



POLICY IN ACTION

How Kazakhstan Is Bridging the Digital Divide

Market context

According to GSMA Intelligence, market penetration of unique mobile internet subscribers in Kazakhstan was around 70% in 2020. With 42% of Kazakhstan's population located in rural areas, extending high-speed connectivity for rural economic development is a big priority for the government. In 2020, Beeline, Kcell and Tele2 agreed to deploy a shared network to support the country's 250+

project, which aims to extend high speed internet to all villages of more than 250 residents. Each operator will build and operate the network in one zone, providing infrastructure access to the other parties. The five-year project will deliver 3G/4G service to 600,000 people in nearly 1,000 rural settlements.

Policy or regulatory action

The 250+ initiative requires significant spending by the operators and the period for achieving a return on the investment is very long. So the government enacted a law to reduce the financial burden by offering significant

discounts on annual spectrum fees to the MNOs building infrastructure in rural areas. The operators can receive a discount of up to 90% on the spectrum fees to help offset their investment.

Why this is good practice

Mobile internet empowers individuals and communities with access to information and life-enhancing services, and bridging the digital divide is a mission that requires action from business and government. The Kazakhstan government took a balanced approach, compensating

coverage obligations on mobile operators with discounts. Already in 2021, the law has demonstrated its effectiveness, as national operators have covered hundreds of villages with high-speed mobile internet.

[Beeline news release on 250+ partnership](#)
[InBusiness KZ article](#)
[Kazinform article](#)

Read more at:
gsma.com/publicpolicy/policy-good-practice

Copyright © March 2022 GSMA