



Tender open for telecoms cable project

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The tender for supply and installation of a submarine cable system which is expected to bring faster and more affordable internet to the Cook Islands, is now open.

The cable project is being undertaken by the Manatua Cable Consortium, a partnership between the Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Niue and Samoa.

Finance minister Mark Brown said the tender, which was first opened last week, is now open to the international market.

“The tender will close in mid-March and we will open the tenders in Tahiti. All of the consortium members will be there for the opening of the tenders that will determine which company will lay the cable.

“The companies were obviously waiting for this time. The supply and installation of the cable is from Samoa through to French Polynesia, including Niue and the Cook Islands.

“We are really happy that the tenders have gone out, and if we get our timing and logistics right, then we are looking at late 2019 for the completion of the project.

“It’s a matter of configuring construction of the cable, and that’s what the tender will (assist us) with.”

In early April last year, the governments of the Cook Islands, Niue, French Polynesia and Samoa signed an agreement to facilitate the design, construction, operation and maintenance of a regional submarine cable system to connect their countries. Rarotonga and Aitutaki will be connected to the system.

The project will cost an estimated \$89 million.

“The government of New Zealand, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, is providing a grant of \$15m to the Cook Islands government to support the project,” said Brown.

“The Cook Islands government have requested ADB (Asian Development Bank) support to finance the Cook Islands’ share of the cost.

“ADB have set aside an Ordinary Capital Resources loan allocation of up to US\$15 million to assist in financing the sections that connect Rarotonga and Aitutaki to the main section of the cable system, to finance construction of the landing stations in Rarotonga and Aitutaki and the setting up of a project management unit to support the implementing agency.”

Brown said the ADB would co-finance the main section of the cable system, proportionate with the Cook Islands’ share.

A report last year said the ADB would also provide technical and legal support to the Cook Islands to prepare the project.

The tender will close on March 14.

Source:

<http://www.cookislandsnews.com/national/local/item/67588-tender-open-for-telecoms-cable-project>