

## Step 4

# Establish Project Objectives and Service Areas

Setting project objectives, or reviewing objectives already established, is the starting point for a needs analysis. From these objectives, areas and locations for service can be determined. This section deals with typical project objectives and presents a method for selecting prospective areas for service.

### 4.1 Project Objectives

The project objectives provide an initial focus by defining the following:

- areas or types of areas to be served;
- quantity of service (the number of new lines, degree of demand to be satisfied, desired penetration to be achieved, or other indicators);
- types of subscribers to be served (residential, business, pay, public call office); and
- types of service to be offered (individual line service, party-line service, voice band data, medium-speed data, telex/gentex, facsimile, mobile, etc.).

Figure 4.1 outlines typical considerations used to establish project objectives. It shows that the objectives are shaped by considering all relevant high-level policies, issues, and needs. Policies and development plans may be from national ministries or from the telecommunication administration. They may state rural telecommunications needs in terms of specific objectives, or they may give broadly defined guidelines and priorities.

Broad guidelines could dictate general improvements in service availability, service quality, and economic efficiency. Project objectives that are more specific might be similar to some of the following typical sample statements:

- Provide service to all communities with a population over 10 000.
- Increase telephone penetration in the rural sector to 1 telephone per 1000 persons.

- Provide one public call office (PCO) for every 10 000 persons in the rural sector.
- Provide an accessible telephone within 10 km of all rural inhabitants.
- Provide ordinary telephone and telex service only.

In view of the high investment cost and low financial return of most rural telecommunications programs, these objectives will likely be justified by expected socio-economic benefits.

Generally, initial rural programs are designed to provide only basic services, so that budgets can provide as much service (and hence value) as possible.

If clear objectives are not handed down from the appropriate level of authority (ministerial or corporate planning), these objectives have to be formulated and approval for them sought from the appropriate level before continuing.

### 4.2 Service Locations

Unless the specific rural locations to receive new or expanded service have been determined at a higher level of authority, prospective areas for service have to be determined.

The following is a general method for developing a relatively detailed inventory of areas requiring service. This inventory can be divided into priorities and can thus form the basis of a long-range rural plan. The inventory may be periodically updated and projects generated from it.

1. Develop a selection criterion based on the rural program objectives.
2. Prepare worksheets that feature the characteristics relevant to the selection criterion. Figure 4.2 shows a typical worksheet.