# Investment Mapping and Prioritisation Guidance

## Africa-BB-Maps Deliverable 1: input document for the Regional Regulatory Associations and the Regional Community of Practice

*Input document, draft v0.3, November 2026. Prepared by the ITU Secretariat as a starting point for review and amendment by WATRA, CRASA, EACO and the CoP co-chairs (ARCEP Bénin, NCC, MACRA). Not an agreed text.*

## 1. Purpose and status of this document

This input document proposes a common approach for using national broadband mapping data to identify, prioritise and present broadband investment needs in the 11 Africa-BB-Maps beneficiary countries. It is intended to be examined by the national regulatory authorities (NRAs) within the three sub-regional Communities of Practice (CoPs), chaired by the Regional Regulatory Associations (RRAs), amended through the common position of each CoP, and finalised at the Africa-Europe Study Visit in Brussels (30 November to 3 December 2026), where it is to be adopted by consensus on 3 December 2026.

Members are invited to propose additions, deletions and changes to any section. Each NRA answers the questions in section 9 individually and sends its answers to the chair of its CoP, with ITU in copy, by the date set by the chair. By 26 November 2026, each CoP agrees one common position, which its chair sends to ITU (see section 10).

## 2. Background

Africa-BB-Maps is a 48-month programme implemented by ITU. It supports Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe in establishing national broadband mapping systems, following the EU experience under the European Electronic Communications Code (Article 22), the BEREC Guidelines on geographical surveys (BoR (20) 42) and the Gigabit Infrastructure Act.

Broadband maps are only useful to investors if they answer investor questions: where coverage is missing, how many people and institutions are affected, what infrastructure already exists nearby, and what it would cost to close the gap. This guidance links the mapping work to the investment agenda of the EU Global Gateway, development finance institutions and national universal service funds.

## 3. Scope

The guidance covers four information layers, consistent with the Africa-BB-Maps data standard under preparation (Deliverable 2):

| Layer | Content | Main source |
|---|---|---|
| Infrastructure | Fibre backbone and metro routes, points of presence, towers and sites, IXPs, data centres, submarine cable landing stations | Operators, infrastructure companies, NRA |
| Service and coverage | Mobile coverage by technology (2G to 5G), fixed broadband availability, quality of service measurements | Operators, NRA drive tests, crowdsourced data |
| Demand | Population, households, schools, health facilities, public administration sites, economic activity | National statistics offices, line ministries, open data |
| Investment | Planned and committed projects, universal service fund projects, donor and DFI financed projects, cost estimates | Ministries, USF, DFIs, operators |

## 4. What financing institutions need from broadband maps

Consultations with financing partners indicate that the following data elements are required to appraise a broadband investment project. Members are invited to confirm, complete or simplify this list.

| Question from the investor | Data needed | Granularity |
|---|---|---|
| Where is the gap? | Unserved and underserved areas by technology and speed | Hexagon or grid (for example 1 km² or H3 level 8), or locality |
| Who is affected? | Population, households and anchor institutions in the gap area | Same as above |
| What exists nearby? | Distance to the nearest fibre node, tower or point of presence | Point and line data |
| What will it cost? | Indicative cost per km of fibre, per site, per connection | National or regional benchmarks |
| Is anyone else investing? | Planned and committed projects, to avoid duplication | Project footprint |
| Is the environment enabling? | Licensing, rights of way, infrastructure sharing, spectrum, USF rules | National, qualitative |

## 5. Proposed prioritisation criteria

The following criteria are proposed for ranking candidate areas or projects. Weights are indicative and should be decided nationally.

| Criterion | Indicator (example) | Indicative weight |
|---|---|---|
| Size of the gap | Population without 4G or fixed broadband | 25% |
| Social impact | Number of unconnected schools and health facilities | 20% |
| Cost efficiency | Estimated cost per person or per institution connected | 20% |
| Proximity to existing infrastructure | Distance to backbone or point of presence | 15% |
| Regional and cross-border value | Contribution to regional corridors and cross-border links | 10% |
| Readiness | Rights of way, permits and co-financing available | 10% |

> *Question for discussion: should the RRAs agree on a common minimum set of criteria and weights, or only on common indicators, leaving weights to each country?*

## 6. Country investment readiness checklist

The checklist below sets out the elements of investment readiness. No country data is requested before the Brussels meeting: members of each CoP are invited to share general, sub-regional observations on which elements are commonly in place, which are the main gaps, and whether the list should be completed or simplified. Each NRA will complete the checklist for its country after the Brussels meeting, in 2027, to build a regional overview of readiness.

### 6.1 Data

- A national broadband map exists or is under development, with an identified data custodian.
- Operators are required to submit infrastructure and coverage data, with a defined frequency and format.
- Demand data (population, schools, health facilities) is available at the required granularity.

- Data sharing arrangements with the statistics office and line ministries are in place.

### 6.2 Policy and regulation

- A national broadband plan or digital strategy with coverage targets is in force.
- Rules on infrastructure sharing, rights of way and dig once are in place or planned.
- The universal service fund uses mapping data to select and award projects.

### 6.3 Institutions

- Roles of the NRA, ministry, USF and statistics office in the mapping system are defined.
- Staff have been trained in GIS and data management, and the system has a sustainability plan after 2028.

## 7. Regional Data Challenge Register

To support regional learning, it is proposed that a common register of data challenges be maintained by the RRAs with ITU support and reviewed at each CoP meeting. Country entries will be recorded after the Brussels meeting, from 2027. Before Brussels, members of each CoP are invited only to comment on the structure of the register and to note general data challenges observed across the sub-region.

| Country | Challenge | Layer | Impact on investment analysis | Proposed action | Owner | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Example | Operators submit coverage data in different formats | Service and coverage | Gap areas cannot be compared | Adopt common template (Deliverable 2) | NRA | Open |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

## 8. Process and roles

| Actor | Role |
|---|---|
| NRAs of the 11 countries | Answer the questions in section 9 individually and send the answers to the CoP chair, with ITU in copy; from 2027, collect and validate data, complete the readiness checklist, identify priority areas |
| RRAs (WATRA, CRASA, EACO) | Chair the sub-regional CoPs, brief their NRAs, coordinate and send to ITU the common position of each CoP, host the register, align with their working groups |
| RRA chairs and NRA co-chairs of the sub-regional CoPs | Lead the discussion in each sub-regional CoP and report to the Regional Community of Practice |
| ITU | Secretariat, technical support, merging of the three CoP positions and publication of the consolidated drafts |
| European Union and EU NRAs | Share EU practice on mapping for investment and on State aid rules (2023/C 36/01) |
| Financing partners | Advise on data requirements and appraisal criteria |

## 9. Questions for the members of each CoP

Each NRA answers the questions below individually, on the basis of general and sub-regional observations (no country figures are requested), and sends its answers to the chair of its CoP, with ITU in copy, by the date set by the chair.

1. Do the four layers in section 3 reflect national priorities? Is anything missing?
2. In general terms across the sub-region, which data elements in section 4 are commonly available today, and which are the main gaps?
3. Are the prioritisation criteria in section 5 appropriate? Should weights be harmonised regionally?
4. Who should maintain the Regional Data Challenge Register, and how often should it be updated?
5. Which cross-border or regional corridor projects should be presented to financing partners first?

## 10. Timeline

| Date | Step |
|---|---|
| 6 November 2026 | ITU sends the three draft input documents to the three sub-regional CoPs and to WATRA, EACO and CRASA, which chair them |
| From 9 November 2026 | Each association briefs its NRAs; each NRA answers the questions in section 9 individually and sends its answers to its CoP chair, with ITU in copy, by the date set by the chair |
| By 26 November 2026 | Each CoP agrees one common position, which its chair sends to ITU |
| 27 November 2026 | ITU merges the three positions within 24 hours and publishes the consolidated drafts |
| 30 November to 3 December 2026 | Africa-Europe Study Visit, Brussels: three days of discussion, adoption by consensus on 3 December 2026 |
| Q1 2027 | Pilot application in at least one country per sub-region; country completion of the readiness checklist and the Regional Data Challenge Register |
| 2027-2028 | Regular review by the Regional Community of Practice |