

# Infrastructure Policy

AFFORDABILITY REPORT 2020 THEMATIC BRIEF



The *Affordability Report's* **infrastructure policy** cluster measures the administrative rules that govern the towers, cables, and other physical parts of the broadband network. The policy survey focuses on two specific parts – the rights of way and infrastructure sharing regulations – to understand where either might become a barrier to network deployment and expansion.

Clarity is key to these regulations. Clear, simplified, and harmonised rules on the public rights of way improve the accuracy of the cost estimates of network upgrades and expansions and provide greater certainty on the return on investment for a network operator. With infrastructure sharing regulations, smaller operators can have clear expectations on how to participate in the market and interact with the infrastructure of incumbent competitors in the market. In combination, these policies influence how readily different network operators can provide coverage across a market, which in turn affects the level of market competition.

## Uganda

↑ Together with regular industry consultations, the Ugandan regulator made [developed new infrastructure sharing regulations](#) to support the country's growing mobile sector and reduces infrastructure conflicts through its new [infrastructure exchange platform](#).

## Peru

↑ With [innovation-friendly policies](#), a public-private partnership was able to [deploy new OpenRAN technology to extend coverage to an additional 4,000 rural and remote communities](#) across Peru.

## India

↑ India's [enabling regulatory approach to passive and active infrastructure sharing](#) reduces costs for operators and enables rapid deployment of mobile services.

## Kenya

↓ [Infrastructure sharing rates underwhelm](#), and the dominant Safaricom uses its incumbent status as market advantage. Draft regulations from the regulator remain yet unenacted.

## Guatemala

↓ [Little harmonisation exists](#) between national and local levels on public rights of way and intervention into infrastructure sharing disputes is limited in the Guatemalan market, discouraging network deployment in more difficult terrain.

## Philippines

↓ The Filipino regulator has [deferred infrastructure sharing regulations as a non-priority](#). Without tangible action from the regulator, the market will continue to struggle without additional clarity.

## Infrastructure policy sets the baseline for market competition. More sharing leads to higher competition.

Overall, infrastructure policies remained consistent across many of the markets covered in the Affordability Report. However, some countries stand out for their achievements and developments in recent years.

New sharing regulations have been introduced in Ethiopia, Uganda, and the DR Congo since 2018. These represent major shifts in the development of the regulatory environment in these countries. With stronger clarity around infrastructure sharing, multiple network operators can compete – and [consumers can reap the benefits of market competition](#).

Exceptionally positive practice comes from projects like the [OpenRAN](#) deployments in Peru and Ghana. In Peru, the collaborative project, labelled [Internet para Todos](#) (Internet for Everyone), has [expanded internet access into historically underserved and hard-to-reach rural areas](#). GIFEC, the Ghanaian Universal Service & Access Fund, has committed funding to [support the deployment of 2,000 new OpenRAN sites](#) to provide network coverage through multiple providers in unserved and underserved areas in the country.

A lack of robust policies in other countries has impeded progress. Limited regulations in Sri Lanka that cover only towers leaves much of the sector relying on out-dated policies. The policy scores in Kenya similarly faltered as sharing regulations were held up in draft stages. In Guatemala, a lack of clarity around infrastructure sharing impedes healthy competition in that country's telecommunications market.

POLICY LEADERBOARD		(/10)
1st	Colombia	8.3
2nd	Peru	8.3
3rd	Mexico	8.0
4th	India	7.0
5th	Uganda	7.0
6th	China	7.0
7th	Argentina	6.5

### A4AI's Policy Recommendations –

- 1 Support and mandate government ministries to collaborate in dig-once policies that enable savings in large public works projects.
- 2 Enact and regularly update infrastructure sharing regulations that encourage fair access and enable market competition.
- 3 Use publicly-funded backhaul projects as interconnective roots to support community networking and smaller operators.