

Projects of Universal Service Fund (Ministry of IT) in Balochistan

Parvez Iftikhar

Universal Service Fund (USF) has been established by the Government of Pakistan (Ministry of Information Technology) to spread the benefits of the telecom revolution to all corners of Pakistan. The objectives of USF are to provide telecom services including basic telephony and e-services in rural areas, broadband in un-served urban areas, infrastructure for these services (like Optic Fiber to connect un-served tehsils) and establishment of Multi-purpose Community Tele-centers for those who cannot afford the necessary instruments/devices.

All funds come from contributions of the Telecom Operators in the country and there is no direct Government funding. All disbursements of the fund are done through open competitive bidding, encouraging full competition among service providers. Through all these projects, the total subsidy committed by USF for various projects has reached PKR 15.17 Billion Rupees, out of

and an un-served population of around 229,000. USF and PTCL entered in this contract on May 29, 2008. A subsidy of Rs. 175 Million is being provided to PTCL that has been completed by PTCL and services have started.

Nasirabad

This lot consists of Bolan, Jaffarabad, Jhal Magsi and Nasirabad areas in Balochistan. There are 648 unserved muzas which have a population of around a million. Through the contract signed in July 2009, CMPak will be paid Rs. 1.57 Billion to provide telephony services in Nasirabad. First project implementation milestone for USF Nasirabad lot has been claimed by CM Pak covering 150 muzas in the districts of Bolan, Jaffarabad, Jhal Magsi and Nasirabad.

Next Rural Telecom Projects The following USF Rural Telecom Project in Balochistan has been advertised for bidding: Mastung This Lot includes Mastung, Ziarat and Nushki districts and has 200 un-served muzas.

Western Balochistan (Package 1) USF awarded a contract of subsidy worth Rs. 374 million to Wateen Telecom to provide Optic Fiber connectivity to 5 un-served Tehsils of Western Balochistan also including the cities of Dringar, Ahmadwal, Nokundi and Chaghi. Wateen Telecom are laying approximately 900 kilometers of Optic Fiber Cables to connect these Tehsils.

Un-served Tehsils in Southern Balochistan (Package 2)

Contract worth Rs. 1.2 Billion subsidy was awarded to PTCL for laying more than 1,200 Kms of Optic Fiber cable in Southern Balochistan. This will provide connectivity to Kech, Dasht, Buleda, Tump, Awaran, Jhal Jao, Dureji, Kanraj and Pasni Tehsil HQs including Peerdrk, Mehnaz, Kalag, Kalatuk, Nodaiz, Hoshab, Nasirabad, Bilecha, Kanraj cities. In addition, this cable will provide additional link to Gawadar and Jiواني. Two project implementation milestones have been

ple will benefit from this project.

Next Optic Fiber Project in Balochistan

Following USF Optic Fiber Project has been advertised for bidding:

Unserved tehsils in Balochistan Package 4

Balochistan-Package-4 consists of un-served areas in Barshor, Musa Khel, Zhob & Ziarat Tehsils (population of 1.7 Million that will benefit from 1,108 kms of Optic Fiber Cable).

After completion of the above projects the whole of Balochistan will be covered with the most modern Information Motorways (see map below) which will facilitate all kinds of modern telecom and IT services.

3. Special Projects

Pilot Project to convert existing Computer Centres into Telecentres

This project involves providing broadband connectivity to the existing computer centres in the rural/semi-urban areas of the country. Through this project, two computer centres in Institute for De-

(50%) is being spent on projects in Balochistan.

Given below are the details of USF Balochistan projects.

1. Rural Telecom Programme
Pishin
Pishin Lot has 3 districts (Killa Abdullah, Pishin and Quetta) and 7 tehsils. There were 312 un-served muzas in Pishin

lation of around 153,000 will benefit from this rural telecom project.

2. Optic Fiber Connectivity to all Tehsils
The second programme aims to extend the reach of Optic Fiber Connectivity to un-served Tehsils. Given below are the optic fiber projects being run in Balochistan:

Un-served Tehsils in

necting 07 tehsils with optic fiber cable.

Un-served tehsils in Central Balochistan (Package 3)

USF signed another contract for subsidising optic fiber connectivity to the un-served tehsils of Central Balochistan and Punjab. Wateen Telecom will be paid Rs. 986 Million for laying more than 1,100 kms of optic fiber to connect 11 un-served tehsils (including 6 Tehsil HQ's and 5 other towns of Central Balochistan and 3 Tehsil HQ's and 3 other towns of Punjab). Around seven hundred thousand people who live in these Tehsils, will benefit from this project.

Un-served tehsils in Central Balochistan (Package 5)

Universal Service Fund awarded a contract worth Rs. 1.5 Billion to PTCL for providing subsidy for optic fiber connectivity to 12 un-served Tehsils in Central Balochistan.

Through this project, 786 Kms of Optic Fiber Cable will be laid to connect 12 unserved Tehsils of Bhag, Sanni, Dera Bugti, Phelawagh, Sui, Gandawa, Jhal Magsi, Kahan, Kohlu, Maiwand, Chattar and Lehri in Balochistan. A population of nearly 1.5 million peo-

centres for boys and girls in Quetta have been converted into multi-purpose community tele-centres.

Existing computer centers all over the province will be converted to telecenters after the Pilot Project is successfully concluded.

Establishment of Multi-purpose Community Tele-centres

Universal Service Fund launched the pilot special-project to establish new Multi-purpose Community Tele-centres (MCTs) throughout the country. This project aims at introducing and promoting e-services in villages by taking Broadband there.

To begin with, Universal Service Fund will be running a pilot project which includes establishment of 20+ MCTs all over the country in order to study and address the problems and issues faced there. These are mauzas having minimum population of 5,000+, with availability of optic fiber within approximately 10 kms.

There will be at least 2 MCTs in each province and no two MCTs in the same Tehsil. Through this Pilot project, new MCTs will be established in Mastung and Pishin Tehsils.