

Digital Single Market

2 October 2012

Role of public authorities in funding high speed broadband infrastructure in rural areas

Published 2 October 2012

Updated 10 June 2015

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--- *Posted by Guido Acchioni, DG INFSO, Policy officer, Workshop organiser at Digital Agenda Assembly*

The [Digital Agenda for Europe](#) [1] has set up ambitious targets on the deployment and use of [high speed broadband infrastructure and services](#) [2]. It is obvious that these are ambitious objectives which will require a substantial amount of investment and efforts both from private and public domains.

The Commission's estimate indicates that between € 38bn and € 58bn would be needed to achieve the 30 Mbps coverage for all by 2020 and between € 181bn and € 268bn to provide sufficient coverage so that 50% of households are on 100 Mbps services. The size of the investment represents a real challenge. This is because the benefits for society as a whole appear to be much greater than the private incentives to invest in faster networks.

Private investment is currently targeting mainly urban areas. However, there are vast parts of Europe which are rural, remote or sparsely populated. To satisfy the needs of these communities, new models of investment in high speed networks are arising particularly at local and regional level. This is particularly relevant within the context of rural and regional development as the availability of open, competitive, affordable and good quality broadband networks is a key element for the long term sustainability and competitiveness of less advanced regions and rural areas.

Five preliminary broadband investment models for public authorities have been identified, and [we seek to gather a broad range of opinion from a range of contributors across Europe](#) [3], in relation to these broadband investment models.

These issues will be discussed at the [Digital Agenda Assembly](#) [4] ([#daa11eu](#) [5] - Brussels 16-17 June)

in a workshop called "[Financing and facilitating broadband projects](#) ^[6]". The [workshop programme](#) ^[6] offers more details.

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[2] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/pillar.cfm?pillar_id=46

[3] <http://broadbandeuropa.wordpress.com/2011/05/01/financing-high-speed-broadband-what-do-you-think/>

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