

PITA NEWS & BRIEFS July 2013

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Source: PITA www.pita.org.fj

TONGA CABLE HAS LANDED

"High speed internet is here!" - the delegates of the Pacific Network Operators Group heard from Tonga Cable Ltd at the recent PacNOG 13 conference and workshops held recently in Nuku'alofa Tonga on 01 July 2013.



Officially opened by the Honourable Mr Sosefo Fe'ao Moeta Vakata, Minister of Public Enterprises of Tonga, the conference delegates further heard that with both end landings of the new submarine cable successfully terminated in June 2013, the new services from the Tonga Cable connected to the global high speed cable networks via the Southern Cross cable has a total system capacity of 320Gbps and will assume its commercial services with an initial 20Gbps capacity from August 2013, offering wholesale ISP, Premium IP transit and carrier services to the local telecommunication & ISP players in Tonga.

The Tonga cable is funded by the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the Tonga Communications Corporation, and is operated by the newly created public enterprise entity, Tonga Cable Ltd (TCL) [click here for pictures and key data](#)

PITA Comments:

Having a key role in organising telecommunication forums in the region for over 13 years engendering technical and commercial exchanges, collaborations and cooperation, and where initiatives and new solutions are tested and followed through, the PITA community is delighted to congratulate TCL, TCC and the Government of Tonga in this great milestone and achievement. Tonga Cable Ltd will be a new addition to the growing numbers of submarine communication operators in the region, with others from PNG, New Caledonia, Fiji, Samoa, American Samoa, French Polynesia, Marshall Is, FSM, Northern Marianas and Guam.

A further regional cooperation on a common cable maintenance plan and back up services are envisaged to be continuously pursued by members with suppliers and donor organisations in the PITA forums

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COOK ISLANDS ON TRACK FOR FAST INTERNET

With the O3B "Tier 1" antennas installed in March 2013, Telecom Cook Islands has now embarked on upgrading its cable network to ensure that the high speed and much improved latency with O3B fast internet service is available to all its customers. According to Mr Jules Maher, CEO of Telecom Cook Islands Ltd, having witnessed the launching of the first 4 Medium Earth Orbiting satellites from French Guyana last month said that *"we're very much excited about the prospect of fast internet in the Cook Is in just a few months' time. We are also planning to upgrade our mobile networks next year to the 3rd generation level (3G) core and access networks for higher mobile data speeds and multimedia capability. These initiatives will definitely put the Cook Is on the digital highway map and customers will not only experience faster internet speeds but will have a wider choice of multi-media telecommunication services in their homes and in their hands."*



Jules Maher (3rd from left) at the launch site in French Guyana with ASTCA (American Samoa Telecom & O3B

He further added that with the O3B beam capability (700kms wide), the Southern Group outer islands will also get a marked boost in internet services. *"They too will enjoy high-speed, low-latency multimedia services,"* he said. The Cook Island radio broadcast services to the outer islands is already successfully provided over an internet platform.

The target date for O3B services is 1 Nov 2013 after a trial period of several weeks.

Telecom Cook Is Ltd, is a joint venture between Cook Is Government and Telecom NZ and currently is the sole telecommunications provider for Cook Islands. The country comprises an archipelago of 15 small islands (12 populated) and 15,000 resident population spread over an area of 2.2 million square kilometres, about four times the size of France!

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TELIKOM PNG TELECOMMUNICATIONS UPDATE ON ECONOMIC BOOM

Telikom PNG reports that its major project currently undertaken includes the increased planning and provisioning for the fast growing traffic from the economic boom at the resource sector as well as from the growing demand for broadband type services and awareness of edge enabled technologies.

It stated at the recent Pacific Network Operators Group conference held in Nuku'alofa that it has started major upgrades on its key terrestrial bearer array of microwave networks, has started working with the government for the national broadband and information system and introducing carrier grade wifi networks in key urban and semi-urban areas.

Telikom PNG is the incumbent telecommunications services provider in PNG and operates two international submarine cable landing stations and a satellite earth station, VSAT and Microwave array for rural connectivity, national fixed telephone and wireless CDMA networks, Internet services and international gateway amongst other wholesale and retail telecommunication services.

Including Telikom PNG and its subsidiaries, there are a total of 6 ISPs and 3 mobile network operators in PNG, two with GSM and one CDMA serving a population of over 7 million, with majority spread in the rural and remote terrains of PNG. PNG's GDP per capita is USD1,844 (2011)



Additional information: Telecom players in PNG include:

ISPs: *Daltron Ltd, Datanet by Digicel PNG Ltd, Datec ISP, Global Technologies, Hitron & Telinet by Telikom PNG*

Mobile Operators:

Digicel PNG Ltd, BeMOBILE both operating GSM, & Citifon of Telikom PNG operating CDMA

Fixed line/Network provider: *Telikom PNG (and other services as mentioned)*

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NTA MARSHALL ISLANDS OPENS UP INTERNET

Marshallese are now experiencing greater internet speeds, thanks to the recent opening up of the unused submarine cable capacity and now made available to users, according to the National Telecommunications Authority (NTA) CEO Thomas Kijiner, stating *“we are already paying for these capacities so why not use it to serve the public and businesses to benefit the country and telecom in return”*.



*Thomas Kijiner
CEO NTAMAR*

NTA has now set its vision beyond the Marshall Islands providing low cost and high speed internet connectivity to other Pacific Islands using its successful VSAT platforms recently implemented for its rural and outer island mobile and internet services. Mr Kijiner added, *“expanding to the region help compensates for the general widespread of low disposable income prevailing in the Marshall Islands while also extending the benefits to neighbouring countries lacking the submarine cable packages and diversity in connectivity.”*

The Marshall Islands’ island capitol Majuro is connected to the international digital highway with the Federated States of Micronesia (*both formerly US Trustee islands*), by a commercial segment of the US military submarine cable running between Guam-Kwajalein. Population is around 55,000.

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PACIFIC ISLANDS ATTEND PACIFIC NETWORK OPERATORS GROUP CONFERENCE & TRAINING

Over 40 delegates from Tonga, PNG, Solomon Is, Kiribati, Marshall Is, Samoa, American Samoa, Tokelau, Cook Is and Fiji attended the recent workshop and training on ISP-IP telecommunications network and systems

Held from 1st to 5th July in Nuku'alofa Tonga, the PacNOG 13th Educational workshop and training provided an opportunity for ISP/IP engineers to exchange on network operational topics as well as get hands-on training on specific IP networks and systems engineering topics.

Back to Basics and fundamentals being the event theme, there were two 4-days training tracks on:
(1) Introduction to Network Routing and Basic Level BGP workshop, and
(2) TCP/IP Fundamentals & Linux Administration

PacNOG13 was kindly hosted by the Tonga Communications Corporation, and trainers provided by Network Start-up Resource Centre NSRC, and the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre – APNIC.

Held twice a year in June and November, PITA regionally coordinates for contents, participations and venue with its partners APNIC, NSRC, ICANN, Pacific Island network operators and/ members



Attendees for Track 1 on Routing:



Attendees for Track 2 on Systems:



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SMALL ISLANDS RAISE CONCERN ON GSMA MEMBERSHIP FEES

PITA Members who are also GSMA members have raised their grave concern on the negative impact of the latest increase in GSMA fees. In a quick comparison with GSMA fees schedule, the minimum fees threshold (Tier 7) where most of the small islands in the Pacific fit in, are based on a minimum subscriber base of 1 million or annual mobile turnover of 1 billion USD. (Cook Is. Tuvalu, Niue population: 15k, 10.8k & 1.4k; Subscribers <12k).

A common letter of concern on this imbalance and for a review has been sent to the division of the GSMA handling members' services and followed up with the Director of this division and officials at the recent GSMA mobile expo in Shanghai, China. PITA certainly looks forward to an earlier review and relief for a more equitable fees basis. PITA is an essential player in raising awareness and mobile operator best practices & standardisations in the region with Fraud, NRTRDE, and collaborating to host GSMA technical and business activities and capacity development programs in the region.

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LACK OF REGIONAL DATA & MARKET CASE STUDIES

PITA and all its members strongly feels that the region is greatly lacking with key regional benchmarking data and country market case study that would not only help them in implementing new initiatives but also to Leaders and Officials in planning way forward for effective reformation in the telecom industry. The small Island economies are much too fragile to failures and financial loss resulting from initiatives without specifics for conducive and sustainable enablers. It is with this view that PITA is seeking collaboration with ITU and partners to embark on providing such information. We hope to announce progress shortly.

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Source: PITA www.pita.org.fj

Other earlier news:

[Fiji auctions LTE spectrum](#)

[Telecom Fiji and the Fiji International Telecommunications Ltd establish direct local peering Vacancies & Tenders](#)

Go to www.pita.org.fj for Upcoming PITA & supported events in Pacific