



FRANCE



Using renewals to power improved mobile broadband coverage

Key lessons

- A close collaboration between governments/regulators, local authorities and mobile operators is key to success;
- Discounted spectrum renewals is one way for governments to help finance improved coverage;
- Network sharing (including the RAN and passive elements) can make improving coverage more efficient; and
- Coverage obligations for rural areas can be an efficient tool when used in conjunction with measures to lower the cost.

Background

In the autumn of 2017, the French government gave regulator Arcep the task to look at ways to improve coverage in rural areas. At the time it hadn't reached the same levels as mobile operators offered using 3G. The regulator organised working groups and interviewed operators and associations of local authorities to analyse existing needs, understand how to best meet the expectations of the territories and identify possible coverage obligations. In January 2018, the government, Arcep and the mobile operators announced a plan called the "New Deal Mobile" to improve connectivity.





How did France improve coverage?

As part of the “New Deal Mobile”, the mobile operators took on new and additional licence obligations to address coverage in exchange for not having to compete for the renewals of spectrum in the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz frequency bands, which were about to expire. Highlights of the arrangement includes:

- 4G services on all sites by the end of 2020;
- Improved coverage of priority roads and in areas defined by public authorities. Each operator is required to provide voice, SMS and 4G to 5,000 new areas. To lower the cost, RAN sharing or sharing a minimum of passive infrastructure elements with the other operators that have been requested to deploy in the area is possible;
- Complementary solutions to enable everyone to communicate from inside public building; and
- Fixed service with 4G to provide a complement fixed network coverage.

Read more

The GSMA's positions on auction best practice:

[gsma.com/spectrum/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Auction-Best-Practice.pdf](https://www.gsma.com/spectrum/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Auction-Best-Practice.pdf)

The GSMA's positions on spectrum pricing:

[gsma.com/spectrum/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/spectrum_pricing_positioning_2017.pdf](https://www.gsma.com/spectrum/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/spectrum_pricing_positioning_2017.pdf)

Read the full report:

[gsma.com/expanding-mobile-coverage](https://www.gsma.com/expanding-mobile-coverage)