

# Papua New Guinea - Telecoms, Mobile, Broadband and Digital Media –Key Statistics, In Depth Analysis and Forecast to 2022

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## [Papua New Guinea - Telecoms, Mobile and Broadband 2017](#)

### Executive summary

With a population of more than 7 million people and mobile penetration of around 50%, PNG’s mobile market has enormous growth potential. However, this growth could be inhibited by the latent difficulties within the market, including the high cost of deploying infrastructure, the relatively low income base among potential subscribers, and the geographical dispersal of the population. As a result of these conditions PNG remains one of the least affordable mobile markets in the Pacific.

Three mobile service operators provide services including Digicel, Bmobile (Vodafone), and Citifon (Telikom PNG). In 2017 Telikom PNG began rolling out its 4G/LTE network and offers discounted devices and packages to customers to encourage take-up.

Digicel is an important player in Papua New Guinea’s market. When it entered the market in 2007 it brought mobile services to previously unserved areas and at the same time slashed prices. The result was a substantial increase in mobile penetration – from 1.6% in 2006 to around 50% today. In 2017 Digicel is also offering 4G LTE services.

It is estimated that around 90% of all internet usage is currently conducted over Digitals’ broadband and mobile networks. It is important to bear in mind however that throughout much of the country, internet access is simply unavailable. While mobile coverage in 2017 is extensive - most rural areas still have only 2G services.

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Network deployment costs are high in PNG due to the relatively low subscriber base, the



impervious terrain, and the high proportion of the population living in rural areas. As a result, fixed telecom infrastructure is almost inexistent outside urban centres, leaving most of the population unserved. With fixed teledensity having seen little change over the past two decades, progress in telecommunications has come primarily from mobile networks, where accessibility has expanded from less than 3% population coverage in 2006 to over 80% by early 2016.

To overcome the country's communication shortcomings, the government is deploying a National Transmission Network, which is expected to boost bandwidth and encourage market competition. It is managed by the state-owned PNG DataCo, which acts as wholesaler.

Given the underdeveloped telecom services, PNG's telecom market has enormous growth potential. Despite the challenges, the country offers many investment opportunities. An increasing number of Papuans are embracing the digital age, particularly the younger generation, and mobile phones in particular are becoming a more important source of social interaction.

#### Key developments:

- Telikom PNG (Citifon) and Digicel both began offering 4G/LTE services in 2017;
- The number of mobile broadband users is expected to continue to grow strongly as the operators expand their 3G and LTE networks in the coming years;
- Huawei Marine has been contracted to help build the National Transmission Network with DataCo;
- An initial public consultation regarding Mobile Number Portability (MNP) is underway;
- PNG is to build its first IXP;
- SIM card registration is being enforced with a deadline of January 1st 2018;
- Regulator issues tender for 3G mobile services;
- Around 90% of Internet usage is conducted over Digicel's mobile and broadband networks;
- Digicel Pacific extends capacity with new O3b Networks deal
- PNG's state-owned incumbent Telikom is being restructured to focus on retail services while its network is transferred to the state-owned company DataCo;
- PNG's National Transmission Network has international connectivity via the PPC1 submarine cable landing in Madang, offering additional bandwidth to the APNG-2 cable landing near Port Moresby;
- Submarine cable network ICN2, connecting PNG to Vanuatu, was expected to be lit by mid-2016;
- PNG's telecom regulator, NICTA proposes mandatory sharing of mobile network infrastructure.

#### Market penetration rates in PNG's telecoms sector – 2016 (e)

##### Penetration of telecoms services:

##### Penetration

##### Fixed-line telephony

2.0%

##### Fixed internet users

10.3%

##### Mobile SIM (population)

49%

#### Companies mentioned in this report

Telikom PNG, PNG DataCo, Digicel, bmobile, Vodafone, Citifon, Greencom, A-Tel, EMTV, HiTRON, Digicel Play, Click TV, Global Internet, Online South Pacific, DataNets, Datec, PACTEL, Facebook, Telstra, Optus, NZ Telecom, Kacific Broadband Satellite, O3b Networks, Huawei Marine.

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## Table of Contents

- I. Executive summary
- II. Key statistics
- III. Country overview
  
- IV. Telecommunications market
  - o IV.1 Market analysis
  - o IV.2 Recent developments
  - o IV.3 Telecom sector development targets for 203
  
- V. Regulatory environment
  - o V.1 Historical overview
  - o V.2 Regulatory authority
    - V.2.1 Independent Public Business Corporation (IPBC)
  - o V.3 Telecom sector liberalisation
  
- VI. Fixed network operators
  - o VI.1 Telikom PN
  - o VI.2 PNG DataCo
  
- VII. Telecommunications infrastructure
  - o VII.1 National telecom network
  - o VII.2 National Transmission Network (NTN)
  - o VII.3 International infrastructure
    - VII.3.1 Satellite
    - VII.3.2 Submarine cables
    - VII.3.3 Connecting the Pacific islands
  
- VIII. Broadband market
  - o VIII.1 Introduction and statistical overview
  - o VIII.2 Major ISPs
  - o VIII.3 Internet Exchange Point (IXP)
- IX. Digital media
  - o IX.1 Introduction
  - o IX.2 Major players
    - IX.2.1 HiTRON
    - IX.2.2 Digicel Play
    - IX.2.3 Click TV
  - o IX.3 Social Media
  - o IX.4 Digital advertising
  
- X. Mobile market
  - o X.1 Market analysis
  - o X.2 Mobile statistics
  - o X.3 Mobile broadband
  - o X.4 Mobile infrastructure
    - X.4.1 Long-term Evolution (LTE)
  - o X.5 Regulatory issues
  
- 10.5.1 SIM registration
  - X.5.2 MNP
- o X.6 Mobile infrastructure
  - X.6.1 Third generation mobile
  - X.6.2 4G / LTE

- o 0.7 Major mobile operators
- 0.7.1 Digicel
- 0.7.2 Bemobile (bmobile)/ Vodafone
- 0.7.3 Citifon (Telikom)
- .....Continued

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