



The Pacific Islands: Connecting Countries to Each Other and the World

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Among the Asian Development Bank's developing member countries, those in the Pacific have some of the most unique challenges.

Foremost among them? Their isolation. ADB's 15 Pacific island countries are spread across a geographical area of 30 million square kilometers, yet their combined landmass makes up less than 2% of this. So connecting the Pacific islands to each other and the world has become some of ADB's most important and necessary work in the region.

Connectivity in the Pacific has two components: the physical and the digital.

Improvements to the region's physical connectivity apply to air, sea, and land infrastructure. Since 2009, ADB has invested, or is investing, almost \$470 million through the Civil Aviation Development Investment Program to upgrade 19 of the region's airports.

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The improved runways, security, and surveillance equipment are helping to create safer and more efficient ways of transporting people and goods by air.

With roads, ADB has built or upgraded more than 1,000 kilometers to make it easier to connect people in some of their countries' most remote areas. The Kiribati Road Rehabilitation Project, for example, helped rehabilitate more than 37 kilometers of paved road and added more than 50 kilometers of footpaths, making the island safer for motorists and pedestrians alike.

ADB has been working to make affordable, high-speed internet available to help people and businesses overcome their isolation.

And improved ports, such as the \$86 million reconstruction of the Aiwo port in Nauru, which began construction in January 2019, will make it safer, easier, and cheaper for countries to expand their trade ties.

TRANSCRIPT: Digital Connectivity

TRANSCRIPT: Physical Connectivity

In terms of the digital, ADB has been working to make affordable, high-speed internet available to help people and businesses overcome their isolation. ADB has committed some \$107 million to help finance submarine cable projects in six Pacific countries—the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, and Tonga—to facilitate faster internet speed and lower costs for consumers.

ADB is also providing technical assistance to improve e-governance in the Cook Islands.

In 2018, ADB's loan and grant portfolio for physical connectivity stood at 24 projects with a total value of \$1.7 billion, while ADB's overall loan and grant portfolio for digital connectivity boasted five projects and a total value of \$104 million.

With improved physical infrastructure like roads, ports, and airports and faster and cheaper internet, the Pacific islands are doing much to mitigate their distance from each other and the rest of the world.

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