

Marshall Islands

Despite challenges owing to the high costs of connecting its relatively small population dispersed over a number of atolls, this Pacific Island nation is making steady progress in increasing connectivity.

Mobile services: The majority state-owned National Telecommunications Authority (NTA) is the only service provider. GSM mobile service is available in the capital Majuro and on five atolls and islands. NTA skipped the deployment of 3G mobile broadband and went straight to LTE, which was launched in Majuro in March 2017.

Fixed services: NTA is the only provider of fixed telephone services, which have limited uptake. Fixed broadband using ADSL with speeds up to 1.5 Mbps is available on five atolls. Leased lines and self-provisioned fibre-optic connections are available for businesses. Wi-Fi is available in the capital and Ebeye atoll. Internet cafes are provided on some of the atolls using satellite. Majuro and Kwajalein, a US government military site, are connected to an undersea fibre-optic cable system (HANTRU) that links the Marshall Islands to Guam and the Federated States of Micronesia. HANTRU was commissioned in 2010.

Government policy: The Ministry of Transport and Communications (MTC) is responsible for the overall regulation, promotion and development of transportation and communications. A draft Communications Law calls for the creation of the Office of the Regulator. Meanwhile, the *National Telecommunications Authority Act* of 1990 remains the relevant legislation. The national *ICT Policy* adopted in 2012 provides for market liberalization including increasing private participation and investment in the provision of ICT services, strengthening the incumbent to operate in a competitive environment, and introducing competition.

Conclusion: Despite geographic challenges in the provision of telecommunication services, the Marshall Islands are taking steps towards market liberalization. The recent launch of LTE networks is also expected to boost the ICT sector in this Pacific Island nation.

Key indicators for Marshall Islands (2017)		Asia & Pacific	World
Fixed-telephone sub. per 100 inhab.	...	9.5	13.0
Mobile-cellular sub. per 100 inhab.	30.1	104.0	103.6
Active mobile-broadband sub. per 100 inhab.	...	60.3	61.9
3G coverage (% of population)	...	91.3	87.9
LTE/WiMAX coverage (% of population)	...	86.9	76.3
Individuals using the Internet (%)	38.7	44.3	48.6
Households with a computer (%)	...	38.9	47.1
Households with Internet access (%)	...	49.0	54.7
International bandwidth per Internet user (kbit/s)	38.4	61.7	76.6
Fixed-broadband sub. per 100 inhab.	1.9	13.0	13.6
Fixed-broadband sub. by speed tiers, % distribution			
<i>-256 kbit/s to 2 Mbit/s</i>	46.5	2.4	4.2
<i>-2 to 10 Mbit/s</i>	40.7	7.6	13.2
<i>-equal to or above 10 Mbit/s</i>	12.7	90.0	82.6

Note: Data in italics are ITU estimates. Source: ITU (as of June 2018).