



**Cook Islands NEWS**  
AS SOLID AS THE ISLANDS WE STAND FOR

## **\$15m loan for submarine cable link**

Monday December 18, 2017



Finance minister Mark Brown

The Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Board of Directors has approved a \$15 million loan for an internet submarine cable project to connect Rarotonga and Aitutaki in the Cook Islands.

The Cook Islands has joined Samoa, Niue, and French Polynesia to implement a regional cable system—Manatua—to have access to faster and more affordable internet.

Avaroa Cable Limited from the Cook Islands, SSCC from Samoa, Telecom Niue from Niue, and OPT from French Polynesia will jointly own and operate the Manatua cable system, which is estimated to cost \$65 million. The government of New Zealand, Agence Française de Développement, and the European Investment Bank will finance the project alongside ADB.

“Improved access to high-speed, affordable broadband internet in the Cook Islands will positively impact the tourism and public sectors as they are, by far, the biggest internet users,” said Emma Veve, director in ADB's Pacific Department.

“The cable project will boost Cook Islands’ connectivity to the rest of the world and provide the potential, for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to better deliver government services.”

“The Manatua cable will definitely result in opportunities that can be harnessed through improved telecommunications connectivity,” said Telecommunications minister, Mark Brown.

“We look forward to the implementation of this project and working in partnership with ADB in this regard.”

The project will deliver faster and better internet quality compared with the current satellite reliance, which will reduce costs for businesses, governments, and households. The project is expected to create new business opportunities and improve public service delivery through harnessing ICT.

However, there has been no word as to whether the cable will result in cheaper prices for broadband, which is currently supplied by satellite and is extremely expensive.

Supporting inclusive growth and investment in ICT are key focus areas of ADB’s Pacific Approach which guides ADB’s operational focus in the region. ADB has worked with the Cook Islands since 1976, approving 20 loans for \$86.9 million, 3 grants for \$12.3 million, and 36 technical assistance projects for \$12.1 million.’

---

Source: <http://www.cookislandsnews.com/national/local/item/67016-15m-loan-for-submarine-cable-link>