

■ Rural telecommunications can help reduce costs in all sectors and, in particular, improve the supply and delivery of public services in the fields of health, education, and agriculture.

A wide range of sectors can benefit, including agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, manufacturing, infrastructure (for example, power, meteorology, civil aviation, and public works), banking and financial services, transportation in all its aspects, commerce, tourism, administration, health, and education.

External benefits of telecommunication services are therefore substantial. The fact that benefits are difficult to quantify should not obscure their existence. Once they have been recognized, appropriate policy instruments must be developed to encourage telecommunication infrastructures in rural areas. Relevant observations about socio-economic benefits that could occur should be included in project proposals and feasibility analyses, and decision makers should allow for cross-subsidization and concessionary terms of financing.