Sri Lanka's Internet connectivity: Telecom aspects

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Pro-poor. Pro-market.

Sri Lanka Internet users in relation to neighbors (excl. micro states)

	Bangladesh	India	Myanmar	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Population/ '000 (2013)	156,595	1,252,140	51,419	27,797	182,143	20,483
Median age of population	24.3	27.7	27.9	22.9	22.6	31.8
Internet users/100- ITU method (2013)	6.5	15.1	1.2	13.3	10.9	21.9
Internet users/ 100- LIRNEasia method (2014)	14.2	15.1	13.6	13.3	10.9	34.8

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Sri Lanka broadband subscriptions, to 2014 YE

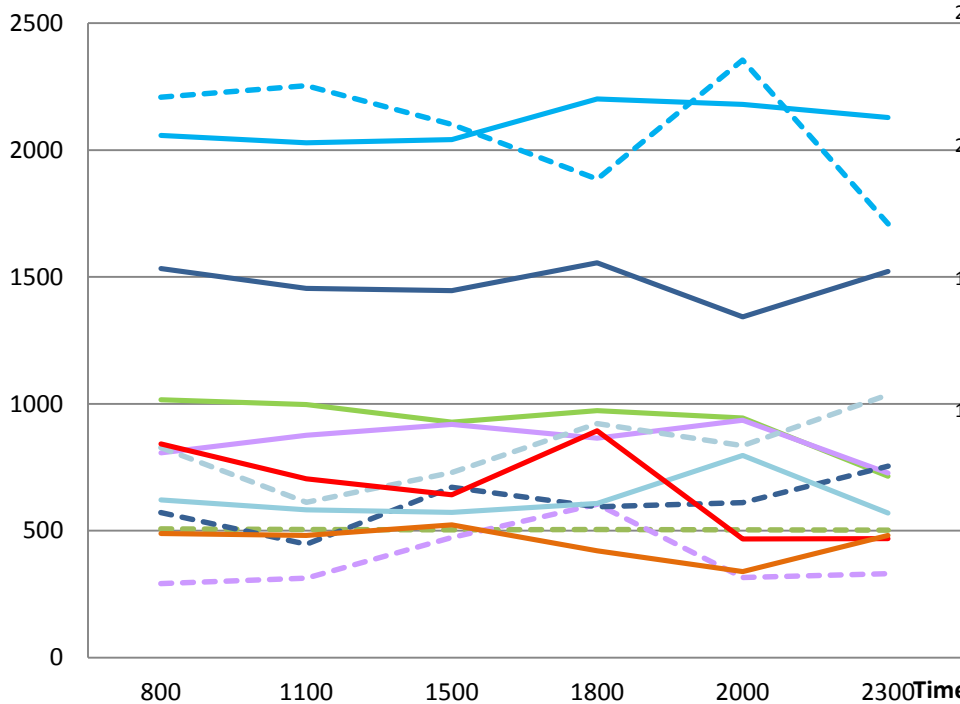

Fixed & mobile broadband subs, 2009-14
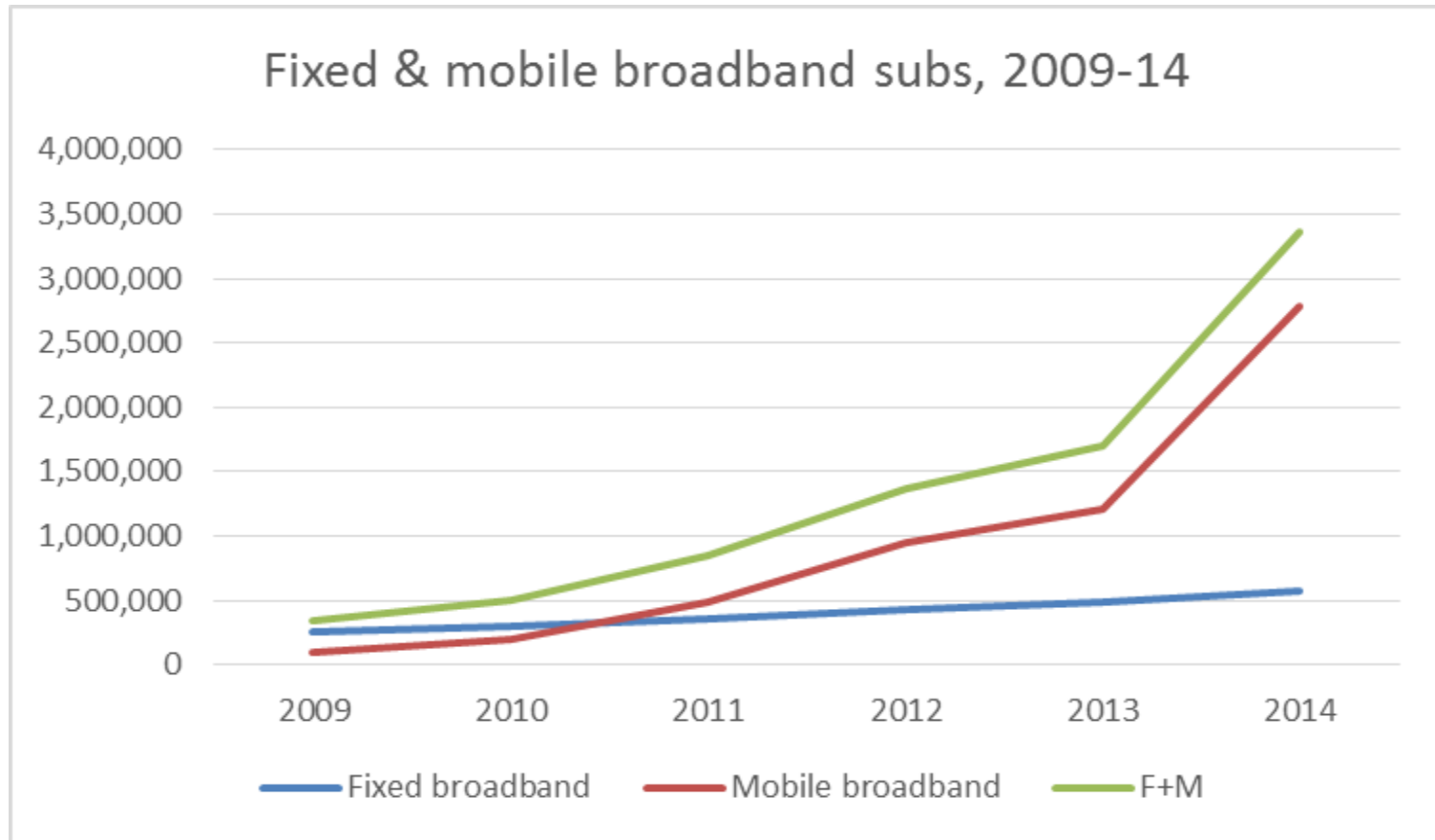
A chain is as strong as its weakest link

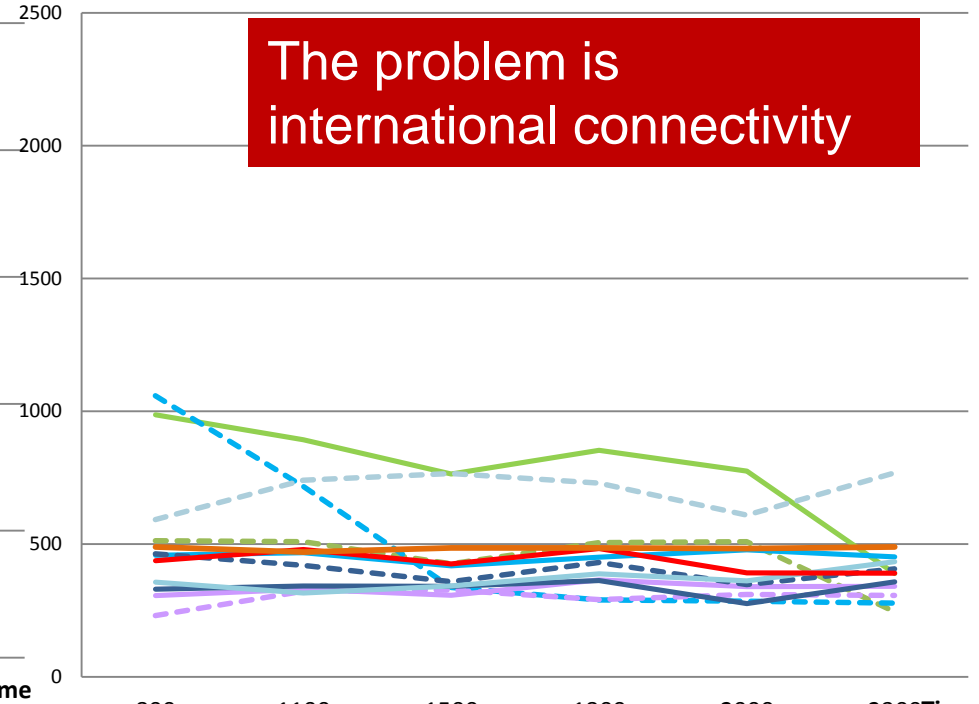Broadband performance is defined by performance over the weakest link

Selected Asian cities: Identifying the weak link (Fixed download)

Download from ISP Server (kbps)

Download from International Server (kbps)

The problem is international connectivity

Legend (left chart):
- —— Qubee (1 Mbps) Dhaka, BD
- - - - Banglalion (512 kbps) Dhaka, BD
- —— Airtel (256 kbps) Bangalore, IN
- - - - BSNL (256 kbps) Bangalore, IN
- —— Airtel (2 Mbps) Chennai, IN
- - - - BSNL (256 kbps) Chennai, IN
- —— Airtel (2 Mbps) Mumbai, IN

Legend (right chart):
- —— Qubee (1 Mbps) Dhaka, BD
- —— Airtel (256 kbps) Bangalore, IN
- —— Airtel (2 Mbps) Chennai, IN
- —— Airtel (2 Mbps) Mumbai, IN
- —— Airtel (2 Mbps) New Delhi, IN
- —— SLT (2 Mbps) Colombo, LK
- - - - Banglalion (512 kbps) Dhaka, BD
- - - - BSNL (256 kbps) Bangalore, IN
- - - - BSNL (256 kbps) Chennai, IN
- - - - MTNL (320 kbps) Mumbai, IN
- - - - MTNL (512 kbps) New Delhi, IN
- —— Telkom Speed (512 kbps) Jakarta, ID

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Source: LIRNEasia, 2011 5

3.6 Broadband via USB Modem - Latency[vii] / Round Trip Time (RTT)
Figure 8 - RTT when pinged to an International server
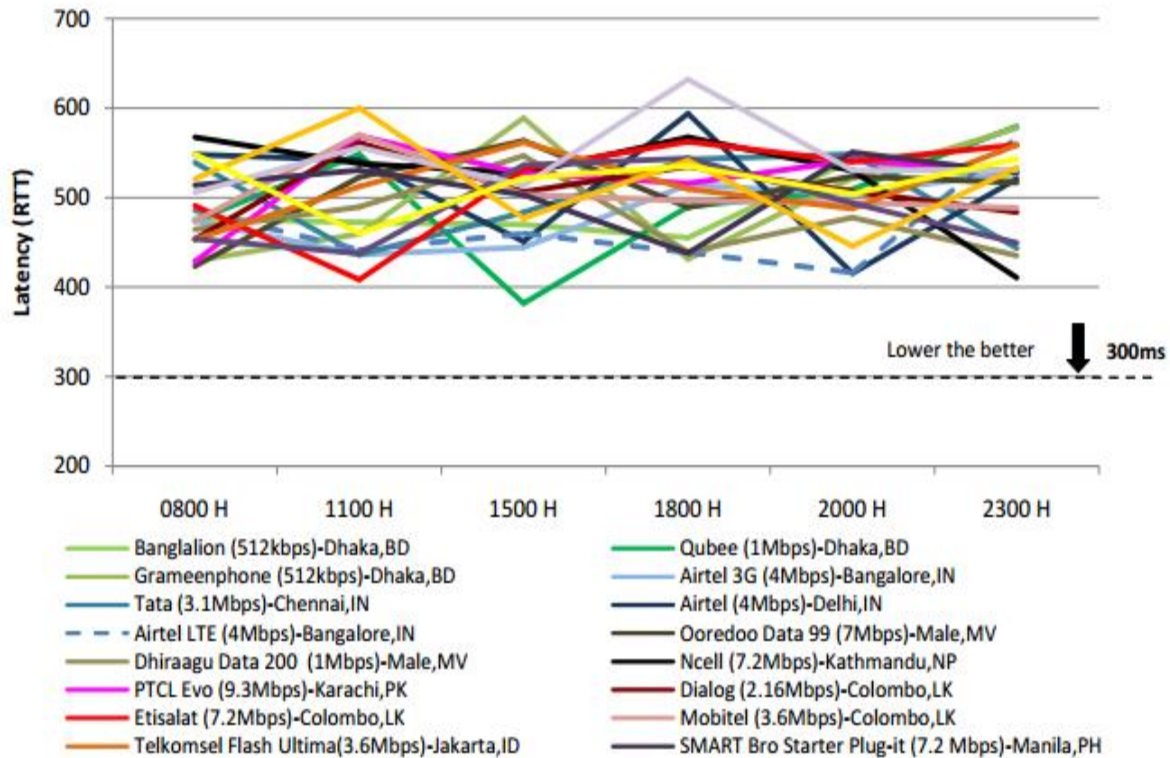
Like most other ISPs in region, Sri Lanka ISPs perform poorly on latency

Status of consortium cables

- Capacity-purchase rules were increasingly relaxed from SEA-ME-WE 2 to 4
- In February 2004, government compelled SLT to permit Tata (then VSNL) to use SEA-ME-WE 3, though colocation rules which had been drafted were not adopted
  - VSNL was a member of the consortium
- Parent of Etisalat Lanka is also a member of the SEA-ME-WE 3,4,5 consortia
  - Dialog Axiata used to be owned by a member (Telekom Malaysia) but is no longer, but has managed to continue using capacity based on past practice

SEA-ME-WE 5 & Bay of Bengal Gateway

SEA-ME-WE 5

- New landing station in Matara, close to southernmost point of Sri Lanka, will
  - Reduce latency because for first time, Sri Lanka will be directly connected to the consortium cable (previous connections through branch cables)
  - Reduce vulnerability
- Hambantota Port will host the submarine cable depot, which may improve speed of recovery from cable breaks in region

BBG

- Hybrid terrestrial and submarine cable that bypasses Malacca, Suez and Hormuz choke points
- To be commissioned by end 2015
- USD 30 million commitment from Dialog Axiata
- Reduces vulnerability to risk of being cut off from SLT-controlled cables

Priority actions

- Sri Lankan operators are doing well is building new cables; facilities-based competition is occurring ➔ will yield benefits in medium term
- But in short term, regulatory action is needed
  - Prices too high
  - Quality problematic
  - Too much power still concentrated at SLT, which built its cable stations and cables when it was a part of government
- Also improve access to domestic backhaul
  - SLT offers capacity to competitors at regulated prices, but worth investigating why greater use is not made of the fiber network
- Need to support AP-IS initiative by UN ESCAP to build terrestrial-maritime mesh network that will permit open access

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In Asia and the Pacific, as in other regions of the world, broadband Internet is accelerating the process of regional integration. It is both a new engine of economic growth and a valuable source of innovation. Broadband Internet, along with related products and services, is the foremost tool for people-to-people connectivity across the region and is accelerating inclusiveness at all levels of society, bringing transformative opportunities to the poorest and most disadvantaged members of society.

However, at the same time, Asia and the Pacific is the most digitally divided region in the world, with less than 8 per cent of the population connected to affordable and reliable high-speed Internet. As a result, millions of people are shut out from transformative digital opportunities in education, health and financial services. For example, in the Republic of Korea, 99.6 per cent of young people have been tive on the Internet for at least five years, while in Timor-Leste this figure is less than 1 per cent. The region also faces

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