

Concept Note

Title	Pacific Regional Regulatory Resource Centre
Organisation(s):	The World Bank
Theme:	Theme 3: Enabling Environment: Policy, Regulatory & Financial Frameworks
Speaking Duration:	15 Minutes
Background and Justification:	<p>The Pacific region is experiencing a wave of liberalization and development of their telecommunications markets. Though these developments are not uniform across the region, and in some instances monopoly service provision remains in place, a number of countries have either terminated exclusive franchise or licensing arrangements or issued universal licenses to new operators. In parallel with these market-opening measures, independent telecommunications and ICT regulators have been established or are under consideration.</p> <p>Newly established regulators face a number of challenges in establishing their credibility and autonomy. In some cases, the necessary legal framework is incomplete or sector policy remains under development. Pre-existing institutional structures were usually embedded within government ministries and were concerned primarily with technical aspects of regulation such as spectrum management and standardization of user apparatus. Monopoly operators, often state-owned, were allowed to exercise quasi-regulatory powers, such as control of the national numbering plan.</p> <p>The transition from these institutions and practices to an independent regulatory body requires clear political commitment, the adoption of appropriate sector policy, and supporting legislation. Independence also implies that the regulatory body will have financial autonomy and clear decision-making authority, with any appeal rights tailored to the needs to provide regulatory certainty and to minimize frivolous or unnecessary litigation.</p> <p>At the same time, regulators are required to develop secondary rules and regulatory processes that provide transparency and predictability around regulatory decisions.</p> <p>Beyond these structural challenges, regulatory bodies need to develop expertise and capacity that will allow them to meet their regulatory responsibilities and build credibility with governments, operators and the public. These skills are often unavailable or will take time to develop.</p>
Objectives:	Support the regional pooling of resources to leverage emerging national policy and regulatory expertise and to facilitate sharing of experiences and of

	international best practices for policy and regulatory development.
Scope:	<p>The activities and services of the centre would be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To collate key industry statistics and issue periodic reports on the state of telecommunications competition in Pacific island countries and the performance of the industry in regard to prices, service quality and innovation; b) To develop information packages on priority regulatory topics; c) To provide advisory services in response to country requests; d) To issue best practice statements on telecommunications policies, laws, implementing rules and regulatory instruments; e) To develop a roster of expertise and support quality control; f) To act as a clearinghouse for formal face-to-face or online training programs.
Expected Outcome:	A regional telecommunications and ICT regulatory support facility with a range of functions to support sharing of information and industry data, improve awareness of sector performance across the region, and provide direct assistance to policymakers and regulators, would assist countries to build their policy and regulatory capacity and to adopt best practice principles and supporting legislation consistent with international experience.
Potential Partners:	Multilateral, bilateral partners, regional organizations, telecommunications industry.
Project Timescale:	5 years
Budget (optional):	Total cost over 5 years is estimated at US\$4,050,000 including US\$163,000 pre-establishment costs. This figure represents an annual budget of about US\$800,000.

Work Program

The work program for year 1 will be limited in scope, reflecting the gradual recruitment of staff and the physical establishment of the office. Activities to be undertaken in year 1 include:

1. The development of the website architecture and launch;
2. The development of industry data collection standards and provision of guidance and training for regulators, and officials where regulatory bodies have not yet been established;
3. The establishment of cooperation arrangements with ITU, EAPIRF, APT, PIFS and PITA;
4. The development of a risk management policy;
5. Establishment of the roster of experts and arbitrators and commencement of monitoring of outcomes of assignments;
6. The design of operating procedures for the provision of advisory services;
7. The appointment of members of the advisory board;
8. The development of the year 2 business plan for consultation with the advisory board and presentation to donors.

By year 2, the Centre will be fully operational. Activities will include:

1. Publishing the first annual survey of telecommunications and ICT markets in Pacific Island countries;
2. Through its website, providing information to regulators and officials on regional policy and regulatory experiences, including analysis of lessons of general application;
3. Providing advice to regulators and officials in response to requests for assistance. The scope of advice will include the design and implementation of sector policy, the development of sound legislation and regulatory instruments, the development and operation of regulatory agencies, and the conduct of regulatory activities;
4. Developing statements on best practice policy and regulatory implementation, telecommunications legislation and models for regulatory instruments;
5. Developing a clearing-house methodology to facilitate potential staff exchanges between regulatory agencies in Pacific island countries and similar agencies in Australia, New Zealand and outside the region;
6. The development of the year 3 business plan for consultation with the advisory board and presentation to donors;
7. The commencement of consultation concerning the shift of the Centre to a location in a Pacific island country.

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