

Ministry of Telecommunication and information technology Contribution to GSR-23:

Regulatory and Economic Incentives for an Inclusive Sustainable Digital Future

Defining regulatory and economic incentives to stimulate the deployment of sustainable digital infrastructure, especially in rural and isolated areas

MTIT Palestine is aiming to ensure that telecom services reach all regions of the country with long-standing consumer protection that ensure everyone has access to services and facilitate the delivery and use of services in rural and isolated areas by achieving Universal Service Obligation, MTIT in the last two year started many initiatives and projects as well as incentives to be taken to improve the connectivity in these areas which include:

1. **Giga initiative:** Through Giga initiative 76 schools in remote West Bank locations will have access to the internet. At the end of the project around of 10,000 students and 1,000 teachers will be able to access the educational resources and opportunities. Most of these schools are in the West Bank's "Area C", one of the most isolated areas. Currently, 70 schools already connected, with speeds up to 30Mbps and the remaining (6 schools) will be connected soon.
2. **FTTH:** In 2021 MTIT granted six of the Palestinian Broadband companies the approval to Install, own, manage and maintain a broadband telecommunications network (FTTH) in addition to the current fixed operator (Paltel) to connect the Palestinian subscriber generally and the rural and Isolated area particularly, thus, and to give the end user the best experience of this new service the MTIT decided the Minimum Broadband Speeds for FTTH, by 100 Mbps. Also, The MTIT gives a new fixed broadband licensed to one of the biggest ISP in Palestine to find a new alternative network and to increase the competition on the infrastructure level.
3. **Post Offices as Digital Access points:** Currently there is around 100 post offices are served with internet in the less attractive and remote areas, As post offices are present in even the most remote and rural areas within Palestine, leveraging the existing post offices infrastructure to provide access to internet, e-government services and other e-services from private sector increased accessibility to the areas and citizens with no internet connectivity, devices, or digital literacy.

4. **Infrastructure Sharing:** MTIT encourage the telecom operators in implementing the Infrastructure Sharing. Accordingly, the Mobile operators under the MTIT supervision have recently signed a new MoU to share in Green field mobile location. One of the current cases that the Palestinian (mobile and Fixed) operators are working on it in the Isolated area is the Northern Valley (Al-Aghwar Al-Shmalyeh), this area is prevented to be served by the Palestinian operators because of the restrictions from the other side, so the operators are now working on an alternative solution to cover the mentioned area above through building shared green field mobile location on area close to the Northern Valley to cover it.
5. **WIFI Licensed:** the MTIT give the WIFI license to the Telecom companies, which primary aims to cover the rural and isolated area in addition to the area near to the apartheid wall.

Identifying the right incentives required to ensure the introduction of emerging ICT technologies and business models

1. **Tax exemption to support broadband connectivity in less attractive areas:** , MTIT is willing to support the infrastructure development and deployment commercially In the uncovered area and specially the Isolated and rural areas by giving taxes exemptions of the licensing fees (7% of Total Revenue) a decision is made and pending the approval of the Palestinian cabinet in this matter.
2. **4G and 5G frequency:** recently the Palestinian Authority signed the 4G and 5G agreement with the other side after a serious of bilateral Joint technical meetings held between the Palestinian side representative by the MTIT staff and the other side. This new technology will with 4G and 5G technology, people in rural areas can enjoy faster internet speeds and more reliable connectivity, which enables them to access online resources, communicate more efficiently, and participate in online communities. This can also improve their quality of life by providing access to telemedicine, remote education, and e-commerce services. Therefore, the implementation of 4G and 5G technology in rural areas has the potential to bridge the digital divide and bring the benefits of advanced connectivity to people who might otherwise be left behind.