

# Fibra Óptica Austral (Chile)

## Good practice: Improving connectivity in Southern Chile through fibre optic networks

**Relevant DFI commitment:** Promote and use trustworthy network infrastructure and services suppliers, relying on risk-based assessments that include technical and non-technical factors for network security.

**Type of the initiative:** project

**Stakeholder Group:** Government

**Launch/adoption:** 2018 - Now

### Goals

Chile's Fibra Óptica Austral (FOA) project is a landmark initiative aimed at bridging the digital divide by providing high-speed broadband connectivity to the remote southern regions of the country. The primary goal is to promote social and economic inclusion by delivering reliable internet access to underserved areas in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. These regions have historically faced connectivity challenges due to their geographical isolation.

The FOA project supports Chile's broader digital transformation agenda by fostering innovation, enhancing public services, and enabling economic opportunities in remote communities. The initiative also strengthens Chile's overall telecommunications infrastructure by connecting these regions to a high-speed optical fibre network, contributing to its competitiveness and resilience in a digital-driven global economy.

### Description

The **Fibra Óptica Austral (FOA)** project, completed in 2022, is a government-led initiative to deploy over 3,000 kilometres of fibre-optic cables across Chile's southernmost territories. With funding from Chile's Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications and support from public and private sector stakeholders, FOA connects the regions of Los Lagos, Aysén, and Magallanes, including key locations such as Puerto Montt, Puerto Natales, and Punta Arenas.

The project is divided into four main sections: three regional terrestrial routes and a crucial underwater cable linking Puerto Montt to Puerto Williams on Navarino Island. The underwater segment, spanning over 2,800 kilometres, is a groundbreaking achievement connecting one of the most remote inhabited areas in the world.

Key features of the FOA project include:

1. **Connectivity Boost:** The deployment ensures broadband access for approximately 30 towns and cities, enabling schools, healthcare centres, businesses, and households to benefit from improved internet speeds and reliability.
2. **Public Service Improvements:** Enhanced digital connectivity enables remote education, telemedicine, and efficient government services, improving the quality of life for residents in these regions.
3. **Economic Growth and Innovation:** By connecting remote areas, FOA fosters opportunities for local businesses, tourism, and entrepreneurship while supporting sustainable development in Patagonia.

The project aligns with Chile's national digital strategy to improve infrastructure and promote universal access to connectivity. It underscores Chile's commitment to reducing geographic and socio-economic barriers, ensuring that even the most isolated communities can participate in the digital economy. FOA serves as a model for other nations aiming to bridge the digital divide in challenging terrains, showcasing how strategic public investment and technological innovation can transform remote regions into digitally inclusive societies.

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