



Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association

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**DEVELOPING A REGIONAL DISASTER EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS**

This is an update on the Concept Paper presented by the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA) for the “ITU/ESCAP DISASTER COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP” on 12TH to 15th December 2006 – Bangkok, Thailand

1. Introduction for Disaster emergency communications package :

Unexpected natural and manmade disasters can occur any place, any time. An immediate response to organize and coordinate recovery operations rapidly is essential to save lives and restore the community infrastructure. These critical emergency activities depend upon the readily availability and access to telecommunication resources to support urgent communications.

2. Background :

The Pacific region consists of thousands of islands scattered over approximately 54 million square kilometres of ocean most of which are with very basic communications access or none. Most of the scattered islands do not have resources to deal with disasters threatening human life and basic needs for life preservation and who will require relief assistance and possible evacuation. This also applies to Papua New Guinea which has to face remoteness of rural communities on the same “island” but with major geographical constraints

In the event of disasters, communicating information for any relief assistance, evacuation or for recovery operations becomes crucial and of utmost importance.

3. Strategy for solving the problem or issue

Most if not all countries in the region comprise of developing countries and least developed countries, and cannot afford their own fully packaged emergency communications platform.

Telecommunications entities in each country, however, are members of the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA) and joint efforts are possible to develop a regional disaster emergency communications package that could be deployed to any country for emergency communications.

The objective is to have available at a few central locations such as New Zealand, a disaster emergency communications package that is transportable via Airlift or ship with the logistical support of government authorities or army forces and that could be provided early for emergency and recovery communications, to critical locations where delays can cost lives.

4. Project or Initiative Outline

1. To develop a regional disaster emergency communications package, to be transportable and easily deployable to any country in the Pacific region.
2. further deployment to be considered of a few disaster emergency communications packages per “group” of countries for better responsiveness

Diagram 1 : Consideration for deployment of disaster recovery emergency communication systems for the Pacific Islands Region

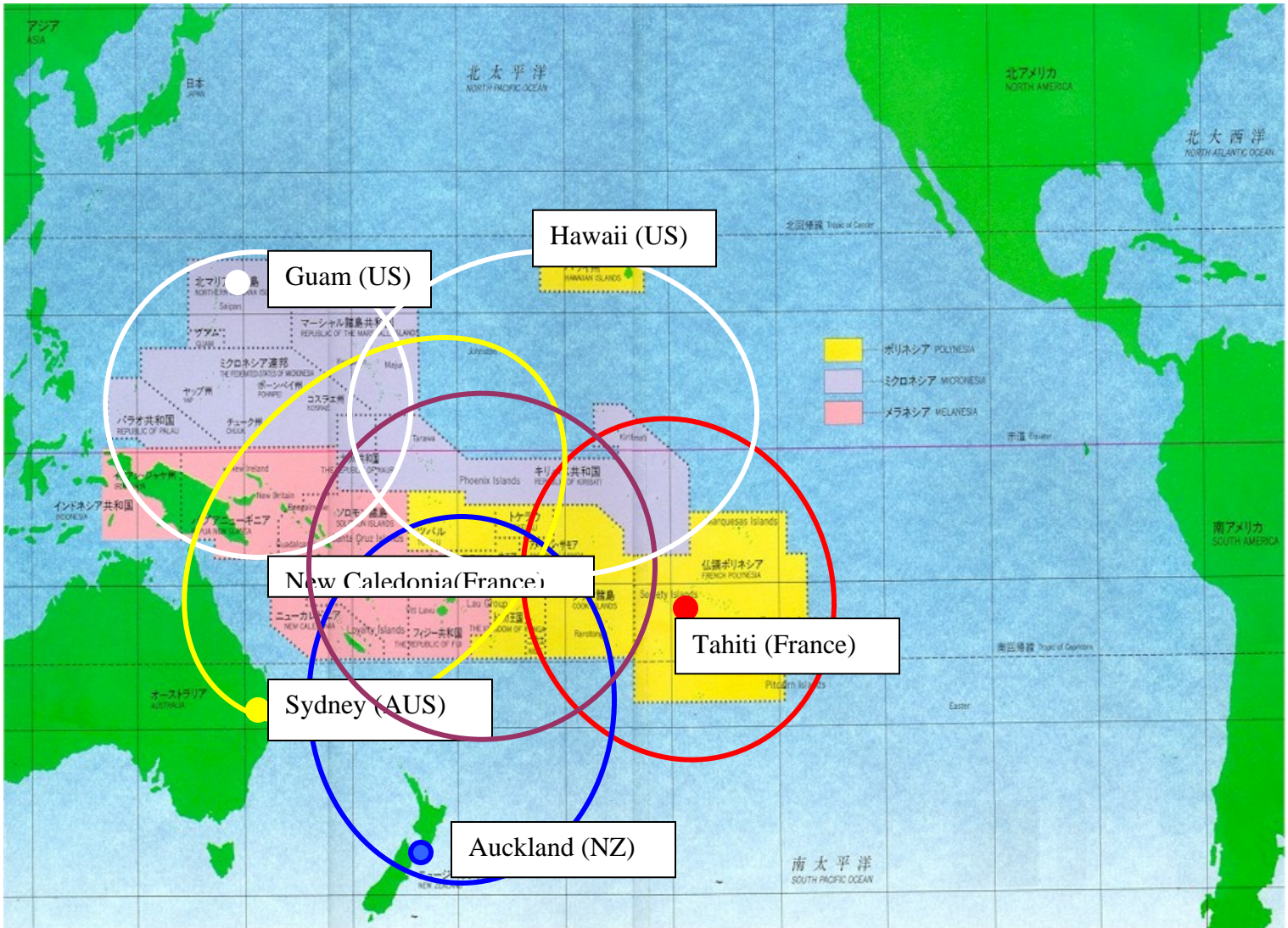
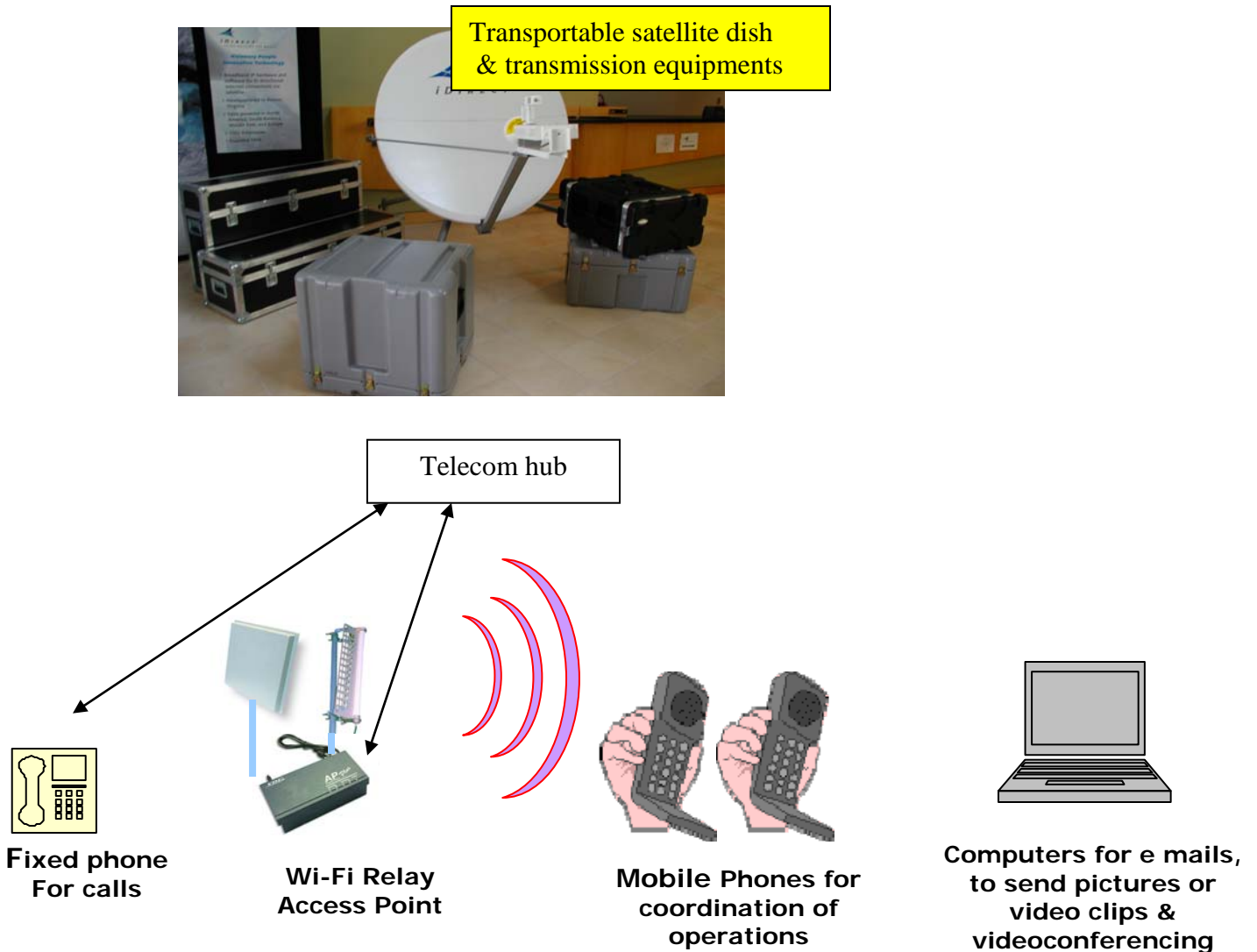


Diagram 2 : Planned configuration of an emergency communication system



5. Activities

PITA to provide coordination for the setup of disaster emergency communications package that includes the following :

- containerized telephone exchange, accessories, and terminals
- fully autonomous power supply system.
- satellite dish and transmission units/accessories
- satellite bandwidth (several satellite service providers who are associate members of PITA have proposed free use of occasional satellite capacity)
- satellite integration equipment
- local network interconnect capability and international access
- customization program and training
- storage and maintenance
- transportation of emergency communication package

- Agreements between members and related parties for the regional disaster emergency communication platform

PITA does not have resources to transport the communications package to the islands where it is required. PITA is to investigate interest from government and agencies who could support transportations of emergency communication package, ideally this would be via the military transport aircraft or ships that are normally involved in the immediate disaster response efforts.

6. Project Update & action plan :

At first PITA is currently putting together a list of all satellite mobile phones (iridium & inmarsat) used in case of an emergency by the telecom provider for domestic and international communications on site in each of the Pacific Islands countries.

6.1 Package to be based in New Zealand :

- Dish (donated by Telecom NZ and switch (donated by Redcom) located at Telecom New Zealand site at Warkworth
- Telecom NZ to put the package together
- PITA & Telecom NZ completed formalities for assistance and funding from NZaid
- PITA to send formal request for assistance and funding to NZaid.

6.2 Package to be based in Tahiti French Polynesia :

- OPT French Polynesia the Telecom operator owns a basic satellite communication device - 2,4 meters C band antenna equipped with a 40 w RF amplifier is available to be shipped anytime in the Pacific in case of an urgent need – easily transportable by airplane – (two units - total volume of 1.2 m3 & weight 140 Kgs)

6.3 Other packages for the region :

- PITA to explore existing solutions (UN ...)
- PITA to liaise with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariate (PIFS), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), South Pacific Commission (SPC) and SOPAC to move the project forward
- PIFS to assist when Intergovernmental liaison is required through the “ICT Task Force” which PITA is member of.
- PITA to complete formalities for ITU assistance in program number 4 of ITU Asia Pacific regional initiatives part of the Doha Action plan to get technical assistance on the project (emergency communications plans and procedures...)
- PITA , PIFS and ITU to search for funding options with potential donors (World Bank, EU ...)

7. Resource Requirements

Resources will be needed to move ahead with the project

- Integrator of equipments
- Agreements between involved parties
- Training program & sessions
- Satellite phones

PITA proposes to work jointly with all regional bodies involved in managing disaster preparedness, mitigation, and community risks.

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