

Telecommunications



Luzon Bypass Infrastructure (LBI) Project

Completed

Project type	Telecommunications
Location	Poro Point, La Union and Baler, Aurora
Cost	PhP 975 Million
Source of funds	GAA
Proponents	BCDA and DICT
Start of Construction	Completed
Status	Completed
Target completion	2020

Project Description:

The project intends to provide international submarine cables a safe alternative path across the Luzon Strait in exchange for allowing the PH government use of the cables.

Two submarine cable landing stations in Poro Point, La Union and Baler, Aurora will be constructed along with a 240 km cable conduit path to connect the two facilities.



Photo Source: BCDA

Developments

- **March 2021:** A separate Facebook proposal to connect California with Hong Kong also withdrawn due to USG national security concerns under CFIUS.
- **September 2020:** NEDA reports completion of the project to the Senate Finance Committee
- **August 2020:** Original application submitted to FCC for the PLCN, which would have connected Los Angeles to Hong Kong, withdrawn due to national security concerns. Revised application for US-Taiwan and US-Philippines portion of the system submitted.
- **July 2020:** Construction of landing stations completed.
- **May 2020:** Call for expression of interest to use cable landing stations sent out.
- **November 2017:** BCDA and DICT signed a landing party agreement with Facebook for the Pacific Light Cable Network (PLCN) to utilize the LBI in exchange for providing a minimum 2,000,000 Mbps of the submarine cable spectrum.
- **December 2016:** Framework agreement between BCDA and DICT signed.

Updated on

March 22, 2021

Common Tower Policy

Under development

Project type	Telecommunications
Location	Nationwide
Cost	TBD
Funding Type	Private
Proponent	DICT
Start of Construction	TBD
Status	Active
Target completion	TBD



Photo Source: BusinessMirror

Developments

- **September 2020:** DICT issued provisional registration certificates to 23 independent tower companies that have existing MOA/MOU with the agency.
- **May 2020:** DICT provided guidelines on Shared Passive Telecommunications Tower Infrastructure through the issuance of Department Circular No. 008, s. 2020
- **June 2019:** Globe Telecom signed a MOU with ISOC and edotco Group for the building of 150 towers in Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon. The towers will be built and co-owned by ISOC and edotco. The towers may eventually be leased to other telcos.
- **June 2019:** DICT signed a MOA with common infrastructure providers ISOC Infrastructure Inc. and edotco Group Sdn. Bhd. for a 5-year agreement to build common towers. The DICT will assist the two firms with all regulatory and administrative requirements and allow the use of DICT properties for the construction of the towers.
- **February 2016:** The *Arangkada* Broadband Policy brief sponsored by 20 Philippine business groups and foreign chambers recommended the adoption of infrastructure sharing to reduce the cost of cellular-tower expansion.

Project Description:

The DICT is implementing a common and shared infrastructure policy, which includes towers and poles, in order to open the market to independent tower companies to build common towers to be leased to all network operators. The table below shows the tower density of the Philippines relative to some ASEAN countries (source: DICT).

Country	Cell Towers
Indonesia	91,700
Malaysia	22,700
Philippines	22,850
Singapore	10,000
Thailand	60,000
Vietnam	90,000

Updated on

March 22, 2021

Free Wifi Project

Under development

Project type	Telecommunications
Location	Nationwide
Cost	PhP 1.2 billion
Funding Type	Public
Proponent	DICT
Start of Construction	N/A
Status	Active
Target completion	

Project Description:

The **Juan Konek Free Public Wi-fi Project** is a government project of the DICT that aims to provide free broadband internet access to municipalities, and cities nationwide. The project aims to make access to internet available for All Filipinos to accelerate economic, social and educational opportunities.

Hotspots will be located in public plazas and parks; public libraries, schools, colleges and universities; rural health units and government hospitals; train stations, airports, and seaports; and national and local government offices. Speed can vary from committed rate of 512 kbps to a burst of 50 Mbps.



Photo Source: 123RF

Developments

- **March 2021:** 8,207 free Wi-Fi sites listed as live as of March 19, 2021
- **October 2020:** P2.7 billion allotted for the project in the 2021 national budget
- **May 2019:** DICT signed contracted a local subsidiary of Singapore-based HyalRoute Group to install fiber optic cable network in the country. Fiber optic network cables may be utilized for Free Wi-Fi project.
- **March 2019:** DICT partnered with the United Nations Development Program for the rollout of free Wi-Fi internet services in the country.
- **August 2018:** Government invests P1.2 billion to put up close to 11,000 free Wi-Fi hot spots around the country.

Updated on

March 22, 2021

North to South Broadband Network

Under development

Project type	Telecommunications
Location	Nationwide
Cost	Php77 to Php200 billion
Funding Type	GAA
Proponent	DICT, NGCP, and TransCo
Start of Construction	Ongoing
Status	Active
Target completion	2020

Project Description:

A national broadband network expected to provide at least proposed 10Mbps connection to underserved households by 2020. The network is part of the National Broadband Plan which seeks to provide necessary policy, regulatory and infostructure interventions to ensure the delivery of universal, fast, reliable, affordable broadband internet services to Filipinos.

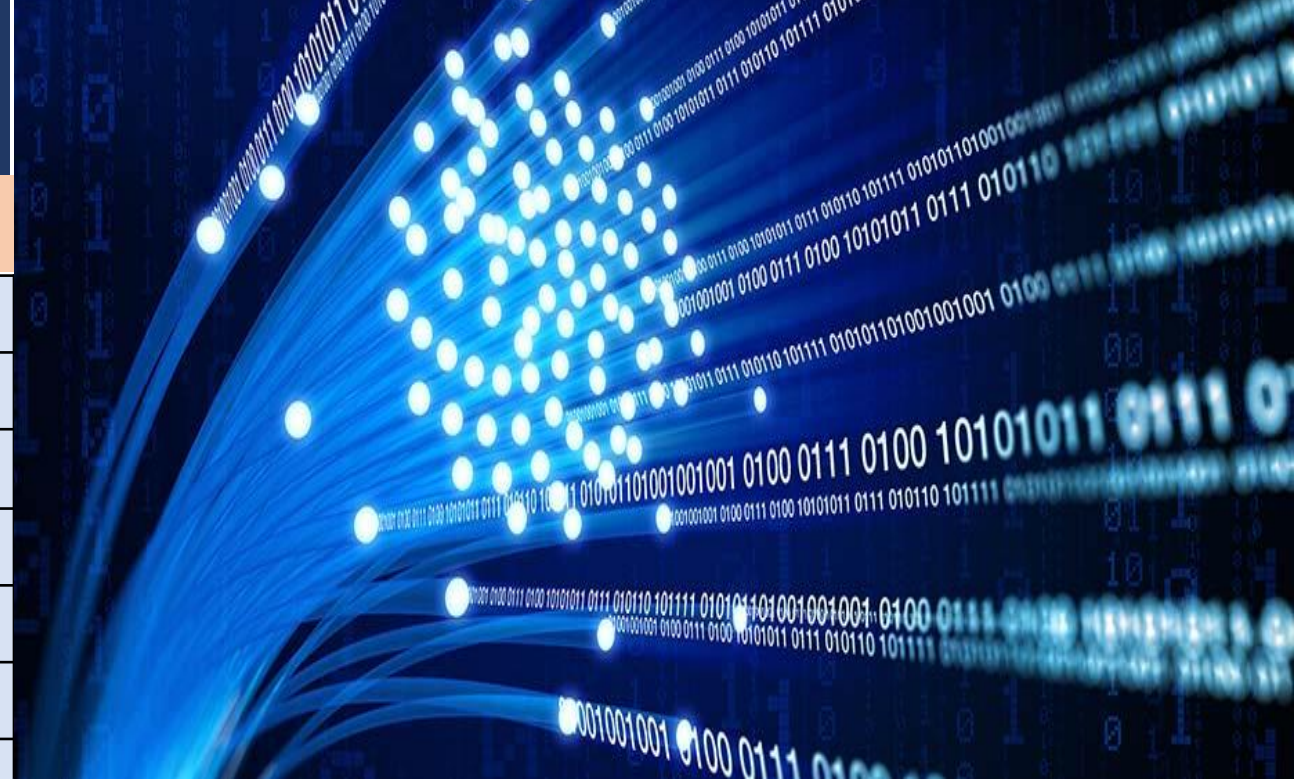


Photo Source: Raging Wire Data Centers

Developments

- **June 2018:** Tripartite agreement signed with the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines and the TransCo which allows the DICT to activate unutilized fiber optic cable network (dark fiber).
- **June 2017:** NBP unveiled with a target of providing 10 Mbps download speed by 2020
- **July 2016:** President Duterte, during his first SONA, directed DICT to develop a National Broadband Plan to accelerate deployment of fiber optic cables to improve internet speed.

Updated on

March 22, 2021

Review on Frequencies Allocation

Under development

Project type	Telecommunications
Location	Nationwide
Cost	TBD
Funding Type	N/A
Proponent	DICT and NTC
Start of Construction	N/A
Status	Active
Target completion	TBD

Project Description:

The DICT is pursuing a policy to take back spectrum (a public good) unused by Globe and PLDT in order to make more frequencies available to a third telco. Based on NTC data, PLDT holds 400 MHz while Globe has rights to 325 MHz. Only 225 MHz is currently unassigned.



Photo Source: Reuters

Developments

- Sec. Rio discussed that retrieving the frequencies from the telco firms is unlikely given that the method to retrieve the frequencies has to undergo a quasi-judicial process. The DICT plans to implement a spectrum user's fee. Rio said that the amount of the spectrum user's fee will be high enough to be a disincentive to the current telco firms in which they will be forced to surrender their unused spectrum to the government.
- In February 2018, President Duterte directed DICT and NTC to recall from PLDT and Globe unused radio frequencies. A month later, DICT announced it will draft a framework for equitable frequency allocation by the end of 2018.
- DICT stated it is drafting guidelines on the distribution of the remaining unassigned or unnamed spectrum of NTC.
- Guidelines on spectrum recall, reallocation and reassignment are in the Open Access in Data Transmission bill (see policy tracker), which was approved by the House of Representatives in November 2017 and is pending Second Reading in the Senate.

Updated on

June 21, 2019

Third Telco Player

Completed

Project type	Telecommunications
Location	Nationwide
Cost	PhP 257 billion
Funding Type	Private
Proponent	DICT, NTC
Start of Construction	N/A
Status	Completed
Target completion	2020

Project History:

The PLDT monopoly was broken in 1993 and 1995 with the issuance of EO 109 and the enactment of RA 7925 or the NTC Charter by President Ramos, leading to the liberalization of the telecom industry. Subsequently, the sector consolidated into the current duopoly of PLDT/Smart and Globe. However, telecommunications is still considered a public utility and subject to the 60/40 foreign equity restriction.

In 2016, Australia's Telstra withdrew plans to invest in the Philippine market in a JV with conglomerate San Miguel Corporation (SMC) to set up a third mobile operator with a shared investment of up to USD\$ 2 billion. Subsequently, SMC sold its frequencies to PLDT and Globe.

In November 2018, DICT selected state-owned China Telecom with Mislattel as the country's third telco.



Photo Source: The Philippine Business and News

Developments

- **May 2021:** RA 11537, renewing Dito's franchise for 25 years signed into law.
- **May 2021:** Dito expands commercial operations to Central and South Luzon.
- **March 2021:** Dito begins commercial operations in Visayas and Mindanao.
- **February 2021:** Dito signed interconnections deals with PLDT and Globe.
- **July 2019:** NTC issued license to operate to DITO
- **July 2019:** Mislattel renamed to Dito Telecommunity (Dito)
- **December 2018:** The House of Representatives approved a resolution approving the acquisition of Mislattel shares by the China Telecom and Mislattel consortium.
- **November 2018:** DICT selected state-owned China Telecom with Mislattel, an old, franchised, non-operating telco acquired by Davao-based businessman Dennis Uy.
- **January 2018:** President Duterte announced his policy to have a third telco selected through a bidding by DICT requiring a joint venture between a local firm with a congressional franchise and a foreign firm.

Updated on

June 14, 2021