

# ADB Backs 411km Submarine Cable Linking Vanuatu and New Caledonia

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**The Asian Development Bank has signed a financing package with Prima Limited to support the design, build and installation of the 411-kilometre Tamtam submarine cable connecting Port Vila, Vanuatu, to Lifou, New Caledonia.**

The project is significant on two fronts: strengthening Vanuatu's digital connectivity and embedding disaster resilience into critical infrastructure. It is also the first transaction under ADB's new Wayfinder Program, designed to mobilise private sector investment across the Pacific through blended concessional finance.

ADB President Masato Kanda described the project as a milestone, noting that reliable internet connectivity and improved disaster resilience are essential for long-term prosperity in Vanuatu.

## Blended finance to de-risk delivery

The financing package includes technical assistance, a \$4.5 million loan from ADB's ordinary capital resources and a reimbursable grant of up to \$1.9 million from the private sector window of the Asian Development Fund.

Through the Wayfinder (Pacific) Program, ADB aims to de-risk complex infrastructure projects and attract private capital. From a project development perspective, this blended structure helps address a common constraint in small island markets: limited commercial viability due to scale and exposure to climate risk.

## Building resilience into critical infrastructure

The Tamtam cable will complement Vanuatu's existing fibre-optic link to Fiji, providing redundancy and reducing the risk of nationwide outages if one cable fails. For a geographically dispersed island nation, this improves service continuity for businesses, government and emergency services.

Scheduled to enter service in December 2027, the project also integrates Science Monitoring and Reliable Telecommunications (SMART) technology. The cable will carry environmental sensors capable of monitoring ocean temperature, sea levels and seismic activity, strengthening early warning systems for natural hazards.

By combining telecommunications infrastructure with climate monitoring, the project demonstrates a systems-based approach to resilience. Data collected by the SMART sensors will be freely available to scientific institutions and civil protection authorities in Vanuatu and New Caledonia.

## Local capability and inclusive outcomes

Prima Limited, incorporated in Vanuatu in 2015, brings operational experience from maintaining the country's first submarine cable. The project is expected to generate local employment and support capacity building, including initiatives to encourage female students into science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

For development finance institutions, projects of this nature illustrate the evolution of infrastructure delivery in the Pacific: multi-functional assets, blended finance structures and integrated resilience features.

Beyond connectivity, the Tamtam cable represents a step toward more robust digital infrastructure, stronger disaster preparedness and deeper private sector participation in the region's infrastructure pipeline.