

State of the Media: Federated States of Micronesia



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Any opinions represented in this report are those of the authors and research participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation or the University of Adelaide.

Photos in this report are from ABCID programs, ABC staff, and ABC archives, unless otherwise specified.

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ACRONYMS

2G	second-generation mobile networks
3G	third-generation of mobile networks
4G	fourth-generation of mobile networks
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABCID	Australian Broadcasting Corporation International Development
AI	artificial intelligence
AM	amplitude modulation
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COM-FSM	College of Micronesia-FSM
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSIB	Cyber Security and Intelligence Bureau
DTTB	digital terrestrial television broadcasting
FM	frequency modulation
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
FSMTC	FSM Telecommunications Corporation
GEDSI	gender equality, disability and social inclusion
ICT	information and communications technology
IP	internet protocol
IPTV	internet protocol television
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
KBA	Kosrae Broadcasting Authority
LGBTIQ+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other sexually and gender diverse people
N/A	not applicable
NWC	National Women's Council
OP-CEDAW	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
PCBL	Pacific Cooperation Broadcasting Limited
TRA	Telecommunication Regulation Authority



Kolonia, FSM. (Pooyan Khorasani)



Moen, Chuuk. (Marek Okon on Unsplash)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an up-to-date snapshot of the state of the media in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). It outlines the challenges to media access in FSM arising from the country's geography. The following themes were identified in the research.

Access to media impeded by FSM's dispersed geography

FSM has an online newspaper, radio stations, and a subscription internet protocol television (IPTV) service; however, these are often only available near major population centres. Internet access is a particular challenge, with less than half the population having regular access – although the recent introduction of Starlink, an internet service that provides high-speed internet via low orbit satellites even to remote areas, is changing this.

FSM's media sector is small and mostly homogenous

Most of FSM's domestic media sector is comprised of public broadcasters (one in each state) and church media. It also includes a paid television service, which broadcasts international stations only, and one online newspaper – FSM's only independent media organisation. Reporting sometimes lacks diversity and often simply disseminates key information, rather than engaging in critical discussion.

Media freedom is uneven

Respondents expressed concern about media freedom, including the right to access government information, although they acknowledged that the government is considering freedom of information legislation. The small size and homogeneity of the sector may also be impacting media freedom. Respondents did not express strong concerns about misinformation or disinformation, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is an independent, sovereign nation made up of four states: Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap. More than 600 islands make up FSM, dispersed over more than 2.6 million km² of the Pacific Ocean. Among these islands, 65 are inhabited by the population of 106,194 people.¹ English is the official language, with eight major Indigenous languages also spoken; Chuukese, Kosraean, Kapingamarangi, Nukuoran, Pohnpeian, Ulithian, Woleaian, and Yapese.

¹ [Pacific Community, Statistics for Development Division - Federated States of Micronesia.](#)



Pohnpei Public Broadcasting Corporation Radio V6AH. (Pooyan Khorasani)

Although FSM is an independent state, it has a Compact of Free Association with the United States, under which the US has exclusive military operating rights in FSM and responsibility for FSM's defence and security. As part of the compact, the US provides economic assistance and grants for sectors including education, health, infrastructure, among others, in addition to providing "eligible FSM citizens the right to travel to the United States without visas to live, work and study."² FSM has a unicameral legislature, the national congress, which consists of 14 members. Both the president and vice president are elected by the congress. An appointed cabinet supports the president and vice president. FSM has a supreme constitution and each state has its own constitution; these provide that each state government will have a similar structure, consisting of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. Each state constitution also recognises and preserves local customs and traditions.³

There is only one independent newspaper and a handful of independent content producers, often working on projects funded by the government or donor agencies.

This report provides a detailed, up-to-date snapshot of the state of the media in FSM. It is part of the State of the Media project, which comprises 12 country reports and one regional report. These reports serve as an accessible resource for media, civil society, and government organisations in support of development goals in the region. In addition to FSM, the countries studied are: Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

² [*U.S. Department of State - U.S. Relations with the Federated States of Micronesia, Bi-Lateral Relations Factsheet.*](#)

³ [*Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(DFAT\) - Federated States of Micronesia country brief.*](#)



2. METHODOLOGY

The study's methodology was guided by the core research questions identified by ABC International Development (ABCID). It was also designed to foreground the expertise of Pacific researchers and media professionals. Data collection, analysis, and report drafting were conducted by Pacific researchers.

The research team began with a desk-based review of primary and secondary literature. Additionally, five stakeholder interviews were conducted. At each step, feedback and advice was sought from the FSM country media expert adviser, Peterson Sam, who also crosschecked the accuracy of findings and co-authored this report. The research was approved by the University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee, and steps were taken to mitigate risks to all research participants, including maintaining their anonymity.

A more detailed discussion of the project methodology is contained in the regional report.⁴

⁴ [ABC International Development - Research.](#)



College of Micronesia student Julio Sue at a social media training.



3. MEDIA ORGANISATION FOOTPRINT

The media landscape in FSM consists of an online newspaper, radio, and television. The only newspaper is The Kaselehlle Press, which is published online every two weeks. Radio is the predominant medium; there are eight domestic radio stations across FSM, each with varying reach. Four of these stations are the public broadcasters in the four states, each operated by the corresponding state government. The only television service across the islands is an IPTV live and on-demand service provided by FSM Telecommunications Corporation (FSMTC) and is available to viewers in Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap and Kosrae on a subscription basis. Almost all media outlets in FSM also communicate with their audience online via Facebook.



Students from the College of Micronesia interview at a fish market in Pohnpei.

Online

The Kaselehlle Press is based in Pohnpei but covers news and stories from across the country. It is privately owned and put together by one person. As a newspaper, it is published online only, via digital publishing platform Issuu, and is available for free in a digital tabloid format. The Kaselehlle Press also owns Paradise Radio (see below).

Social media supports and enables media in FSM to reach their audience. The Kaselehlle Press has 10,000 followers on Facebook, where they also post links to Issuu for each new edition of the paper.⁵ All four government radio stations stream online. The V6AH radio station also uses YouTube and Facebook for livestreaming, with 9,920 YouTube subscribers⁶ and 14,000 Facebook followers.⁷

Radio

Radio is the most widely accessed medium in FSM, with eight locally-based radio stations targeting a broad range of interests and geographical areas. For example, the public broadcaster based out of Pohnpei, V6AH Radio, broadcasts 24 hours a day via FM, FSMTC TV, YouTube and Facebook live feeds; it also broadcasts on AM between 6am and 10am.⁸ The Seventh-day Adventist Church broadcasts from a Kosrae school to neighbouring villages; it provides religious, children's, and health programs.⁹ BBC Pohnpei 101.1 FM is also broadcasting and ABC Radio Australia recently expanded its transmission footprint to Pohnpei and broadcasts on 89.1 FM.¹⁰

See table 1 for a comprehensive list of all radio stations in FSM.

⁵ [The Kaselehlle Press - Facebook page](#).

⁶ [Voice of Pohnpei, Pohnpei Public Broadcasting Corporation, V6AH Radio - You Tube channel](#), accessed December 5, 2024.

⁷ [Voice of Pohnpei, Pohnpei Public Broadcasting Corporation, V6AH Radio - Facebook page](#), accessed December 5, 2024.

⁸ [Voice of Pohnpei, Pohnpei Public Broadcasting Corporation, V6AH Radio - Facebook page, intro and listen live](#), accessed August 22, 2024.

⁹ [Guam-Micronesia Mission of Seventh-day Adventists - Kosrae](#), accessed December 5, 2024.

¹⁰ [ABC News - ABC launches ABC Radio Australia in Micronesia](#), May 28, 2024.

Table 1. Radio

Organisation	Ownership/ Funding	Language	Website/Social media	Sector
Chuuk V6AK Radio AM1593	State	Chuukese/ English	Chuuk V6AK Radio - website and live stream Facebook	Government
Kosrae V6AJ Radio AM1503 FM89.7	State	Kosraean/ English	Kosrae V6AJ Radio - website and live stream Facebook	Government
Pohnpei V6AH Radio AM1449	State	Pohnpeian / English	Pohnpei V6AH Radio - website and live stream Facebook, YouTube	Government
Yap V6AI Radio AM1494	State	Yapese/ English	Yap V6AI - website and live stream	Government
V6JY FM 88.9	Private	Yapese / English	N/A	Church
Paradise Radio V6W1 FM 89.5	Private (Kaselehlie Press)	Pohnpeian / English	Facebook	Commercial
Bible Baptist Radio V6MA FM 88.5 and FM 89.9 AM1350	Church	Chuukese / English	Bible Baptist Radio, Chuuk, V6MA - website and live stream Facebook	Church
Joy FM FM 89.5 (Kosrae), FM 87.9 (Pohnpei), FM 88.5 (Yap) (Seventh- day Adventist)	Church	English	Joy FM - website Facebook	Church

Television

FSM does not have a domestic broadcast television station. However, FSMTC provides internet protocol television (IPTV) services to Chuuk, Yap, Pohnpei and Kosrae.¹¹ IPTV differs from broadcast, cable, and satellite TV; it is distributed by a service provider, via IP networks, and can be delivered in the form of live or on-demand TV.¹² FSMTC operates Pacifica TV in Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap and MyTV in Kosrae.¹³ Through these services, residents of FSM can pay for access to 35 channels.¹⁴

11 [FSM Telecommunications Corporation - TV, homepage](#), accessed August 22, 2024.

12 [Informa TechTarget - IPTV \(Internet Protocol television\)](#), last updated August 2021.

13 [FSM Telecommunications Corporation - Rates and Information](#), accessed August 22, 2024.

14 [FSM Telecommunications Corporation - Channel Lineup](#), accessed August 22, 2024.



Kaselehlle Press Editor Bill Jaynes at work. (Facebook The Kaselehlle Press)

Target audience

Generally, media platforms in FSM are community focused. For instance, The Kaselehlle Press publishes news content for a general audience, rather than targeting particular groups by age, gender, or education – according to a media practitioner respondent. Because the FSM media sector is highly concentrated, organisations seek to appeal to a broad audience base. There is a broad awareness among media practitioners of the need to appeal to youth audiences which informs content-making decisions.

Most domestic radio in FSM serves a local audience in the area in which a station broadcasts. Because of the challenges of broadcasting to a widespread and linguistically diverse population, each state operates its own public radio station to serve the needs of local audiences. Many of FSM's radio stations also broadcast religious content to cater to a variety of Christian denominations: 55 per cent of the population identify as Roman Catholic and approximately 40 per cent identify as Protestant.¹⁵

All media practitioner respondents stated that they engage with their audience through social media, but also via email and phone. Almost all FSM media platforms use Facebook to publish their news and information and to collect audience feedback.

¹⁵ [*U.S. Department of State - 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Micronesia*](#), accessed December 5, 2024.

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4. MEDIA CONTENT COVERAGE

The Kaselehlie Press has only one reporter and broadly states that it covers “stories of local importance” and highlights government corruption as a topic of interest to readers. Media practitioner respondents reflected that The Kaselehlie Press publishes anything in the public interest that comes to its attention. The newspaper’s real challenge is accessing information, mostly because of government reluctance to engage with media, unwillingness of sources to come forward, and the difficulty of one person reporting on everything.

Public broadcasting via radio has the largest media footprint in FSM and is therefore the main source of information that people rely on. According to a media practitioner respondent, public broadcasting covers local news, announcements, programs, and activities; international news; and anything else that might be considered newsworthy to the local audience. Newsworthy content includes government projects in communities; news from government departments responsible for public safety, education, environment, and health; and other public interest issues.

Another media practitioner respondent said that they produce diverse community content that resonates with all age groups, from youth to elders, and what members of the community are interested in:

We produce diverse content that the community can be well informed of and remains engaging and relevant to the youth and the broader community such as announcements and updates, event coverages, educational content, success stories, community spotlights, health and wellness and many more. (FSM 04)

Another respondent said that more reporting is needed on government activities, and that public radio should operate independently from government so it can freely report on public issues:

It would be great to be able to report on government activities to inform the people what's going on, even if it means exposing those that are entertaining and committing corruption activities ... V6AH needs to be totally moved away from under the government care so it can freely report all public interest issues and best inform the public. (FSM 05)

Thus, media practitioner respondents believe that FSM's small population size has created an environment where the media is used as a platform to disseminate or share information, rather than as a tool for journalists to report on issues of public interest.

The Temwen Access Road in Nihkawad, Pohnpei. (Hamish Wyatt/World Bank)



Availability of foreign content is mainly via TV channels and radio broadcast from BBC and ABC Radio. Since the launch of the local Pacifica TV in 2022, people in FSM have access to a broad range of programming, from across the Pacific region and the rest of the world, including news and current affairs, entertainment, sport, and children's programs. However, it should be noted that Pacifica TV is a paid service, and not all of FSM's residents have access.

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion

The stakeholder interviews with media practitioners aimed to capture top-level themes including gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) representation in media content coverage in Federated States of Micronesia. The findings below should not be viewed as exhaustive due to a small sample size. Rather, these insights provide an indication of potential trends in media practitioner perceptions of GEDSI issues.

The FSM government recognises the equality of all citizens. All five Constitutions of FSM “guarantee equal protection under the law to all citizens regardless of sex, race, ancestry, national origin, language, religion, or social status”.¹⁶ FSM has never criminalised consensual same-sex relationships. In November 2018, the Congressional Act 20-150 was passed, which effectively prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.¹⁷ FSM is also a signatory to the United Nations Human Rights Council's 2011 Joint Statement on Ending Acts of Violence and Related Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

Efforts have been made to improve gender equality and the participation of women in political and economic affairs, and the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs has a gender development section. This section is also the technical partner for the FSM National Women's Council (NWC), which “serves as the umbrella organisation for all women's groups and organisations in the four states to amplify women's voices in both national and global affairs”.¹⁸ However, “traditional roles and expectations still permeate FSM society and have been identified as a limiting factor in women's participation in power and decision-making”.¹⁹ FSM has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), but not the Optional Protocol to CEDAW (OP-CEDAW) nor the inquiry procedure under CEDAW. FSM has also ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).²⁰

Media coverage of issues related to gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) is generally minimal. However, one media practitioner respondent described the situation as improved, particularly in relation to LGBTIQ+ issues, which were “almost never discussed 24 years ago, and many lived in fear of being exposed. Now, LGBTI individuals don't seem to be as afraid to express it as they once were” (FSM 03). Conversely, another respondent said that they do not really prioritise GEDSI issues in their news coverage but mentioned an awareness of gender and disability programs and scholarships available to journalists (FSM 04). In radio, media practitioner respondents stated that coverage of GEDSI issues depends on GEDSI representatives approaching the radio station to produce their own programs to relay to the public (FSM 05).

¹⁶ [UN Women - Gender Equality Brief for Federated States of Micronesia \(2022\) PDF](#).

¹⁷ [UN Women, Gender Equality Brief for Federated States of Micronesia \(UN Women, 2022\)](#), 3.

¹⁸ [UN Women, Gender Equality Brief](#), 3.

¹⁹ [UN Women, Gender Equality Brief](#), 3.

²⁰ [UN Women, Gender Equality Brief](#), 13.



Student from the College of Micronesia interviews in Pohnpei.

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5. MEDIA BUSINESS RESILIENCE

The public broadcaster radio stations in each state are funded by their corresponding state governments. Equipment faults have caused stations to cease broadcast. Procuring and repairing equipment is difficult and states have faced challenges in managing these processes effectively. Grants and donor funds are sometimes available for public broadcaster programming and infrastructure and are a factor in media resilience.

The Kaselehlie Press depends entirely on advertising, as the newspaper is available online free of charge in a tabloid format. The sustainability of a sole-operator media organisation is a clear challenge.

Christian radio stations are funded by the church with which they align.



Division of Media and Protocol Office, Yap. (Facebook: Yap State Media and Protocol)

Artificial intelligence

Most media practitioner respondents stated that they regularly use artificial intelligence (AI), although some said they have never tried using it. The main reasons given for using AI included checking sentence accuracy, helping with word choice, and copyediting. One respondent described how AI is used in their context:

AI improves the quality and correctness of written material rather than broader applications of AI. Using AI more extensively in content creation or audience engagement could streamline workflows, enhance personalisation of content delivery, and provide deeper insights into audience preferences and behaviours, thereby fostering higher engagement and more effective communication strategies in newsrooms. (FSM 04)



6. MEDIA POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT

Freedom of expression

The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia broadly states that “no law may impair freedom of expression”,²¹ but there is no express provision for freedom of the press or media. In practice, government media outlets are platforms to disseminate news and information about the government’s national development goals and achievements, rather than report on public interest issues.

²¹ [Federated States of Micronesia - Article IV Declaration of Rights, Section 1.](#)



Erecting Bible Baptist Radio's new tower in 2013. (Facebook: Bible Baptist Radio Station 88.5FM)

With most media state-owned, only one independent media outlet in the country, and challenges in accessing information, only limited independent news content is being produced.

Accessing official information

The public's right to access official information is not guaranteed in the constitution. In September 2021, the president of FSM proposed the draft Freedom of Information Act to the 22nd FSM Congress. The proposed legislation aims to “enhance transparency in public service, establish a culture of openness and accountability in Government, and encourage the disclosure of public information”.²² At the time of writing, there is no published notice of the bill being passed and becoming law.

²² [*Embassy of the Federated States of Micronesia- President Panuelo Submits Freedom of Information Act to 22nd FSM Congress, September 25, 2021.*](#)

Telecommunications

The Telecommunications Corporation of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSMTC) was established by the Telecommunications Corporation Act 1981. It is a public corporation responsible for telecommunication services in FSM.²³ In 2014, an amendment to section 203 of Title 21 of the Code of the Federated States of Micronesia reaffirmed the responsibilities of the FSMTC, in addition to creating the FSMT Cable Corporation and Telecommunication Regulation Authority (TRA)²⁴ to “liberalise telecommunications in the FSM”.²⁵ The 2014 amendments to the act authorised FSMTC to operate radio and television services, which was previously outside of the organisation’s remit.

Radio communications are regulated by the Radio Communication Act 1991. Radio communications include, but are not limited to, “broadcast radio services, citizen radio, fixed radio services, amateur services, public safety and government uses”.²⁶ Under the act, three channels are reserved for emergency, disaster, and government use only.

Online

The Cybersecurity Roadmap focuses on laws and policies relating to cybercrime and cybersecurity. The six-year roadmap aims to develop a national cybersecurity strategy, and its implementation will lead to the enactment of cybercrime legislation.²⁷ FSM has a Draft Cybercrime Bill, however as of November 2024, the Bill was still before the national congress.²⁸ The roadmap recommends enacting personal data protection legislation including guidelines on “lawful data collection, storage, and processing to protect citizens’ privacy”.²⁹

The roadmap also recommends that FSM prioritise the identification, classification, and protection of sensitive information and how FSM should enact legislation to protect classified information. Prior to the release of the roadmap, former president David W. Panuelo created the Cyber Security and Intelligence Bureau (CSIB) within the Department of Justice through an executive order in 2021 to “serve as the cyber-criminal law enforcement and intelligence network... and to provide high-level policy recommendation to the Secretary of Justice on strengthening cyber security and criminal law enforcement”.³⁰

23 [Federated States of Micronesia Telecommunications Corporation Act of 1981, Chapter 2, Section 202.](#)

24 [Congressional Bill No. 18-145, C.D.1, 2014, PDF.](#)

25 [The Government of Pohnpei State - Joint Leadership Meeting with presentations by FSMTC, FSMT Cable Corporation and NORMA, November 25, 2020.](#)

26 [Federated States of Micronesia Consolidated Legislation, Revised Code 2014 - Telecommunications, Title 21.](#)

27 [Cybersecurity Roadmap, Federated States of Micronesia, December 2021.](#)

28 [Marly Fredrick, The FSM Advances Digital Security With Inaugural Cybersecurity Symposium, November 29, 2024.](#)

29 [Geneva Internet Platform - Cybersecurity Roadmap for The Federated States of Micronesia.](#)

30 [Embassy of the Federated States of Micronesia - President Panuelo Creates FSM Cyber Security & Intelligence Bureau, a New, Special Division of the Department of Justice, accessed December 5, 2024.](#)



Radio Australia's Pohnpei FM transmitter site. (Pooyan Khorasani)

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7. MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

Media practitioner respondents did not generally see mis/disinformation as an issue of concern. They consider media broadcasts that are focused on advocacy and general community updates to be free of mis/disinformation. This perception is underpinned by FSM's small population size, where most citizens in a particular area are likely to know each other and can correct errors.



College of Micronesia's community radio station has been off air since a storm caused transmitter damage in 2024.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020–22, FSM did not experience mis/disinformation to the same degree as many other Pacific countries. This is perhaps attributable to its relative isolation from COVID-19 until early 2021.³¹ However, one respondent said that there was disinformation coming from certain officials during the lockdowns:

Actually, there was so much disinformation coming from FSM government officials during the pandemic that there were times that FSM police and Pohnpei state police had several standoffs. It went as far as having five members of the Pohnpei State COVID-19 Task Force arrested and three of them were imprisoned. (FSM 05)

31 [Office of the President, Federated States of Micronesia - Address by H.E. David W. Panuelo on the Occasion of the Return & COVID-19 Status of the MV Chief Mailo & Her Crew - Video on Facebook page, January 11, 2021.](#)



8. MEDIA INFRASTRUCTURE

Telecommunications

When the telecommunications sector in FSM was opened up to competition in 2014, multiple telecommunications service providers were able to establish themselves.³² There are now nine telecommunications service providers in FSM.

³² [FSMT Cable Corporation- Market Liberalisation, Regulation and Infrastructure Development in the Federated States of Micronesia PDF](#), accessed August 22, 2024.



KUTE 89.9FM Radio Studio. (Facebook: Yap State Media and Protocol)

According to the World Bank, internet access in FSM used to depend on slow and unreliable satellite-based connections, made more challenging by the wide geographic spread of the islands.³³ However, Starlink was granted a licence to operate in March 2024, which has enabled access to faster and more reliable satellite connection.³⁴

FSM has multiple submarine cables that connect the islands to the internet. These include the Chuuk-Pohnpei submarine cable,³⁵ the Yap cable, which connects Yap to the SEA-US cable in Guam, and the East Micronesia Cable (EMCS) which connects Pohnpei to Kiribati.³⁶ Pohnpei is also connected to the HANTRU-1 cable system.³⁷ Kosrae is expected to be connected to the existing HANTRU-1 cable in Pohnpei by 2025.³⁸

In the first half of 2024, FSMTC completed the installation of four new cell towers on the island of Pohnpei providing mobile and internet coverage: Awak (February 2024),³⁹ Paliais (March 2024),⁴⁰ Wone (June 2024)⁴¹, Nandaku (August 2024).⁴²

33 [World Bank Group - Micro Connections: Connecting the Federated States of Micronesia](#), June 11, 2018.

34 [Telecommunication Regulation Authority - Public Register of Licences](#), accessed December 5, 2024.

35 ["Federated States of Micronesia Telecommunications Company: Chuuk-Pohnpei Cable," Submarine Cables](#), accessed August 22, 2024.

36 [TeleGeography - Submarine Cable Map- Pohnpei](#).

37 [TeleGeography - Submarine Cable Map- HANTRU-1](#).

38 [East Micronesia Cable System - Press Release: Advancing delivery of the East Micronesia Cable Project](#), March 8, 2024.

39 [FSM Telecommunications Corporation - FSMTC Successfully Commissioned Awak Nanmatour Cell Tower](#), accessed August 22, 2024.

40 [FSM Telecommunications Corporation - FSMTC Successfully Commissioned Paliais Cell Tower](#), accessed August 22, 2024.

41 [FSM Telecommunications Corporation - FSMTC Successfully Commissioned Wone Cell Tower](#), accessed August 22, 2024.

42 [FSM Telecommunications Corporation - Nandaku, Pohnpei Cell Tower](#), August 31, 2024.

Broadcast transmission

According to the World Bank, FSM is “highly dependent on digital technologies to connect people across its 600 islands”.⁴³ The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) notes that “DTTB coverage is limited due to geographical barriers: [firstly,] mountainous topography exists in all four states and divides the radio coverage into several small areas” and, secondly, many of FSM’s islands are remote, remaining outside of broadcast service coverage.⁴⁴

In Kosrae, radio broadcasting has been inconsistent in recent years. In 2020, the Kosrae Broadcasting Station did not broadcast for some time, due to the breakdown of its AM radio transmission. The operator, the Kosrae Broadcasting Authority (KBA), reached out to the FSM Congress for funding assistance to fix the issue while they temporarily broadcast over FM, albeit with limited transmission. However, the FSM National Public Auditor found that KBA’s subsequent purchase of new AM radio transmission equipment did not comply with procurement policy; the equipment was faulty and overpriced, and very little vendor verification had been undertaken. Consequently, radio service to residents of Kosrae remains limited. The Office of the National Public Auditor stated in a report the importance of regaining transmission to all parts of the island.⁴⁵ This is the last remaining FSM state to be connected via submarine fibre-optic cable, meaning that audiences may have higher reliance on radio for information.

There is currently no domestic broadcast television service in operation. However, as discussed, FSM’s largest telecommunication service provider, FSMTC, provides live TV and on-demand video content via its IPTV service. In Pohnpei, Chuuk and Yap the service is branded ‘PacificaTV’, and in Kosrae, ‘MyTV’. A total of 35 stations are available, and subscribers pay for installation, a set top box and monthly access fee.⁴⁶

43 [*World Bank Group - Press Release: New Digital Project to Connect Federated States of Micronesia to Global Economic Opportunities, March 29, 2020.*](#)

44 [*International Telecommunication Union \(ITU\) - The Status of FSM’s Transition from Analog to Digital Television Broadcasting, PDF, accessed August 22 2024.*](#)

45 [*Office of the National Public Auditor, Federated States of Micronesia, Noncompliance with Procurement Regulations Resulted in the Loss of Funds for the Kosrae Broadcast Station, Report No. 2023-08, August 8, 2023.*](#)

46 [*FSM Telecommunications Corporation - Pacifica IPTV, website.*](#)



Broadcast tower of Bible Baptist Radio. (Facebook: Bible Baptist Radio Station 88.5FM)

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9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations on strengthening the FSM media sector are informed by data collected from media practitioner respondents.

Deliver foundational journalism training

Participants expressed a need for training that would help media improve their ability to report accurately and in a timely way, as these were identified as areas of inconsistency. Strengthening basic journalistic skills is expected to improve journalism quality and to build audience trust.

Establish a forum for journalists to access government

Media practitioners expressed the challenges they face in accessing government personnel and politicians for information and comment. More opportunities and willingness among government personnel to answer questions directly would allow media to more accurately report on political issues that impact the people of FSM.



Announcer Benjamin George on V6AH.

Provide assistance for the maintenance and operation of broadcast equipment

Because FSM's media sector is so homogenous, when one organisation is unable to operate due to an equipment fault, it has a detrimental impact on citizens' ability to engage with issues and information that impact them. In Kosrae, for example, the undersea internet cable is yet to be connected, and the public broadcaster is currently unable to broadcast consistently due to equipment fault. Empowering the media to maintain their own equipment would help media to stay on air.

CONCLUSION

The findings in this report highlight the challenges associated with media access in FSM, which are amplified by the country's dispersed geography. Internet is difficult to access outside of major population centres, however, the recent introduction of Starlink and expected completion of submarine cable connections is changing this. In addition, FSM's media sector is small and mostly homogenous, with reporting lacking diversity and critical discussion. Finally, media freedom is uneven in FSM, partially due to the lack of diversity in the sector and because freedom of information has not been legislated.