



PacNOG 36
Rarotonga, Cook Island

Network Development & Upgrade

USDA RUS approves \$25 million grant for FSMTC to expand high-speed internet under the ReCONNECT program

FSM Telecommunications Corporation

September 11, 2025

Pohnpei - The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development agency, under the ReConnect Program, has approved a grant of \$25 million to the FSM Telecommunications Corporation (FSMTC). This vital funding will enable the expansion of high-speed internet access and target to provide up to 100 Mbps upload and download speeds to both currently served and unserved areas across the islands of Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap, and Kosrae.

The ReConnect Program is a key component of the United States' commitment to fostering digital expansion and economic growth in Micronesia. The grant will facilitate the deployment of critical broadband infrastructure, ensuring that more communities gain reliable access to fast internet, transforming lives, and supporting local development initiatives.

During a recent trip to Pohnpei, USDA Rural Development State Director Bryan



Anguiano met with FSMTC representatives led by FSMTC President & CEO, Fredy Perman, and shared USDA's commitment to prosperity for Micronesia and people throughout its island communities.

This initiative is expected to deliver numerous socio-economic benefits, including enhanced educational opportunities, improved healthcare services, increased business productivity, and broader participation in the Federated States of Micronesia. It also aligns with global efforts to bridge the digital divide and promote sustainable development in remote island regions.

The US government remains committed to supporting Micronesia's growth and resilience through innovative and impactful programs. Funding and technical support for the project will be managed by USDA's Rural Utilities Service, working closely with FSM Telecommunications Corporation (FSMTC).



Network Development & Upgrade

- 20Gb IP Transit
- 2 of 4 FSM States are fully FTTH
- In the process of migrating our Billing system from AvaBill to Junosoft
- In the process of updating our backbone from Cisco 10Gb routers to Arista 100gb routers to accommodate plans to upgrade customer minimum bandwidth



Operational Challenges

- Geography and land ownership limits tower placements
- Unpredictable and frequent rainy weather damaging Coax cables and delaying repairs
- Frequent power outages damaging infrastructure and affecting network stability



Outage, attacks and service recovery

- Outages caused by hardware failures, cable failures and power loss from island wide power outages
- Low cybersecurity knowledge for non-IT workers creating weak points in the network
 - Phishing and spam mails
 - Accessing unsafe sites
- Third party support upgrading security measures and strengthening our network with the help of ThreatLocker and Huntress EDR



Persistent Technical Problems

- Outdated infrastructure limiting bandwidth capacity for customers
- High cost of new equipment slows down modernization
- Customer demand outpacing infrastructure capacity
- Weather and terrain making it difficult to maintain infrastructure
- Zayo Internet traffic routes with high latency

