

Satellite Service provision in the Pacific; Regulatory consideration

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SUMMARY

The Pacific is an area of vast proportions; an immense physical expanse and widely dispersed population.

There is currently a strong focus on developing new submarine cables and though welcome it needs be noted that their increasing use requires back up capacity often in the form of satellites.

Finally, satellites provide a unique solution to Pacific needs not just during disasters but also in providing targeted solutions to remote locations.



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OVERVIEW

- The geography of the Pacific
- Service provision in the Pacific
- Satellites vs fibre
- Regulators' role in facilitating usage and rollout of satellite services

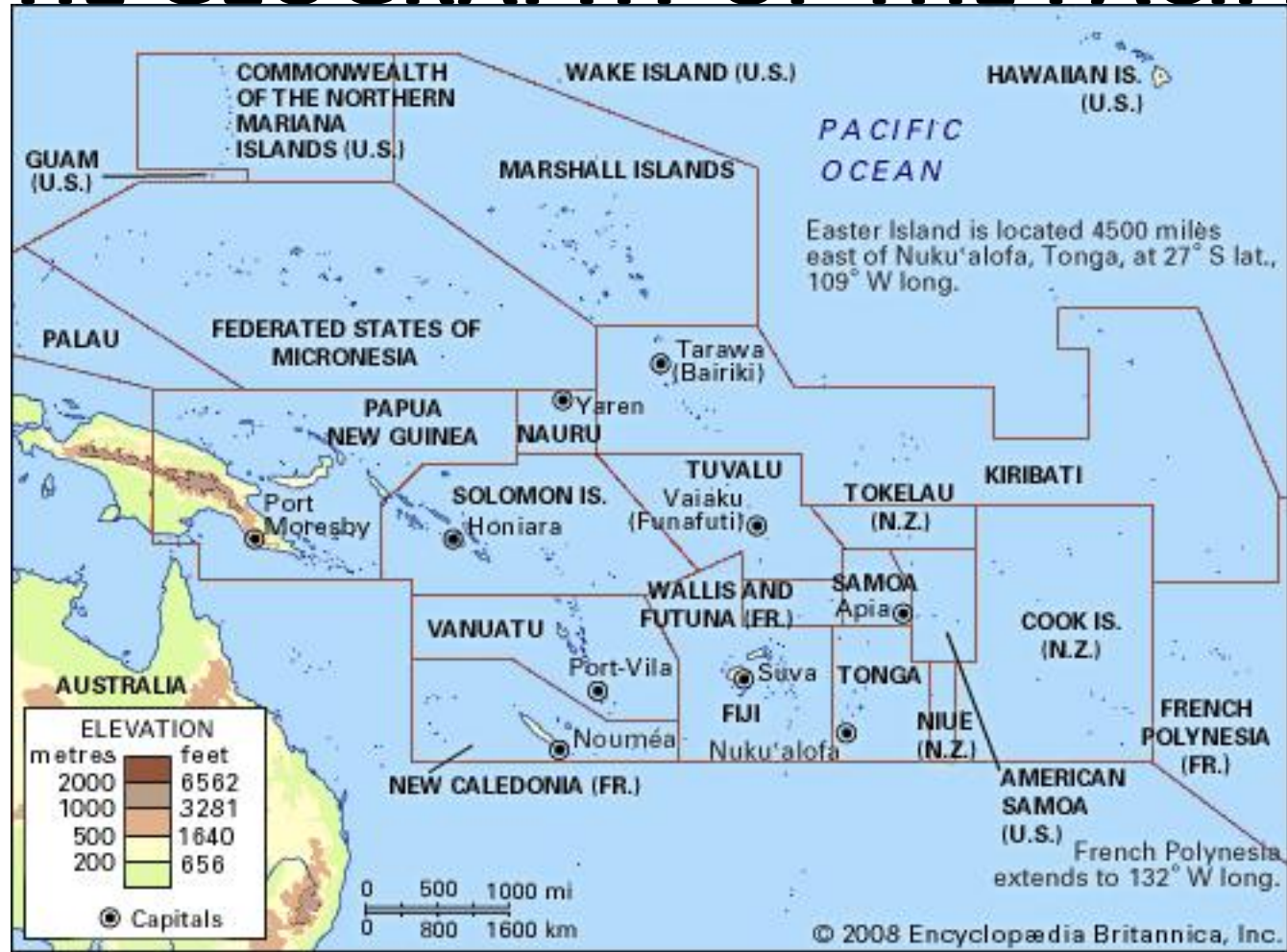


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THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE PACIFIC



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THE PACIFIC

- The Pacific Ocean is a body of water between the Western Hemisphere, Asia, and Australia
- It is immense, covering a total area of 165.384 million sq km; this is about 18 times the size of the US; as the largest ocean, covers about one-third of the global surface; larger than the total land area of the world;
- 10 million sq. miles



Pacific Region
Level 4, Japan-Pacific ICT Center



Provision of Service in the Pacific

- The uptake of the ICTs in the Pacific has traditionally been hampered by the island nations' dispersed populations, small size and vast oceanic distances separating them.
- The financial models for service provision show large costs of service provision in education, economic development, social welfare, health, travel and communication and have limited the growth of important industries such as fisheries, agriculture and tourism.
- Studies have made recommendations highlighting the need for leadership from governments. Partnerships with businesses, non-government organisations (NGOs), religious groups and the community at large are required to facilitate participation in the knowledge society and to make their countries part of global economic advancement, which is becoming increasingly dependent on ICT capabilities.
- Governments also need to provide special attention to protect the social, cultural and ethnic diversity of the Pacific Community.



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Satellite Service vs Fibre

- Fibre optics will most probably never reach all Pacific islands, satellite systems provide an effective alternative method of access.
- Many new satellite systems are being launched and existing systems are being upgraded.
- New fibres are connecting the main cities/"urban" areas in the Pacific;
- Outer islands are often not connected by the new fibres.
- Satellites and fibre are complementary systems



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Regulators as facilitators

The Regulators and Governments need to focus on

- Promoting institutional and policy reform;
- Planning and capacity-building, including coordination between stakeholders;
- Regulatory reforms to ensure consistency of regulations;
- Well-conceived plans for achieving universal access, and tackling the digital divide through the encouragement of the adoption and diffusion of ICTs;
- Having policies and regulations that avoid being locked into traditional yet unsustainable business models of incumbents.



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Regulators facilitating service provision

- Improvements in telecommunications services and information technology now provide increasing opportunities for PICTs to overcome these circumstances by:
 - reducing barriers of distance,
 - improving service delivery across countries and the Pacific Community,
 - reducing costs,
 - improving the knowledge, skills and general development of their people,
 - maximising the economic growth of their countries and the Pacific Community, and
 - working more effectively together.



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Conclusions

- Connectivity in the Pacific is an issue.
- The geography of the Pacific presents unique challenges.
- Fibre and satellites are complementary
- The role of the Regulators is to facilitate and ensure fair and transparent treatment to all potential providers and to be technology (and business model) agnostic.
- Going forward there needs to be a collaborative effort between all stakeholders.



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Thank you

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