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DESARROLLO PAÍS AND GOOGLE PARTNER TO DEVELOP HUMBOLDT SUBMARINE CABLE PROJECT THAT WILL CONNECT CHILE AND AUSTRALIA

Google inks PPP for Australia-Chile subsea fibre optic cable

Isabella Ankerson

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Chilean state-owned infrastructure group Desarrollo País has enlisted Debevoise & Plimpton LLP in New York and Carey in Santiago to ink a public-private agreement (PPP) with Google for the development of a landmark submarine fibre optic cable project between Chile to Australia.

Latin Lawyer understands that Ropes & Gray LLP guided Google in the deal but could not confirm before publication.

The PPP was signed on 2 June for an undisclosed amount.

Through the agreement, Desarrollo País and Google formed a special purpose vehicle (SPV), Humboldt Connect, which will be responsible for the development, construction and operation of the 14,800-kilometre underwater fibre optic cable.

Though the value of the agreement remains unknown, sources have reported that the project is set to cost up to US$650 million.

The Chilean government has pledged to contribute a minimum of US$25 million to the project, whilst Google will invest up to US$550 million.

The Humboldt cable, which is expected to become operational in 2027, will transport digital data from cloud computing services, media streaming, and telecoms traffic between the city of Valparaíso in Chile and Sydney in Australia via French Polynesia at a rate of 144 terabytes per second. It will have an operational lifespan of 25 years.

The underwater infrastructure will also connect to branching units in

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Carey y Cía. Ltda.
Isidora Goyenechea 2800, 43rd Floor.
Las Condes, Santiago, Chile.
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the Juan Fernández Islands and Easter Island in the Pacific Ocean.

The cable is the first of its kind to connect Latin America to the Asia Pacific. It will also provide high-speed internet to French Polynesia – an area that is substantially underserved by global telecommunications infrastructure – for the first time.

The Humboldt cable is the first trans-Pacific digital infrastructure project of this scale to be led by a Latin American country, establishing Chile's position as a hub for broadband and telecoms connectivity in the region.

The project will also enable Australia to diversify its international connectivity network and strengthen its ties with Latin America, while bringing new opportunities for cross-border investment.

The Humboldt project is the latest deal in Chile's market for data assets, which has continued to attract investment due to expansive land assets and growing renewables infrastructure. The country also launched a national data centre strategy in December, with the aim of positioning Chile as the main hub for data centre assets in Latin America.

According to Latin Lawyer's news reporting, seven deals involving Chilean data assets have taken place since the start of 2024. In December, Texas-based Aligned Data Centers upsized an existing loan to US$2.25 billion to fund its acquisition of Latin America-focused counterpart ODATA from Brazil's Patria, including its Chilean assets.

Counsel to Desarrollo País

Debevoise & Plimpton LLP

Partner David Grosgold, counsel Sergio Torres and associate Lola Oliveira de Barros in New York

Carey

Partners Francisco Ugarte and Alejandra Daroch, counsel Eduardo Martin and associates Arturo Fasani and Dominique Zuckerman in

Santiago