Cell Broadcast for Early Warnings in the Arab States

A scalable pathway to CAP-enabled, multi-channel and people-centred warning dissemination

98%+
of the population covered by a mobile network

83.8%
of people aged 10 and over own a mobile phone

8 countries
with operational Cell Broadcast services or deployment preparations underway

USD 40m
preliminary estimate for CB deployment in the remaining 14 countries

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Arab States are moving rapidly from awareness to implementation of mobile-enabled public warning systems (PWS). Eight countries have operational Cell Broadcast services or are at various stages of national piloting, deployment or advanced preparation, while several others are progressing with feasibility studies, regulatory work or broader Pillar 3 readiness activities.

In the Arab States, 98% of the population is covered by a mobile network and 84% of people aged 10 and over own a mobile phone. Effective warning requires clear national authority, Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) based PWS, operator integration, inclusive messaging, testing and sustained operational capacity.

The immediate opportunity is to finance country-owned, CAP-enabled and multi-channel warning ecosystems in the remaining 14 countries, supporting the regional objective of coverage across all 22 Member States by 2030. These ecosystems combine Cell Broadcast and, where appropriate, location-based SMS with radio, television, sirens, applications, satellite and community channels. Recent ITU engagement under EW4All Pillar 3 confirms growing demand and demonstrates that implementation is technically and institutionally achievable at national scale.

INDICATIVE INVESTMENT NEEDS

USD 40 million

Capital expenditure(CAPEX) and three years of operating expenditure(OPEX) for Cell Broadcast deployment in the 14 countries in the last two pipeline groups below.

Estimates are preliminary and assume a nationwide, centralized solution in each country.

CAPEX covers a Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)-based public warning system for alert origination, the Cell Broadcast Entity (CBE), a centralized Cell Broadcast Centre (CBC) serving all mobile network operators, implementation and integration, capacity building and applicable radio access network (RAN) licences.

OPEX covers three years of cloud hosting, support and maintenance for the PWS/CBE and CBC.

Costs vary by the number of operators, technologies, and network size.

WHY CELL BROADCAST

Cell Broadcast (CB) is a mobile network technology that delivers emergency warnings simultaneously to compatible phones within a defined target area. When integrated into a public warning system that uses the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) and complementary dissemination channels, it is a core component of a resilient, people-centred approach to public warning.

Fast & geo-targeted — warnings can be issued within seconds to a defined target area

Resilient at scale — alerts can reach millions of compatible devices without the risk of network congestion

Automatic & accessible — no app, registration or collection of recipients' personal data is required

Prominent & actionable — a distinctive sound and/or vibration attracts attention; multilingual messages with clear instructions help people take action

ARAB STATES IMPLEMENTATION PIPELINE

ITU groups countries by implementation maturity, reflecting confirmed deployments and recent engagement under EW4All Pillar 3. Status should be validated with national authorities as programmes advance.

MATURITY LEVEL	COUNTRIES	POSITIONING
Operational 6 countries	Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates	National Cell Broadcast public warning service in operation.
Nationally piloted / deployment / advanced preparation 2 countries	Morocco and Jordan	Active deployment planning, feasibility or procurement preparation.
Pillar 3 / enabling preparation 4 countries	Comoros, Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan	Assessment, architecture, NETP, CAP or regulatory work progressing.
Initial engagement / pathway to confirm 10 countries	Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Mauritania, State of Palestine, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen	National pathway and priority support to be confirmed.

Note: This brief covers the 22 Member States of the ITU Arab States region. Country categorization reflects reported developments and ITU interactions under EW4All Pillar 3 as of October 2026. Data Source: ITU Facts and Figures 2025.