

Announcement

ITU and the European Commission launch project to build ICT policy and regulatory capacity in the Pacific

On the occasion of the *Pacific ICT Ministerial Forum: Connecting the Unconnected* held from 17-20 February 2009 in Nukualofa, Kingdom of Tonga, Mr Sami Al-Basheer, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau and Mr. Lénaïc Georgelin, Representative of the European Commission, announced the launch of an ITU-EC project on capacity building and ICT Policy, Regulatory and Legislative Frameworks Support for Pacific Islands States (ICB4PIS).

This ITU-EC project which will be implemented within a period of two years, falls under a broader project covering countries in Sub Sahara Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands (ACP).

Today, most of Pacific Island States have their respective Telecommunications Acts in place and a number of them have or are in the process of setting up regulatory authorities. A major challenge now is to build regulatory capacities and legislative and institutional frameworks to support the implementation of reforms in traditional areas of telecommunications while at the same time move towards embracing innovation in the broader ICT sector.

ICB4PIS will offer comprehensive training programmes tailored to national and regional needs and will enable regulators and policy makers to fulfil their mandate of creating a regulatory environment conducive to making telecommunications/ICT available to the broadest possible range of people at affordable prices.

This project will complement work already undertaken by other organisations. Close coordination with all concerned institutions and parties will be ensured.

Courses will be offered on the following topics:

- Universal service and its funding mechanism;
- Costing, pricing and regulation of services and interconnection;
- Licensing;
- Competition policy, legal and regulatory frameworks;
- Frequency management and national frequency plan building;
- Technical and financing audit of sector performances;
- Next generation networks (NGN) planning and migration guidelines;
- Numbers, addresses and domain names planning.

The target beneficiaries will be governments, regulatory bodies, service providers, the private sector, regional organisations and investors in the Pacific.

During the project, findings will be compiled with a view to highlighting best practices and laying the ground for possible guidelines that countries may consider later on as a base for harmonized directives (but not in the framework of this project).