Grants and donations may also be made to the Fund by individuals or legal entities.

1.3 Management of the Fund

Effective September 16, 2008, the Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations 2008 was gazetted and came into operation. The aim of these Regulations is to provide for the efficient and effective management of the USF. The Regulations govern the

way in which the Fund operates. Along with these Regulations, there are Universal Service Guidelines issued under Section 7 of the Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations to facilitate the proper operation of the Fund. These guidelines are an indication of the policy and procedures that must be followed in the operation of the Fund.

The USF plays an integral role in the development and technological innovation of the telecommunications sector and of the country as a whole.

2. SWOT ANALYSIS

2.1 Strengths

- The NTRC has been able to leverage the resources of the USF to ensure that new contracts are in place for projects which came to an end.
- The NTRC has continued to encourage ICT development nationally through the MyApp Summer Program and the icode784 competition.
- The NTRC has been able to work along with various stakeholder agencies including the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines in executing various initiatives.

2.2 Weaknesses

- The Fund has not been able to source additional funding to execute large scale ICT projects locally.

2.3 Opportunities

- With the proliferation of smartphones and wireless internet devices in St Vincent and the Grenadines, the Wi-Fi service being provided by the USF island wide will be utilized more than in previous years.

2.4 Threats

- With the increase use of internet services being provided by the USF, there may be an increase in the occurrences of phishing, cyber predators, cyber bullying and persons falling for cyber scams.

3. CRITICAL ISSUES

There is one critical issue which is currently affecting the USF which is our ability to source additional funding to execute large scale ICT projects locally.

4. SECTOR REVIEW

Figure 1 shows the revenues generated by telecommunications operators between the years 2014-2019. There was a marginal increase of revenue of 1% in 2019 compared to 2018.

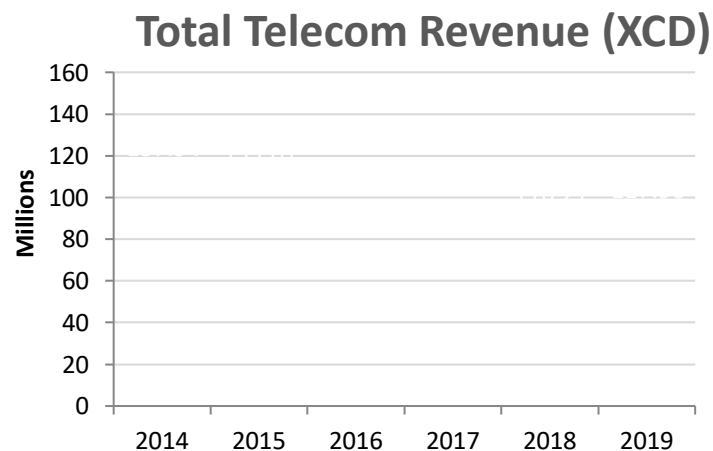


Fig 1. Source: NTRCs Annual Report 2019

4.1 Financial Performance of the Universal Service Fund

Revenue

For the year ended December 31, 2019, the USF had projected to receive a total of Two Million One Hundred and Ten Thousand, Three Hundred Dollars (\$2,110,300.00) from Telecommunications Service Providers. Additionally, interest of Nineteen Thousand Dollars (\$19,000.00) and other income of Thirty Thousand Nine Hundred Dollars (\$30,900) were also projected to be received. The actual revenue received by the USF 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 that was due in October 2019 before the year ended. However, this is expected to be collected in January 2020.

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 relates to the execution of the 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 payments 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 the 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 some contractual payments to a later date.

4.2 Projected Revenue for 2020

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. It must be noted that the receivable in USF contributions from 2019 has been included in the projected amount for 2020.

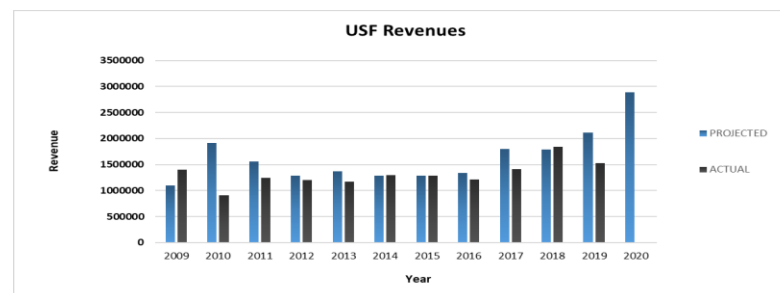


Fig 2. USF Projected Revenues

4.3 Public Awareness

In 2019, the NTRC executed several public awareness initiatives.

1. Launch of Vincy Wi-Fi

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) launched a free mobile app on the Android and iOS platforms on March 19, 2019 at the National Insurance Services (NIS) Conference Room. The app which is dubbed “Vincy Wi-Fi” is a mobile application designed to assist locals and visitors of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to find the locations of various connectivity hotspots across the country. Such connectivity spots include open Wi-Fi hotspots at all educational institutions and Wi-Fi hotspots at various Community centers and tourism sites across St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Wi-Fi hotspots were put in place by the NTRC via the Universal Service Fund (USF). The app provides the user with information about the schools, pictures of the schools and allows for persons to report Wi-Fi faults.

2. icode784 competition

On September 8, 2019, the Commission rebranded and launched the icode784 competition previously known as the i² competition. The reason for the name change is to reflect our objectives of targeting some of the goals within the seventeen (17) UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our competition seeks to achieve the following six (6) SDGs; No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Quality Education, Decent Work Economic Growth, Industry Innovation and Infrastructure and Sustainable Cities and Communities.

As per previous years, the focus of the competition was on the development of mobile apps and ideas that can facilitate the implementation of new systems or improve existing systems within both the Private and Public Sectors of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The aim is to improve the efficiency of their services and to increase their profits which will lead to national development.

In 2019, there was an increase in the number of entries for the competition compared to 2018. Fifty-Seven (57) entries were received in 2019 as compared to fifty-four (54) entries which were received for the 2018 competition. Forty (40) groups entered the Secondary Idea Category, ten (10) groups entered the Secondary Mobile Application Category, and there were Seven (7) entries for the Open Category, consisting of Individuals under the age of Thirty-Five (35) years.

The schools that entered the Secondary level were Petit Bordel Secondary School, Mountain View Adventist Academy, Union Island Secondary School, St. Vincent Girls High School, St. Vincent Grammar School, Troumaca Secondary School, Dr. JP Eustace Memorial Secondary School, North Union Secondary School and the St. Joseph's Convent Kingstown.

The Open Category saw participation from seven (7) teams from the public.

The finals of the competition concluded on November 12, 2019 at the Kingstown Methodist Church Hall. The winners of the various categories of the competition were as follows:

- Secondary Idea Category: "NUSS Conquerors 2" from the North Union Secondary School.
- Secondary Mobile Application Category: "Astra" from the St. Vincent Grammar School.
- Open Category (Individuals under the age of 35 years): "KNR".

3. Financial Assistance Program

In 2017, the NTRC developed a yearly program where financial assistance is given to one (1) Primary School student and one (1) Secondary School student. This program continued for its third consecutive year, where Clifana McDowall a student of the North Union Secondary School received an amount of \$1,000.00 and Gabrielle Phillips a student of the Questelles Government School received an amount of \$500.00. The program targets students attending schools in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A letter is sent to all Primary and Secondary schools for the principals to submit the names of students who would qualify for the assistance and the reason(s) why they should be considered. As such, the NTRC selects the neediest students based on the objectives of the program. The financial assistance program will continue for the foreseeable future.

4. The NTRC's myApp Summer Program

For the fifth consecutive year, the NTRC held its annual myApp Summer program. The 2019 program was held in Mesopotamia from July 15 - August 2, 2019 at the Emmanuel High School Mesopotamia. A total of twenty (20) students attended the program. The objective of the NTRC's myAPP Program is to teach participants between the ages of 13-18, who may or may not have previous exposure, how to code and design mobile applications. This program develops the necessary programming skills of the participants that would enable them to enter forums such as our annual icode784 Competition. The valedictorian for the program was Ms. Runel Primus a resident of Cane End, Mesopotamia. The 2019 program was made possible through sponsorship from Digicel, Flow, Mickey's Roast City and JMK Auto Parts.

5. Radio and Interview Sessions

Radio and Television interviews were conducted at the Agency for Public Information (API), Xtreme FM and National Broadcasting Corporation Radio Station (NBC). These interviews were used as a promotional tool to relay information to the General Public regarding the activities that were being carried out by the NTRC such as the NTRC's 2019 icode784 competition and the myApp Summer Program.

6. Social Media Campaign

In an effort to reach a wider audience, the NTRC engages the public on Facebook and Instagram providing them with information about our organization. In addition, several competitions were held on our social media networks to engage the public and to increase our followers on Instagram and our likes on Facebook.

7. Food Gift Basket Distribution Drive

During the month of April 2019, the NTRC conducted a Food Gift Basket distribution drive under the theme "My Community Helper". The NTRC partnered with the Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Persons with Disabilities and Youth to obtain three families from each constituency to be a candidate to receive a gift basket. This promotion targeted persons of need in the various constituencies, as well as, elderly persons over the age of 65 years. The distributions were done during the period April 17-18, 2019.

5. USF PROJECTS STATUS

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

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 new project, the Community Access Project, was signed on March 8, 2019 between Cable and Wireless and the NTRC. This new contract will run for two years and will come to an end on March 7, 2021. The commissioning process for the Community Access Project begun on October 29, 2019 and was completed on December 19, 2019 as all the services and equipment were in place at each site under this project.

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 St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 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 select 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 (3) 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 three (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.

Schools Project

The new contract for this project was signed on October 23, 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 22, 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. 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 provider's 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 ensure that access is restricted to certain content at each location and also serves to monitor the status

of the services at each location. This project is expected to be commissioned by the second quarter of 2020.

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 at 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 USF 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 8, 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).

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 out. The NTRC subsequently entered a contract with Cable and Wireless on May 14, 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.

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

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, was 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 retendered on July 24, 2019 and the Commission is currently in the process of negotiating the final contract terms with a provider and a new contract is expected to be in place by the first quarter of 2020.

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.

6. STATISTICS

6.1 Fixed Line Subscriptions

The graph below shows Fixed Line Subscribers over the last seven (7) years.

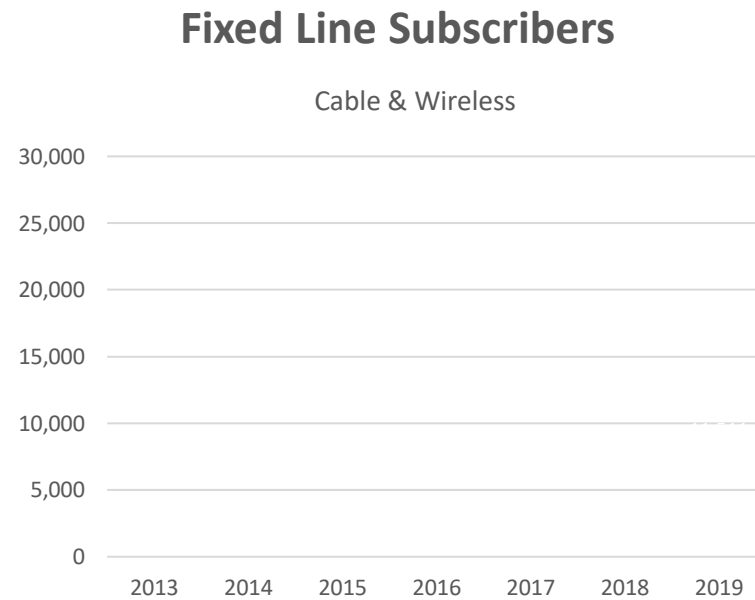


Fig 3. Source: NTRCs Annual Report 2019

6.2 Broadband Internet Subscribers

Figure 4 below shows the total number of Broadband Internet Subscribers from 2013 to 2019. In 2018, there was a decrease in the broadband subscribers while in 2019 there was an increase in the broadband subscribers. It should be noted that the figures were adjusted for 2018 broadband subscribers based on clarifications received from the service providers.

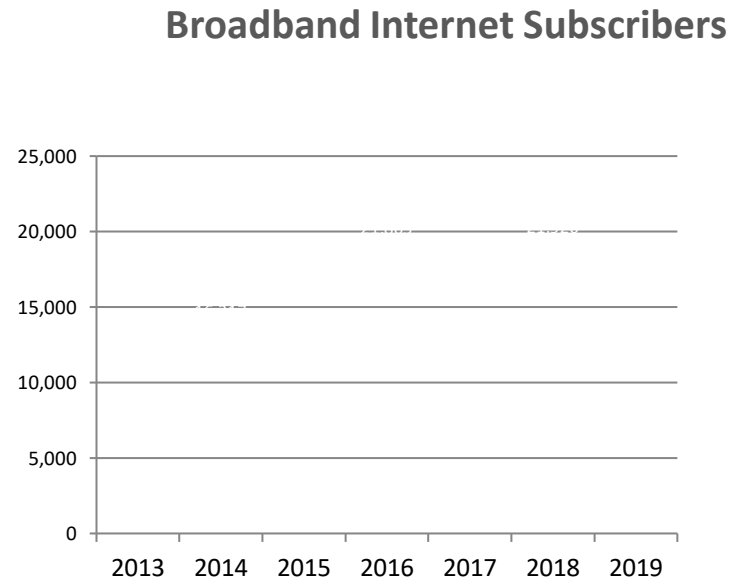


Fig 4. Source: NTRCs Annual Report 2019

Figure 5 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 with the exception of 2019 which had a decrease of 2,167 subscribers.

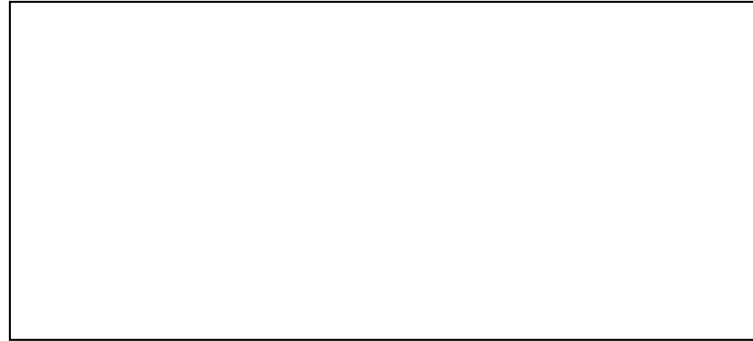


Fig 5. Source: NTRCs Annual Report 2019

6.3 Portable Computers

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 computers were imported in SVG while 2019 saw Four Thousand, Four Hundred and Nine (4,409) devices were imported in 2019. This represents a 62.69% decrease from 2018.

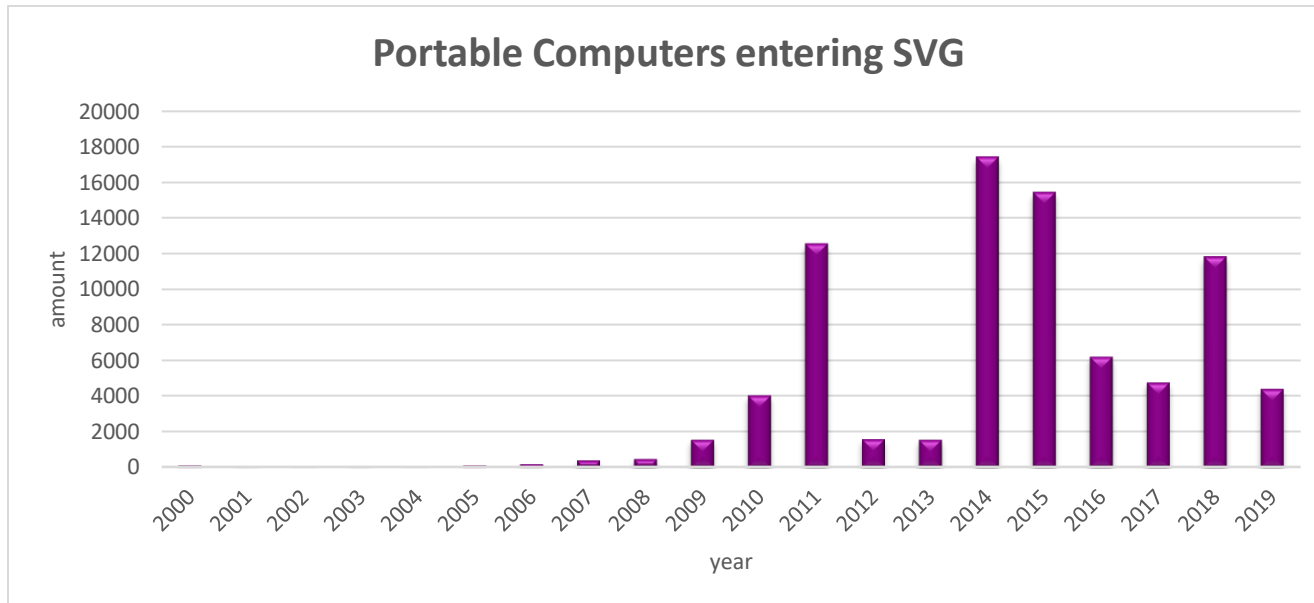


Fig 6. Source: Customs and Excise Department

6.4 Desktop Computers

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.

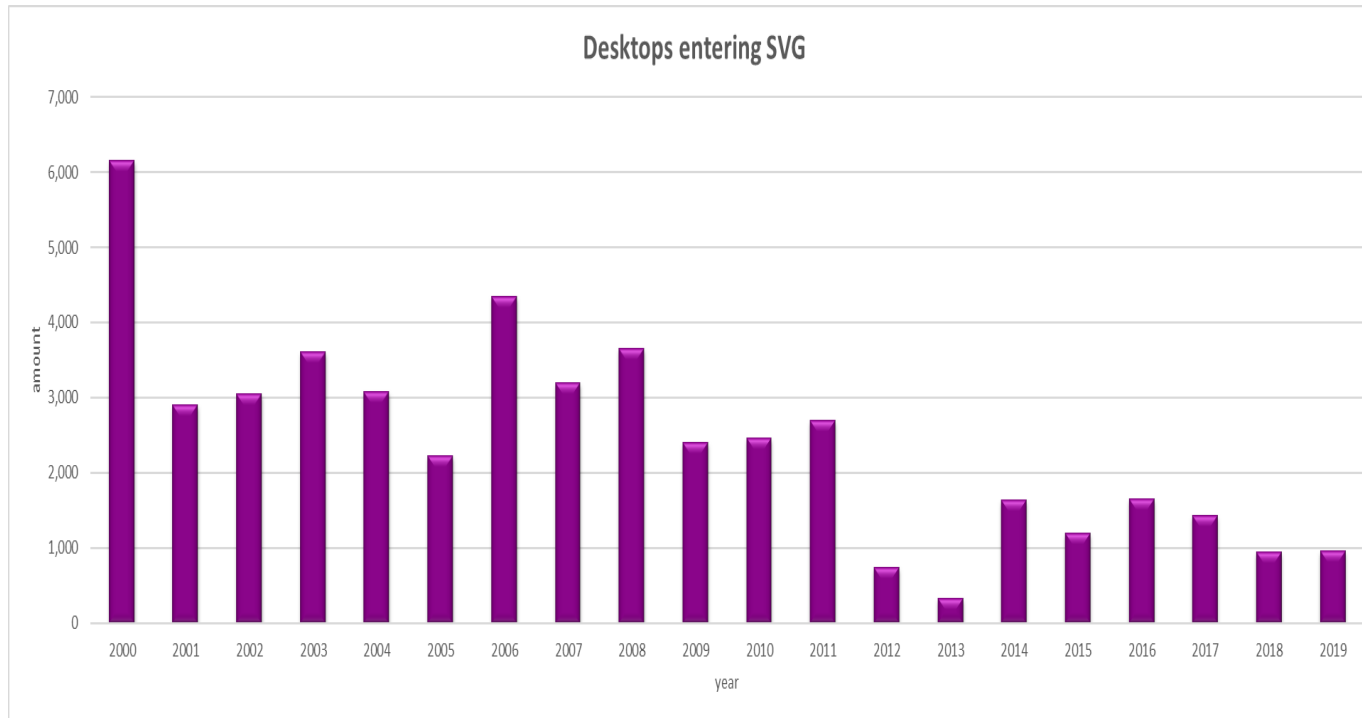


Fig 7. Source: Customs and Excise Department

6.5 Mobile phones

Figure 8 below shows the number of mobile phones entering the country. The graph shows that there has been a decrease in the number of mobile phones being imported. The figure reduced from Twenty-Two Thousand, Eight Hundred and Fifty-Six (22,856) in 2018 to Twenty-Two Thousand, Eight Hundred and Nine (22,809) in 2019 representing a 0.99 % reduction in the number of mobile phones imported in the year 2019.

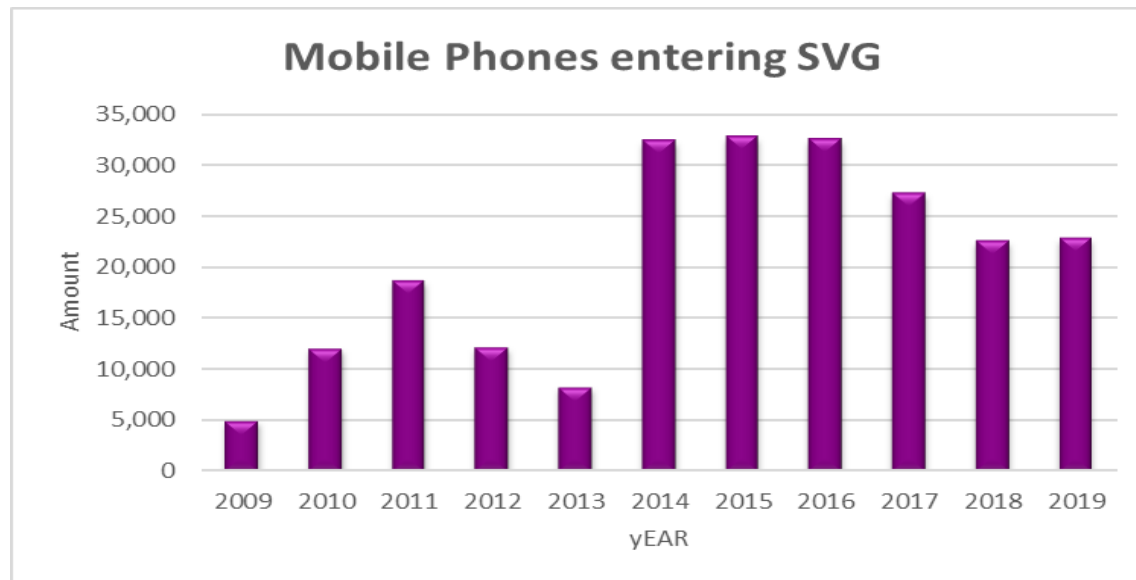


Fig 8. Source: Customs and Excise Department

7. BROAD RESPONSE STRATEGIES

1. The 8th edition to the icode784 Competition will be held in 2020.
2. The USF will continue its field work activities by visiting those sites which have services and equipment under the various projects being implemented by the USF Islandwide.
3. The USF will continue to seek regional or international funding for projects which we have developed.

8. RESULT INDICATORS 2019

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. As 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, Sustainable Development and Information Technology 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 Sustainable Development and Information Technology 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 Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology 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. 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 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 a contract with Cable and Wireless for this project on October 23, 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 8, 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 14, 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 8, 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 retendered 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 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 - July 2019. The survey was conducted using a sample size of Three Thousand Six Hundred and Seventy-Eight (3,678) persons from Thirteen (13) census divisions throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines. The data was collected electronically from the respondents 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.

9. OBJECTIVES FOR 2020

1. The 2020 Operating Plan will be established by March 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 other NTRCs so that we can all benefit from these projects.

3. The 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.

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 which is supplied by VINLEC is placed at the Mt Wynne Beach under the Payphone Project to provide power to the equipment.

10 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS