

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



MANATUA CONSORTIUM CONFIRMS CABLE LAY OPERATIONS COMPLETE

- *Groundbreaking 3600km cable successfully deployed across South Pacific on time -*
- *Landings in Tahiti & Bora Bora, French Polynesia; Rarotonga & Aitutaki in Cook Islands; Niue and Samoa Successfully Completed -*
- *Unique international collaboration to transform regional speed, resilience and affordability -*
- *Cable on target to be live by June 2020 -*

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, 17 February 2020 – Telecommunications executives from the four partner organisations behind the *Manatua – One Polynesia Cable* have confirmed that the cable lay operations were successfully completed in January 2020.

In an operation lasting more than 50 days, and defying two regional cyclones, Cable Ship *SubCom Reliance*'s 65 strong team worked night and day to place the 3600km cable on the seabed of the South Pacific. Starting in Apia, Samoa, further cable landings in Niue, Rarotonga and Aitutaki in the Cook Islands, and Bora Bora and Tahiti in French Polynesia, were successfully completed from November 2019 through to January 2020. At times more than 100 people on land and at sea, including many local contractors, worked to

bring each cable landing ashore. The arrival of the cable in each location was met with traditional Polynesian celebrations and blessings.

The new optical fibre submarine cable now spans the South Pacific and will transform speed, capacity, resilience and affordability. Manatua is the first submarine cable to connect Niue and also 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 Samoa, met in Auckland, New Zealand this week. The consortium reviewed engineering reports from the completed work to ensure stringent quality standards had been met before giving approval to move to the next stage of work.

The focus of the project will now shift to completing the integration of the six cable landing stations, and commissioning and testing of the Manatua cable network. Once operational, the Manatua cable is designed to provide service for at least 25 years.

Citizens of the consortium countries 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 Telecoms said:

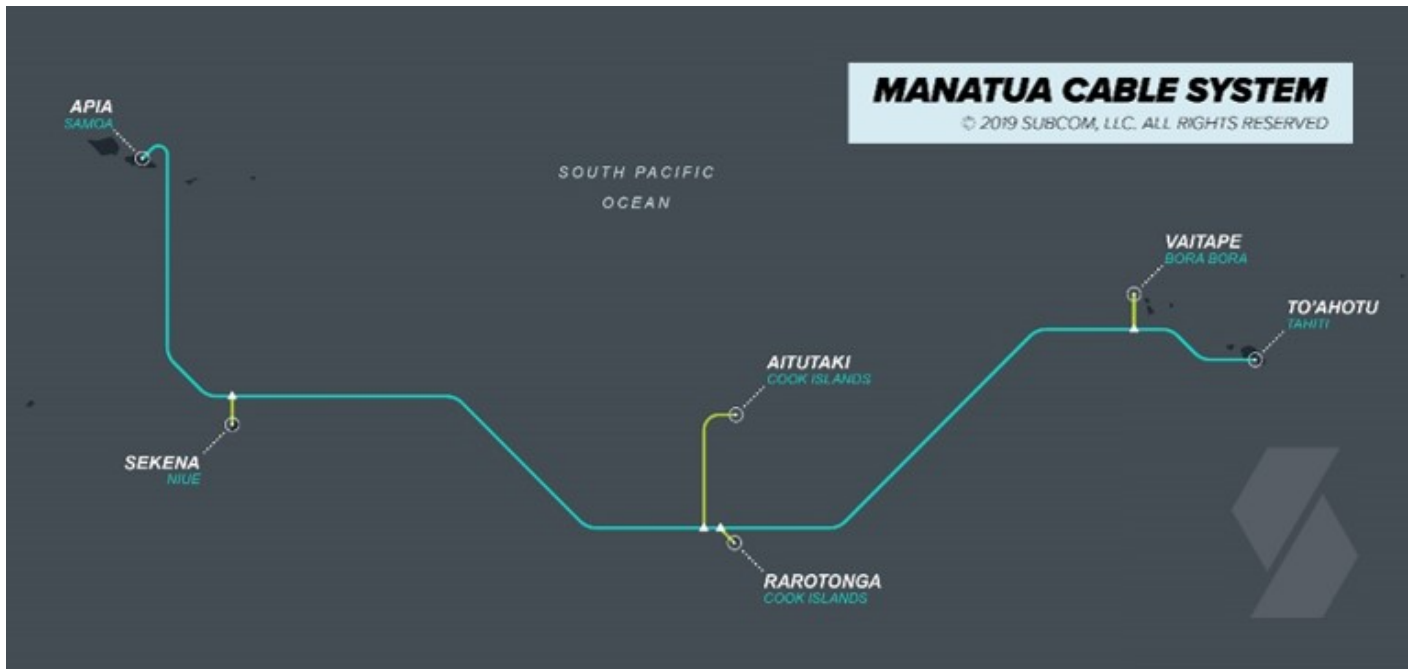
"The past 50 days have seen intense effort from so many people working to ensure the Manatua One Polynesia cable is deployed in accordance with our stringent design goals. The work has gone incredibly well and we acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the men and women that made this possible."

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

"Completion of the cable lay operation has required years of planning and coordination. We now have the firm foundations in place for the Manatua network and can look forward to making the cable live for service in just a few months' time and realizing our original vision of a trans-Polynesian information superhighway."

ENDS

System Map *(SubCom authorizes use for publication)*



Cable Ship *SubCom Reliance*: *SubCom Reliance* pictured off Rutaki reef, Rarotonga, Cook Islands on 8 January 2020 just prior to landing Manatua's Rarotonga branch cable amid heavy surf following Cyclone Sarai.



Cable Ship *SubCom Reliance*: *Cable ship SubCom Reliance* pictured off Rutaki passage, Rarotonga, Cook Islands on 8 January 2020 just prior to landing Manatua's Rarotonga branch cable.



Cable landing celebrations: Cook Islands traditional dancers celebrating the arrival of the Manatua One Polynesia Cable at Rutaki village, Rarotonga, Cook Islands on 9 January 2020.



Cable Landing: Aitutaki school children join in the celebrations of the arrival of the Manatua One Polynesia Cable on Aitutaki, Cook Islands, 14 December 2019.



Cable Landing: *SubCom, Optic Marine Group and Avaroa Cable Ltd undertake the complex engineering operation to bring the cable ashore on Aitutaki, Cook Islands 14 December 2019.*



Cable Landing: *The Manatua One Polynesia makes landfall at Rutaki village, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 9 January 2020. The first international submarine cable in the Cook Islands.*



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 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 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.