

Measat partners govt agencies to advance high-speed broadband in Sabah

By Digital News Asia March 10, 2021

- **Rapid broadband via satellite deployed at Kampung Gana, Kampung Kumawana**
- **First 300GB sponsored by Sabah State Government; villages access it via PAC vouchers**



THE Sabah Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (KSTI), together with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and MEASAT Global Berhad (Measat), has deployed CONNECTme NOW, a community-based prepaid broadband service via satellite at two rural locations in Sabah.

Kampung Gana, Papar and Kampung Kumawana, Tabunan has now gained broadband service via satellite, with the first 300GB sponsored by the Sabah State Government to each village. This is part of KSTI's efforts to address poor internet access and connectivity across rural Sabah, Measat said in a statement.

"Closing the digital divide is imperative to improve the quality of life and economic opportunities for the people of Sabah especially in rural areas," said Yakub Khan, Sabah minister of science, technology and innovation.

"To make digitalisation and innovation adoptable at the public level, the necessary infrastructure improvements must be set in place across the state and not limited to central areas."

CONNECTme NOW employs very small aperture terminal (VSAT) and high throughput satellite (HTS) technology at strategic places within Kampung Gana and Kampung Kumawanan, Measat said.

These VSAT terminals, along with Wi-Fi hotspot equipment, will enable villagers within a 100m radius to receive broadband services. Villagers can access the Internet through Prepaid Access Code (PAC) vouchers, with no contract or fixed monthly charges, it added.

Yakub said that the installation of CONNECTme NOW via satellite is an "immediate solution" as opposed to constructing a telecommunication line to an area, which will take a

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solution as opposed to constructing a telecommunications tower, which will take a longer time to deploy.

“Given that the Covid-19 situation has forced everyone to live with the new normal of limited physical interaction, we need a fast solution for students, communities and businesses to quickly adopt digitalisation,” he explained.

“Measat is pleased to be able to support the plans and initiatives of KSTI and MCMC in bridging the digital divide across the state of Sabah”, said Yau Chyong Lim, chief operating officer of Measat.

“We are aware of the persistent connectivity problems faced by rural communities and will continue to roll-out CONNECTme NOW to the rural interiors anywhere in Malaysia to help the unserved and underserved communities overcome the challenges of broadband communication.”

CONNECTme NOW is touted to be Malaysia’s first prepaid satellite broadband WiFi Hotspot service operated by Measat. It connects over 100,000 broadband connections within unconnected communities residing outside of 4G or terrestrial coverage nationwide, Measat claimed.

Measat recently invested US\$293 million (RM1.2 billion) to build its next-generation satellite, MEASAT-3d, in a bid to improve its support of cost-effective high-speed broadband with up to 100Mbps speeds in areas without any terrestrial network, it added.

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