

Manatua Consortium Confirms One Polynesia Fibre Cable Ready to Light up the South Pacific



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- Ground-breaking 3600km cable ready for service –*
- Unique international collaboration to transform regional speed, resilience, and affordability –*
- Project completed on time and within budget despite severe global disruption –*
- Landings in Tahiti & Bora Bora in French Polynesia; Rarotonga & Aitutaki in the Cook Islands; Niue and Samoa are live –*
- First submarine cable connections for Niue and the Cook Islands to start a revolution in national connectivity –*

SOUTH PACIFIC – Leaders of the four nations behind the Manatua One Polynesia Cable Project have announced that the cable was accepted last week from turnkey supplier and submarine cable leader, SubCom.

They further announced that, following final checks and preparations by the four operators managing the project as the Manatua Consortium, comprising Office des Postes et Télécommunications (OPT) in French Polynesia, Avaroa Cable Limited (ACL) in the Cook Islands, Telecom Niue Limited (TNL) in Niue, and Samoa Submarine Cable Company (SSCC) in Samoa, the system was officially “Ready for Service.”

The announcement is the culmination of three years of planning, design, cable manufacture, and cable laying. Since completing the cable lay in January 2020, the focus has been on commissioning and testing to confirm the system functions to specifications prior to handover.

Despite disruptions from the global COVID-19 pandemic during the latter stages of the project, which restricted the movement of critical test resources, the Manatua system has been delivered on time and within the original budget – a major testament to the collaboration and determination of the partners and SubCom.

Manatua is a ground-breaking collaboration initiated in April 2017 with the signing of an international treaty by the President of French Polynesia, the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, the Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, and the Premier of the Government of Niue.

The new 3600 km optical fibre submarine cable now spans the South Pacific and will transform speed, capacity, resilience, and affordability. The cable connects Tahiti and Bora Bora in French Polynesia, Rarotonga and Aitutaki in the Cook Islands, Niue and Samoa. It is the first submarine cable in the Cook Islands and Niue, which until now have relied on satellite connectivity.

Once operational, the Manatua cable is designed to provide service for at least 25 years. The system comprises two optical fibre pairs, each capable of carrying data at 10 Terabits per second (= 10,000,000 Mbps).

Citizens of the consortium countries will benefit from Manatua as each operator works to make the new infrastructure available to retailers for incorporation into their local connectivity products and services.

Edouard Fitch, President of French Polynesia, said:

“I consider this cooperation as a fantastic technical advancement and a milestone in terms of connectivity for our Polynesian region, which will allow us to a broader connectivity to the World. This is an indication of our determination and a tangible action undertaken under the banner of the Polynesian Leaders Group. We should consider this project as a tremendous achievement and I wish to salute and acknowledge the unwavering support of the government of New Zealand (The Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade) who fostered this initiative four years ago.”

Honourable Henry Puna, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, said:

“Through Manatua, our four nations have achieved together something that was unattainable individually. Because of that collaborative spirit, our people will be connected. Our lives will be connected. Our futures will be more prosperous and rewarding. This project is the dawn of a new era of cooperation and collaboration across Polynesia. I am so proud of the work undertaken by Avaroa Cable and their partners in the other countries. It is the perfect model for the future of our region.”

Dalton Tagelagi, Premier of Niue, said:

“The Manatua Consortium is a testament to Polynesian countries working together to make a real difference to the lives of our people, our countries and our future. Niue’s connection to the Manatua Cable network is a key investment for a world-class telecommunications infrastructure to expedite Niue’s technological future that is crucial for the development of the country. It will enable a digital platform for improvements to education, health, other government services and to the private sector enhancing the business and tourism markets.”

Tuilaepa Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, said:

“The Manatua Cable is a physical embodiment of the Polynesian leaders’ shared vision of a connected Pacific region; delivering fast, reliable and affordable internet for all. It will strengthen our cultural connections, drive economic development and employment, and create the foundation for the digital transformation of all our countries.”

About the Manatua – One Polynesia Cable

The Manatua cable is a 3634 km, 2 fibre pairs system connecting Samoa, Niue, Rarotonga and Aitutaki in the Cook Islands and Tahiti and Bora Bora in French Polynesia. Each fibre pair will be capable of operating at up to 10 tera bits per second (= 10,000,000 megabits per second) using state-of-the-art fibre optic technology.

About the Manatua Cable Consortium

The ground-breaking Manatua cable consortium was formed following the signing of an International Treaty in April 2017 between the governments of the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and French Polynesia. The purpose of the consortium is to build and operate the Manatua cable. The consortium comprises Avaroa Cable Ltd (for the Cook Islands), Niue Telecom, the Samoa Submarine Cable Company and Office des Postes et Telecommunications (for French Polynesia). It is the first consortium of its type anywhere in the Pacific.

About Office des Postes et Télécommunications (OPT)

OPT Group of French Polynesia is a government-owned company with 3 main subsidiaries. ONATi operates and delivers fixed line infrastructure and services, is the ISP and the mobile operator; Tahiti Nui Telecoms former international operator is still hosting equipment's such as satellites Teleport, Honotua cable landing station and now focusing on Data Centres and services, sells computers and provides IT services; Fare Rata provides postal and banking services. With its 87 stores spread on a surface as vast as Europe, OPT Group delivers services to all inhabited islands.

About Avaroa Cable Ltd (ACL)

ACL is a crown corporate entity which manages the Cook Islands involvement in the Manatua Cable project and its commercialisation. It is the newest international wholesale operator in the South Pacific with an independent board appointed by the Cook Islands Investment Corporation. ACL's funding for its involvement in Manatua has been provided by the Cook Islands Government, the New Zealand Aid Programme and the Asian Development Bank.

About Telecom Niue (TNL)

Telecom Niue (TNL) is a state-owned enterprise (SOE) and the service provider for the Niue Government and its involvement in the Manatua Cable Project. TNL is overseen by an independent board and is involved in a broad range of projects. TNL is the prominent service provider for Government of Niue (GoN) internet services, provides Marine Radio 24/7 monitoring services for the Department of Maritime Services, and does supply and maintenance of civil aviation communications infrastructure. TNL's funding for its involvement in Manatua is through a combination of GoN and the New Zealand Aid Programme.

About Samoan Submarine Cable Company (SSCC)

Samoa Submarine Cable Company (SSCC) is a company incorporated in Samoa, and based in Apia, which built and operates the Tui-Samoa submarine cable between Apia Samoa and Suva Fiji with spurs to Savaii and Wallis & Futuna. SSCC also provides cable landing party arrangements for other regional and trans-pacific international cable systems. SSCC's mandate is to operate an open access and non-discriminatory landing party in order to deliver fast, reliable and affordable internet services to promote ICT innovation and Digital Transformation as an enabler of economic growth and social prosperity for the people of Samoa and the Pacific region.

About SubCom

SubCom is the leading global partner for today's undersea data transport requirements. SubCom designs, manufactures, deploys, maintains, and operates the industry's most reliable fibre optic cable networks. Its flexible solutions include repeaterless to ultra-long-haul, offshore oil and gas, scientific applications, and marine services. SubCom brings end-to-end network knowledge and global experience to support on-time delivery, and meet the needs of customers worldwide. To date, the company has deployed over 200 networks – enough undersea cable to circle Earth more than 17 times at the equator.

About the Cook Islands

The Cook Islands is a self-governing democracy comprising 15 islands in the South Pacific of c.15,000 people operating in free association with New Zealand.

About French Polynesia

French Polynesia is an overseas collectively of the French Republic with 118 islands spread on a surface of over 5 million square kilometres, as vast as Europe. The population is more than 270,000 inhabitants and more than 70% are concentrated on the main island of Tahiti.

About Niue

Niue is a large upraised coral atoll, and is a standalone land mass in the centre of a triangle of Polynesian islands made up of Tonga, Samoa and the Cook Islands. Niue's population of approximately 1500 residents are dual citizens of this self-governing nation (1974) which is in free association with New Zealand. Niueans are bilingual, speaking both Vagahau Niue and English. Niue comprises 14 villages steeped in a rich culture and history that is believed to date back a thousand years.

About Samoa

Samoa, with a population around 200,000 people, is among the western most islands of Polynesia located in the central South Pacific Ocean. Samoa gained its independence from New Zealand in 1962 after more than a century of colonial rule. It is a member of the Commonwealth. The country was known as Western Samoa until 1997. Its capital and main commercial centre is Apia, on the island of Upolu.

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