

Programme Summary



What is the Shared Rural Network?

The Shared Rural Network (SRN) is a telecommunications programme which sees the UK Government working in partnership with the four UK mobile network operators - EE, O2, Three and Vodafone - to increase mobile connectivity in rural parts of the UK.

The programme will make 4G available to 95% of the UK, offering significant improvements to mobile coverage in rural communities. The mobile network operators (MNOs) expect this will extend mobile coverage to an additional 280,000 premises and create an additional 16,000km of the UK's roads, boosting productivity and investment in rural areas.

Why create the Shared Rural Network?

The Shared Rural Network was developed to improve digital infrastructure across the UK, ensuring that people and businesses have access to a reliable 4G mobile connection, regardless of their location. Good coverage and high-speed mobile connectivity are essential to a modern way of life, whether it's running a business, communicating with friends and family, working remotely, or accessing news and information instantly, there is a need for reliable, good quality coverage.

How is the Shared Rural Network structured and funded?

The Shared Rural Network will cost over £1billion to build and operate, with the UK Government contributing £500m and the mobile network operators (MNOs) contributing £532m. The Shared Rural Network is the first time that the UK Government and MNOs have come together to deliver a programme of this scale and impact, and will be delivered in two parts:

1. For those areas where there is some 4G coverage, but not from all four operators, known as partial not-spots, the MNOs are investing in extending coverage, by upgrading their existing networks. By closing the majority of partial not-spots across the UK, the programme will increase choice for rural communities and businesses and improve the experience for people travelling around the UK.
2. The publicly funded element will see new masts being built to target the hard-to-reach areas with no mobile coverage at all, known as total not-spots. The UK Government will pay for the infrastructure and masts to be built and all four MNOs will use the masts to provide coverage to their customers.

Together, the Shared Rural Network will increase the parts of the UK that get a mobile service from at least one operator to 95% and from all operators to 84%, enabling rural businesses and communities to thrive.



Who is responsible for the delivery of the Shared Rural Network?

The Shared Rural Network is a complex programme which requires a great deal of partnership working from a wide range of stakeholders, suppliers, and service providers. Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited (DMSL), a joint venture of all four mobile operators, manages and runs the Shared Rural Network programme and provides reporting and tracking information for the four mobile network operators, the Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and Ofcom.

DMSL will work with the mobile network operators, in partnership with the UK Government, to tackle the total not-spot areas; and the industry led part of the programme addressing the issue of partial not-spots is being delivered directly by the four mobile network operators.

All the work undertaken as part of the Shared Rural Network programme is regulated by Ofcom, with regular reporting throughout the life of the programme to ensure agreed obligations and targets are met.

What are the benefits of the Shared Rural Network?

The benefits of reliable 4G mobile connectivity are far reaching and have positive impacts on many aspects of day-to-day life. There are many personal and commercial benefits, as well as positive impacts on healthcare, education, tourism, remote working, and accessing online services, to name a few. The Shared Rural Network will help those who live and work in rural communities to achieve their full potential through improved mobile connectivity.

