

Vanuatu

The South Pacific nation has made significant progress in developing its ICT sector in recent years with strong growth in data traffic following the deployment of its first undersea cable link in 2014 and the launch of LTE in 2016.

Mobile services: There are two operators: the incumbent Telecom Vanuatu Limited (TVL), which began offering GSM mobile services in 2002, and Digicel (Vanuatu) Limited. Digicel entered as the second operator when it launched its GSM network in June 2008. The introduction of cellular competition rapidly increased coverage and uptake with 80 per cent of households having a mobile phone (97 per cent of urban households compared to 73 per cent in rural homes).⁵⁰¹ Mobile subscriptions continue to rise year on year. However, even though penetration sits at 80 per cent of the population, there is a significant number of dual SIM handsets and the continued use of both networks due to bundled discount offerings by both operators. Digicel has become the market leader by some margin. It launched its 3G network in December 2011 and TVL followed in January 2013. Digicel launched LTE in 2016 and mobile broadband has developed rapidly with a 1500 per cent growth in mobile data downloaded between 2014 and 2016.

Fixed services: TVL was owned in equal shares by the Government, the United Kingdom's Cable & Wireless, and France Telecom. As part of the liberalization process, the Government sold its shares in TVL to the two remaining shareholders. In 2011, Cable & Wireless sold its 50 per cent stake to Mauritius Telecom, which gradually increased its ownership. In 2017, Mauritius Telecom sold TVL to ATH of Fiji. TVL remains the only provider of landline telephones. There are four service providers operating in the broadband Internet space. TVL offers FTTH, DSL, WiMAX and Wi-Fi services; Digicel offers wireless Internet access using WiMAX and Wi-Fi; and Telsat Broadband Limited offers wireless Internet via WiFi and Ku band satellite services (via Kacific Broadband Satellites). A notable milestone was the launch of LTE by WanTok in April 2014 when it began providing fixed wireless services in the capital Port Vila. Both TVL and Digicel have metropolitan fibre rings around Port Vila and Luganville on the island of Espiritu Santo, but otherwise optical fibre in the national backbone is non-existent and national backbone connectivity relies mainly on microwave services. The 1 259 kilometre Interchange Cable Network 1 (ICN1), which links Vanuatu to Fiji via fibre-optic cable, was completed in January 2014. With ICN1,

Key indicators for Vanuatu (2017)	Asia & Pacific	World	
Fixed-telephone sub. per 100 inhab.	1.3	9.5	13.0
Mobile-cellular sub. per 100 inhab.	82.5	104.0	103.6
Active mobile-broadband sub. per 100 inhab.	45.4	60.3	61.9
3G coverage (% of population)	98.0	91.3	87.9
LTE/WiMAX coverage (% of population)	33.0	86.9	76.3
Individuals using the Internet (%)	25.7	44.3	48.6
Households with a computer (%)	22.4	38.9	47.1
Households with Internet access (%)	29.4	49.0	54.7
International bandwidth per Internet user (kbit/s)	12.2	61.7	76.6
Fixed-broadband sub. per 100 inhab.	2.1	13.0	13.6
Fixed-broadband sub. by speed tiers, % distribution			
<i>-256 kbit/s to 2 Mbit/s</i>	51.4	2.4	4.2
<i>-2 to 10 Mbit/s</i>	26.8	7.6	13.2
<i>-equal to or above 10 Mbit/s</i>	21.8	90.0	82.6

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

traffic is sent to Fiji where it is transferred to the Southern Cross cable and routed to Australia or the United States. The Vanuatu Internet Exchange was launched in 2013.

Government policy: The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) is responsible for ICT sector oversight, guided by the 2013 *National Information and Communication Technology Policy*. The policy covers a five-year period with eight priority areas: i) access to ICTs in Education; ii) access to ICT infrastructure and devices; iii) e-government; iv) integration of ICTs into sectoral policies; v) building trust (mitigating risks and threats related to ICT development); vi) locally relevant content; vii) capacity building; and viii) platform for multi-stakeholder and multi-sector coordination and collaboration. The Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator (TRR) was established under the *Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulation Act* of 2009; however, the Office was established in February 2008. Initiatives under the Universal Access Policy (UAP) aim to expand penetration of mobile and broadband services into rural areas, with the objective of 98 per cent population coverage with a minimum download speed of 2 Mbps by January 2018.

Conclusion: Vanuatu has made great strides in ICT following liberalization of the telecommunication sector in 2008, which ended TVL's monopoly and led to the introduction of mobile competition and the launch of the ICN1 submarine cable in 2014. The UAP is expected to significantly expand broadband coverage throughout the country.