

Telecommunications - Ecuador

Industry Update

Contributed by **Coronel & Pérez**

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In January 2002 CONATEL (the state regulator) initiated a process to issue licences for wireless local services under wireless local loop technology.

The fixed telephone service is provided by the state. The former state-owned service provider EMETEL (which had national coverage) split in 1996 creating two state corporations with regional coverage: Pacifictel covering the coastal and the Galapagos Islands, and Andinatel covering the highlands and Amazon region. Both companies and ETAPA, an enterprise of the City Hall of Cuenca (the third largest city in Ecuador), have failed in several privatization attempts in the past few years.

Last January Pacifictel started looking for a competent international operator to administer its regional telecommunications and its subsidiaries. Pacifictel authorities expect to contract an international operator by the middle of 2002. The State Modernization Authority is helping the process by establishing a special committee to speed up the process of hiring this international operator. An international investment bank has been designated to assist in the process.

Meanwhile, the process of licensing personal communications system bands is moving forward. In February 2002 CONATEL designated Latin Pacific Capital as the investment bank in charge of assisting it in the licensing process.

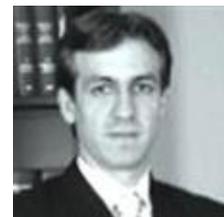
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