

**MANATUA CONSORTIUM MEDIA RELEASE:
APPROVED FOR RELEASE**



MANATUA CONSORTIUM SUMMIT GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO START CABLE LAY

- *New submarine cable system will be the first in Cook Islands and Niue -*
- *Unique international collaboration to transform regional speed, resilience and affordability -*
- *Landings in Tahiti and Bora Bora, French Polynesia; Rarotonga & Aitutaki in Cook Islands; Niue and Samoa -*
- *Cable on target to be live by June 2020 -*

APIA, SAMOA, 6 November 2019 – A crucial meeting of regional telecommunications leaders has approved the final stages of planning for the installation of the Manatua – One Polynesia Cable. The new optical fibre submarine cable will span the South Pacific transforming speed, capacity, resilience and affordability. The six landings will be in Tahiti and Bora Bora in French Polynesia, Rarotonga and Aitutaki in the Cook Islands, Apia, Samoa and Niue. It is the first fibre connectivity to Niue and the Cook Islands.

Manatua is a groundbreaking 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.

Manatua Consortium executives from 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 the Independent State of Samoa, met in Apia this week to approve detailed installation plans.

The cable is already in the region following manufacture in New Hampshire, USA by submarine cable industry leader SubCom, who was successful in the extensive supplier selection process held in 2018. Transfer of the 3700km cable from the delivery freighter *Thorco Liva* onto specialist cable laying vessel *SubCom Reliance* is currently underway. Cable lay operations will commence in Samoa in November, Niue and Cook Islands in December, and finish in French Polynesia in January 2020.

The meeting marked the culmination of 12 months of intensive consortium efforts overseeing technical design, manufacture, performance validation, marine survey and contractual compliance to ensure the cable will perform to expectations over its 25-year life. In parallel, the consortium has been readying itself for the start of operational service in June 2020.

Polynesian citizens will benefit from Manatua as each operator works to make the new infrastructure available to their retailers to incorporate into their local connectivity products and services.

Vairani Davio, Joint-Chair of the Manatua Procurement Group and OPT's Chef de Project Telecom said:

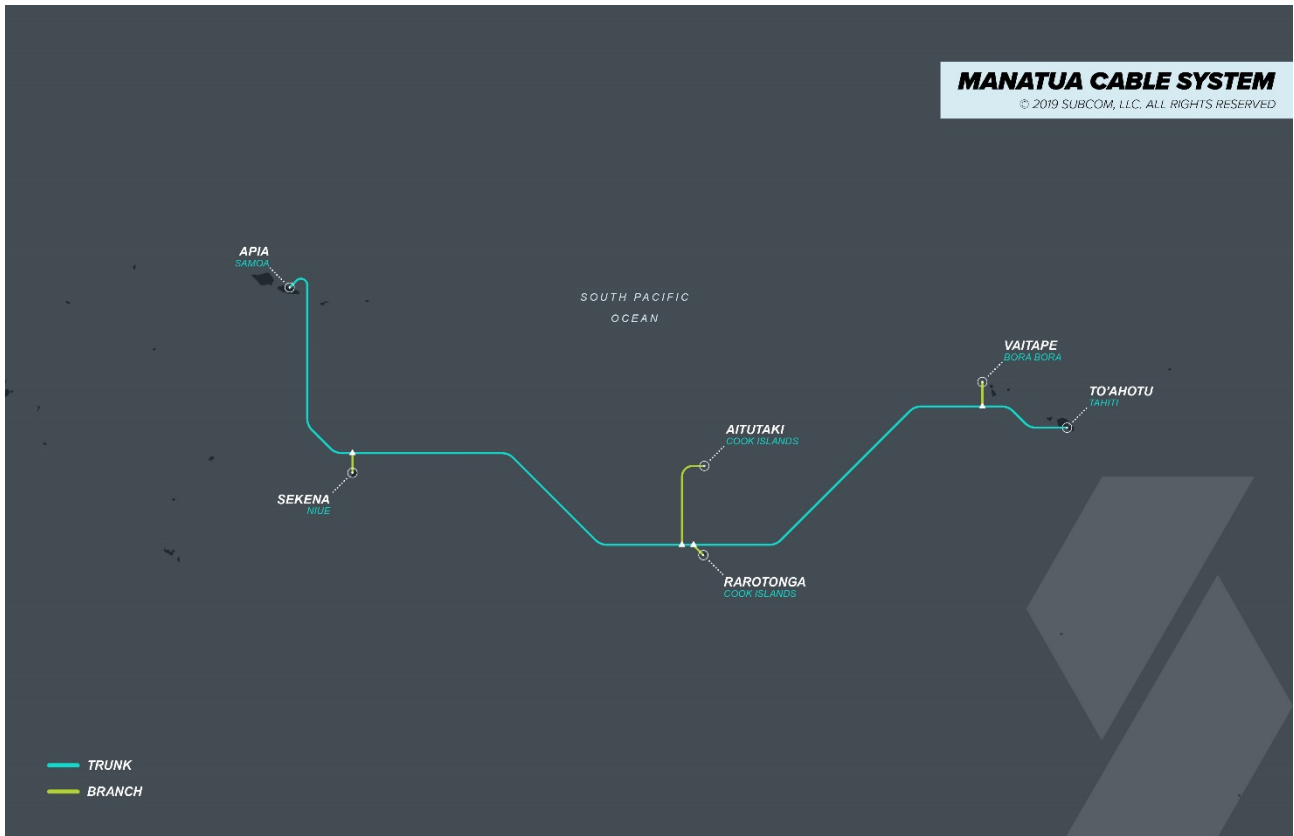
"The Manatua cable is a physical embodiment of the Polynesian leaders' shared vision of a connected region, delivering reliable, high-capacity and affordable connectivity. It will strengthen our cultural connections and create the foundation for our island's digital transformation."

Dr Ranulf Scarbrough, Manatua Consortium Management Committee Joint-Chair and CEO of Avaroa Cable Ltd said:

"The Manatua One Polynesia cable is the first collaboration of its kind, with four partners working together to achieve far more than they each could alone. It marks a new era of connectedness and collaboration for Polynesia."

ENDS

System Map (*SubCom authorizes use for publication*)



SubCom Reliance cable lay vessel (*SubCom authorizes use for publication*)



Manatua Consortium Team



Back row, left to right: Raymond Hughes (SSCC), Richard Williams (ACL), Ranulf Scarbrough (ACL), Christian Fruean (SSCC), Neil Bloxsom (TNL), Rodney Chui (OPT)

Front row, left to right: Edwin Utanga (ACL), Helelany Ly (OPT), Emmanuel Delanoue (SSCC), Vairani Davio (OPT), Loic Le Fur (Axiom)

Further information

Enquiries about this news release should be made to Ranulf Scarbrough on +682-50731 or by email to ranulf.scarbrough@cookislands.gov.ck.

About the Manatua – One Polynesia Cable

The Manatua cable will be a 3700km, 2 fibre pair 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 de Poste et Telecommunications (for French Polynesia). It is the first consortium of its type anywhere in the Pacific.

About Office des Postes et Telecommunications (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 Centers 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 the state-owned enterprise (SOE) 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 fiber 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 collectivity of the French Republic with 118 islands spread on a surface of over 5 million square kilometers, 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.