



Kacific to bring fast broadband to Kiribati's most remote islands

Singapore – 20 October 2014 – People on all of the 33 islands and atolls of Kiribati will be able to enjoy high speed broadband services from 2017, thanks to an agreement their government signed today with Kacific Broadband Satellites. Under the multi-million dollar five year services agreement, Kacific will provide the islands with 150 Mbps of bandwidth increasing to 200 Mbps over the term of the contract. Kiribati will be able to increase bandwidth in bursts of up to 50 percent on demand.

With a population of 100,000 people across 3.5 million square kilometres of islands and ocean, Kiribati is the 18th largest nation in the world in terms of its exclusive economic zone, with one of the most disseminated populations on the planet. That poses particular connectivity challenges: to date, only 6 percent of households have broadband and service is slow and expensive and it has not been economical to provide service to many of the remote islands.

Kacific will deploy four high power beams from its Ka-band High Throughput Satellite (HTS) to cover the entire population of Kiribati: two directed on the Gilbert Islands group, one on the Line Islands group and another on the raised coral island, Banaba.

Kacific's solution is adapted to the Pacific nations and will be customised to Kiribati's topology to ensure a reliable and affordable service with ample room to grow and expand. The service uses a very simple, validated and streamlined satellite technology so all islands in the group will receive equally outstanding service quality. Citizens, communities, enterprises and institutions will enjoy high throughput speeds using only a small (75cm to 1.2m diameter) inexpensive terminal.

The Hon. Rimeta Beniamina, Kiribati's Minister of Communications, Transport and Tourism Development says that Kacific's service is a good fit for island nations: "It is very important that we in the Pacific are not left behind in terms of connectivity. Kacific's proposition and pricing, and speed of connectivity are ideal for the Pacific especially for providing service to outlying islands."

The agreement comes at a time when the island nation is reforming and preparing to privatise its state owned telecommunications service, Telecom Services Kiribati Limited (TSKL). Hon. Beniamina says that the pending privatisation of TSKL, due to take place next month, means that the agreement with Kacific has considerable strategic importance as a way of ensuring a future universal service for all islands of Kiribati, including the most remote ones.

"While it is to some extent inevitable that the new owners of TSKL will concentrate on serving South Tarawa and other population centres, this agreement will ensure that our remote islands will be able to

enjoy a connected future,” says Hon. Beniamina. “When Kacific launches we will allocate bandwidth to the new owners to ensure adequate coverage on the outer islands.”

Kiribati also plans to use Kacific’s satellite service in conjunction with its existing 3G / LTE mobile network, using the satellite service for backhaul.

“Kacific’s pledge is to provide an affordable, universally accessible national broadband service. We can do this where other technologies have struggled,” says Kacific CEO, Christian Patouraux. “There is today simply no alternative to Kacific’s proposed access, speed and affordability in the Pacific.

“Using fully proven technologies Kacific will make a direct high-speed internet connection available to every government agency, institution, business and family in the footprint area. Wherever they live in the nation, the people of Kiribati will enjoy a broadband service equivalent to those in more densely populated nations.”

Hon. Beniamina says that the fast, low cost broadband provided by Kacific will provide benefits in a number of critical areas:

- It will improve delivery of healthcare on remote islands, where patients requiring treatment may be days away from hospital facilities. Broadband will allow nurses in clinics to videoconference with doctors in hospitals to provide better diagnoses and get advice on treatments and procedures.
- Kacific’s service will enable primary school students in the outer islands to be better prepared to use the digital tools they will encounter when they attend secondary schools.
- Broadband will underpin e-government services, improving communications between the government and its people.
- Better nationwide connectivity will play a critical role in providing warnings of extreme weather events and assist in disaster recovery.
- Fishing and passenger vessels will be able to install tracking antennae to access the signal and keep in touch with maritime services and provide better safety for crew members.
- Villages churches, youth groups and women's groups in remote communities will be able to combine to share the cost of service.
- People will be able to stay in touch via popular video services such as Skype with distant family members who form part of the larger Kiribati diaspora in New Zealand, Fiji and the Solomon Islands.

Kacific expects to launch its Kacific-1 satellite by early 2017 and to provide operational service shortly thereafter. From the moment the satellite is commissioned, all of Kiribati will be able to receive coverage using only a small, low cost dish antenna. Overnight every school, village, clinic, shop, business and dwelling in the country will have access to a fast, affordable, national broadband network.

This agreement is the fifth that Kacific has signed since it announced its intention to provide a service in December 2013.

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About Kacific

Kacific Broadband Satellites Pte Ltd is a satellite operator developing a broadband offering for the underserved Pacific island market. It plans to address the gap in supply with a satellite specifically designed for this market and using the latest multi-beam and high throughput space communications technology transmitting over the Ka Band.

Kacific's target market comprises the islands of the Pacific, and the land masses of New Zealand, eastern Indonesia, Philippines and Papua New Guinea. It plans to provide satellite coverage to the majority of the island nations in Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia including the Solomon Islands, Western Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Tokelau, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Northern Mariana, Vanuatu, Marshall Islands, Palau, Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, Papua, Tuvalu, Wallis and Futuna and Guam.

Using cost-effective technology and a lean business model Kacific will provide better broadband quality throughout the Pacific at significantly less than current retail prices, fostering greater internet usage and fuelling economic growth and improvements in service delivery in the islands.

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