

RULING THE SUBSEA HIGHWAY

Carmine Sorrentino, VP of sales for the Americas at Sparkle, explains how the firm is strengthening its backbone and investing in new cables, as traffic continues to surge

Q | What trends represent the biggest opportunity in the subsea industry over the next 24 months in the American continent?

The submarine cable industry is facing a new era marked by the entry of OTTs such as Google, Facebook and Microsoft that handle a large part of international internet traffic, and often build their own infrastructure, sometimes in collaboration with traditional wholesale operators. Although consortium cables still continue to be realised in some areas of the world, in the Americas we expect new private cables being constructed, based on agreements between international carriers and OTTs.

Today much of the traffic is driven by video streaming, gaming and live apps, for which latency is crucial.

This transformation offers a big opportunity for wholesale carriers to differentiate their offerings on top of pure connectivity, but at the same time it also offers a challenge as they need to invest in their networks to provide connectivity at the lowest latency.

Q | How is Sparkle embracing those trends?

We are investing in new cables and expanding our Points of Presence (PoPs) to offer a fast, reliable and capillary connectivity in our core markets of Europe, the Mediterranean basin and the Americas, and in other selected geographies.

Sparkle has an extensive and growing presence in the Americas, with PoPs in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico and Venezuela, and we are completely restructuring our backbone to support the demand for capacity originating in South America, especially Brazil, along the South to North America route.

With this objective, we acquired spectrum sections on the Pacific Caribbean Cable System (PCCS) in Central America and the Caribbean. In 2017 we activated three fibre pairs on the Seabras-1 cable connecting Brazil to the US on the Atlantic route and, more

recently, a fibre pair on the Google-owned Curie cable connecting Chile with the US on the Pacific route.

Q | What is Sparkle's role in Google's Curie Submarine Cable and how does it interoperate with the rest of your portfolio?

We wanted to enhance our regional backbone with a new subsea "highway" between Latin America and the United States, to complement our existing terrestrial and submarine networks, in addition to the Seabras-1 cable in the Atlantic.

Our new fibre pair on the Google-owned Curie submarine cable – the first direct new generation US-Chile cable connecting Los Angeles to Valparaiso – will be fully integrated with our global backbone, increasing redundancy and offering a fourth diversified route for South to North America connectivity.

With these new highways, Curie in the Pacific and Seabras-1 in the Atlantic, Sparkle offers the best performance in terms of latency and robustness through its Tier-1 global IP transit and connectivity services, catering the huge data demand driven by new technologies, media platforms and cloud-based services that require omnipresent internet connectivity.

We are also increasing the capillary of our backbone, opening new Points of Presence in the region, such as the latest opening of the PoP in Salvador, Brazil.

Q | Why was it important for Sparkle to add a PoP in Brazil and what are the plans for the region?

Brazil is a large and growing market within South America and historically a core market for TIM Group as a whole.

Today, more than 60% of Internet traffic stays locally, due to language reasons, and carriers' IP backbones must be capillary to keep contents closer to the end users.

Sparkle has 11 PoPs in Brazil – distributed between Sao Paulo, Rio De Janeiro, Fortaleza and Salvador – and our backbone is fully



Carmine Sorrentino, VP of Sales for the Americas, SPARKLE

integrated with TIM Brasil's fibre optic network of 102,000km across all Brazilian states, to provide high-speed Internet connectivity within Brazil, as well as across the Americas and globally.

In the next few months, we plan to open a PoP also in Porto Alegre, in the country's South-East region, to further expand our network capillary in Brazil. In addition, we will continue to invest in our regional backbone, investing in new cables with focus on the transatlantic route to satisfy the increasing bandwidth demand coming from Europe and US.

Q | What are the main benefits to customers using Sparkle's infrastructure?

Sparkle is a leading global operator, and first Tier-1 backbone in Latam, thanks to its state-of-the-art proprietary backbone of around 540,000 km of fibre, spanning from Europe to Africa, the Americas and Asia as well as an extensive ownership in major international submarine cables.

Our customers – typically ISPs, OTTs, media and content players, ASPs, fixed and mobile operators and multinational enterprises – can benefit from a full range of IP, data, cloud, data center, mobile data and voice solutions.

Our network and our service portfolio are in continuous evolution to provide our customers top performance customised solutions.