This Rural Broadband Policy Framework (RBPF) aims to provide guidance to address the persistent “Digital Divide”, with a focus on the context and challenges faced in rural areas.

DEVELOPING THE RURAL BROADBAND POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. Broadband policies should improve the availability of high-quality, affordable broadband services in underserved rural areas.

2. Rural broadband policies should draw from real-world experience – locally, regionally, and globally.

3. Rural broadband policies should harness the resources and capabilities of the private sector and complementary providers, such as community networks.

5. Rural broadband policies (and all broadband policies) must be gender responsive.

4. Rural broadband policies should be comprehensive.

6. Effective implementation will require evidence and standards – internet with defined broadband speeds, relevant devices, etc.
The RBPF should go through an inclusive, iterative, and consultative process with constituents. The process should be deliberately constructed with the following desired attributes in mind:

- The policymaking process should encourage broad participation.
- The policymaking process should be transparent.
- The policymaking process should allow stakeholders to meaningfully participate.

The results of the process should be captured in a specific, documentary work product specifically focused on rural policy issues (e.g., a “Rural Broadband Plan”).

ELEMENTS OF THE RURAL BROADBAND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The following are key elements to assist policymakers in crafting the policies that will support rural broadband development.

A. Harness market competition while addressing market failures

B. Streamline regulatory processes

C. Invest in and improve public access and universal service and access funds

D. Effectively manage spectrum resources

E. Leverage innovative technologies, architectures, and business models

F. Adopt appropriate tax and fee structures

G. Stimulate demand for broadband services