



BDT COMMUNIQUÉ

Newly released: *A guide to developing a national emergency roaming framework*

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The International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) has launched [*A guide to developing a national emergency roaming framework*](#) outlining practical steps that regulatory authorities and mobile network operators (MNOs) may follow when establishing a national emergency roaming framework. The guide can also be used directly by MNOs to establish bilateral agreements for emergency roaming.

The guide provides practical steps on:

- The design and implementation of emergency roaming frameworks tailored to national circumstances and country-specific contexts
- Regulatory considerations
- Operational arrangements, including activation procedures
- Coordination mechanisms among stakeholders, including regulators, MNOs, emergency management or disaster risk reduction authorities, and other relevant partners

The importance of this guide for regulators and MNOs

Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau, said: "Connectivity in times of crisis is not optional—it is essential. The guide is designed to support regulatory authorities in turning the concept of emergency roaming into life-saving practice. National emergency roaming frameworks provide a practical solution to help ensure continuity of access to emergency services, early warning messages, and essential communications for both the public and first responders."

Through this guide, BDT encourages continued collaboration among governments, through their regulatory authorities, the private sector, including MNOs, emergency management and disaster risk reduction agencies, regional and international regulatory organizations, and development partners to advance the implementation of emergency telecommunication measures and strengthen connectivity resilience worldwide.

The guide complements countries' ongoing efforts to develop and implement **National Emergency Telecommunication Plans (NETPs)**, which provide the strategic framework for maintaining resilient and reliable communications throughout all **phases of disaster risk management**.

Why countries should establish national emergency roaming frameworks

The increasing intensity and complexity of natural hazards such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and wildfires pose threats to information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure.

The newly launched guide provides countries with a regulatory and operational basis for emergency roaming agreements between governments and MNOs, or directly between MNOs, when disasters or other emergencies disrupt network services. Through these arrangements, users can continue to access voice, SMS, and data services at no additional cost.

Maintaining connectivity during disasters is vital. It facilitates the exchange of life-saving information and enables first responders and other relevant stakeholders to coordinate more effectively on the response and recovery efforts. It also enables affected people to remain in contact with family members and loved ones, helping reduce uncertainty, and supporting community resilience during crises.

Resources and background information:

- [A guide to developing a national emergency roaming framework.](#)
- [National Emergency Telecommunication Plans \(NETPs\)](#)
- [Phases of disaster risk management](#)

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About the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs), driving innovation in ICTs together with 194 Member States and a membership of over 900 companies, universities, and international and regional organizations. Established over 150 years ago, ITU is the intergovernmental body responsible for coordinating the shared global use of the radio spectrum, promoting international cooperation in assigning satellite orbits, improving communication infrastructure in the developing world, and establishing the worldwide standards that foster seamless interconnection of a vast range of communications systems. From broadband networks to cutting-edge wireless technologies, aeronautical and maritime navigation, radio astronomy, oceanographic and satellite-based Earth monitoring as well as converging fixed-mobile phone, Internet, and broadcasting technologies, ITU is committed to connecting the world.

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