Vanuatu
Telecommunications & ICT
Technical Assistance Program

Supporting the establishment of a fully-liberalised telecommunications sector to provide more widely available, affordable and varied telecom services for the people of Vanuatu.

Background
The Government of Vanuatu is undertaking a comprehensive economic reform program in the infrastructure sectors, including in telecommunications. It aims to promote rapid socioeconomic development, create a more business-friendly environment, and make basic services more affordable and reliable. On 25 June 2008, a new telecom service provider, Digicel, launched operations alongside the existing operator, Telecom Vanuatu Ltd. Following the introduction of competition in the mobile communications market, mobile phone usage has increased from 11.5 percent in January 2007 to over 50 percent as of March 2010. The telecoms sector in Vanuatu is increasingly competitive and dynamic. At the end of 2009, Internet services were also liberalised. There are now ten telecommunications services providers in the country. The government has asked the World Bank to support the institutions overseeing and regulating the market: the Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Works, and the Telecommunications Regulator. The World Bank has been working in partnership with AusAID to promote telecommunications reform throughout the Pacific region.

About the Program
The broad objective of the Telecommunications & ICT (Information and Communications Technologies) Technical Assistance Program is to assist in the transfer of legal, regulatory, and technical expertise in order to support the establishment of fully-functional telecommunications institutions. This will comprise short-term and long-term recruitment of consultants with the primary role of knowledge transfer and on-the-job training; the procurement of office and specialist equipment; promoting association and close cooperation with similar entities in other countries; and in-country and overseas training.

In addition, the program’s more specialised objectives include:

Supporting the policymaking capabilities of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities
- Recommend to the government policy options in the areas of legislation, fiscal incentives, etc;
- Monitor the implementation of government policy in the industry;
- Advise on future policies for promoting universal service to telecommunications in Vanuatu; and
- Lead government work on international agreements related to telecommunications.

Supporting the Telecommunications Regulator
- Implement telecommunications sector reform and the government’s telecommunications policy;
- Issue licences and other authorisations, and monitor compliance with licences and regulations;
- Regulate technical and commercial aspects of interconnection;
- Resolve disputes between operators, and between operators and customers, as required; and
- Allocate, assign and supervise the use of radio spectrum and frequencies.

Location: The program will be based in Port Vila, with benefits affecting the general population of Vanuatu.

Approval Date: 31 August 2009
Closing Date: 30 June 2013
Total Program Cost: US$2.81 million
Donors: Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility Trust Fund — US$2.81 million
Implementing Agency: Vanuatu Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities; Telecommunications Regulator

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