











## Digital Economy Partnership – commencement of negotiations

completed until the content of the agreement is clearer. As advice on these issues becomes available, partners will consider options for the optimal structure of the agreement, including whether the agreement will include political commitments based on cooperation and best practice, whether the focus will be legally binding commitments, or a hybrid.

11. Whatever legal form the agreement takes, New Zealand will be looking to:

- Take a “partnership” approach, by collaborating and co-creating the substance of the agreement. The aim is to agree what can be agreed, and look to be creative about building in continuing work on what cannot yet be agreed.
- Draft so as to avoid irrelevance, by aiming to ensure that the agreement is structured and expressed so that its language does not go out of date and the agreement can be refreshed (a ‘living agreement’) as partners agree further issues and welcome new members.
- Adopt an approach whereby the process is as transparent as possible and any agreement is offered to others on an open accession basis.

12. Officials will seek further guidance from Ministers and Cabinet approval if required once there is further clarity on the proposed structure and legal form.

### Seeking the views of New Zealanders

13. A public submissions process will be initiated at the same time as any Ministerial announcement. This process will help inform any mandate from Ministers. The public submissions process will ensure New Zealanders (including Māori, business, academics, NGOs and wider civil society) have an opportunity to input into the discussions, including providing feedback on issues of interest on an ongoing basis.
14. Consistent with current practice, engagement with New Zealanders on this initiative will also occur as part of targeted emails, social media and MFAT’s programme of face-to-face outreach on trade policy with the general public, Te Iwi Māori, unions, NGOs and New Zealand businesses.