



FIRST OVERVIEW OF KEY INITIATIVES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The COVID-19 virus has presented a stress test for governments worldwide, with the Internet playing a crucial role in keeping critical infrastructure and resources connected and available.

For instance, reliable, high-speed Internet is key to ensuring that hospitals and medical institutions have access to global information networks and resources necessary to fight the virus. Broadband connectivity is also now absolutely crucial for educational institutions and businesses to continue to provide essential services.

The unprecedented global health emergency is taxing networks and platforms to the limit, with some operators and platforms reporting demand spikes as high as 800%.

Through ITU's Global Network Resiliency Platform (#REG4COVID, available at: <https://reg4COVID.itu.int/>) we have collected experiences, ongoing initiatives, and innovative policy and regulatory measures designed to help ensure communities remain connected, that we support one another, and that we harness the full power and potential of ICTs to save lives. The platform includes a collection of regulatory practices and lessons learned in keeping the networks the whole world is now relying on up and running as well as examples of how key public and private sector stakeholders from countries across the world are working together to meet unprecedented demand – and identified.

ITU's Global Network Resiliency Platform also recently launched discussion boards where the regulatory community can actively discuss experiences and solutions – you can register here: <https://reg4COVID.itu.int/>.

This Paper gives a short overview of initiatives and will form the basis of further analysis and discussion papers to help countries in their response to the COVID crisis.

1. Key short term regulatory initiatives

Initiative	Description
Increasing Broadband capacity and speeds	Regulatory bodies have been encouraging MNOs to increase broadband speeds for customers to ensure quality of service (QoS) is maintained.
Providing free services to customers	Regulators have also supported other initiatives such as free access to educational websites as well as free data allowances to citizens.
New Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) networks	4G/5G FWA has been used in some areas to quickly deploy necessary wireless broadband infrastructure. The need for improved connectivity is due to the need to quickly augment coverage and capacity near health care facilities and/or over cities and urban/suburban areas which may be subject to social distancing requirements.
Allowing more flexible IMT spectrum use	<p>Policymakers and regulators have engaged in responses designed to grant permanent or temporary IMT spectrum licenses in the midst of the pandemic. Such responses typically involve allowing the use of either vacant spectrum or unused spectrum of existing licensees.</p> <p>These additional IMT spectrum licenses may facilitate operators providing their customers with greater network access or improved quality of service.</p>
Network Management	<p>Three forms are common:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Voluntary</i>: Telecom regulators are asking operators to take part in pledges or initiatives to maintain network connectivity and help customers cope with the coronavirus outbreak. Typically, these initiatives are not government mandate, but a voluntary measure on the part of providers. • <i>Mandatory</i>: A smaller number of regulators have also implemented mandatory measures requiring telco cooperation in enhancing network infrastructure, ensuring quality of telecommunication services, etc. in order to address the effects of the pandemic. • <i>General</i>: There has also been a regulatory trend towards publishing new guidelines or revising existing ones to better handle congested and overloaded networks
Government subsidised broadband services	In a small number of countries, Governments have subsidized wireless broadband services to support the costs of consumers working and studying from home.

Initiative	Description
Generally easing regulatory requirements on licensees	Government and regulators have taken steps to minimize the regulatory and reporting obligations on licensed operators.
Addressing fake COVID-19 news initiatives	A number of countries have promulgated rules addressing fake news in relation to COVID-19 including the link of 5G to the coronavirus
Tracking application developments	A number of countries have created or are in the process of creating tracking applications in order to track the spread of COVID-19. Apple and Google have also announced its partnership to develop a contact tracing technology to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

2. Short-Term Commercial Initiatives by operators

Initiative	Description
Additional Data	Many mobile network operators (MNOs) are offering to provide its customers with additional data as businesses and schools across the world transition to working remotely, due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
Going digital in terms of recharges etc	Facilitate prepaid mobile recharges being made online rather through physical scratch cards etc to improve connectivity during any lockdowns
Free access to online learning resources	In order to support distance learning and home-schooling during school closures, access to remote learning opportunities and educational platforms has been made available at no cost by a number of operators.
Facilitating mobile money transactions	Banks and telecommunications companies are encouraging consumers to avoid cash payment in favour of digital transactions to avoid the spread of the coronavirus.
Increasing Broadband Speeds	Operators are upgrading Internet speeds – including transmission and backhaul capacity - to better accommodate the unprecedented number of people working and learning from home which has been up to a 70 percent in certain country markets.
Free access to health/government information	MNOs are providing free access to information contained in government and social welfare sites, as well as to websites containing health information relevant to coronavirus crisis.
Providing other free services	MNOs have also commenced a variety of other initiatives for their customers, at no extra cost. These include free access to networks and waiving overcharge fees.

3. Key Initiatives by Content Providers and Online Providers

Initiative	Description
Lifting time limits in video calls	Zoom has lifted time limits on its video calls for the free versions in China, as well as for schools in Japan, Italy, and the US, by request. ¹
Range of free services including but not limited to:	<p>Microsoft is offering anyone its premium version of Teams for free for six months and has lifted existing user limits on its free version. The premium Teams product was already available for no extra cost to those who pay for the Office Suite, and Teams had already been free for many schools.²</p> <p>Google announced that it would offer its enterprise videoconferencing features — for example, larger meetings of up to 250 people and the ability to record — for free to G Suite and G Suite for Education customers through July 1, 2020</p> <p>LogMeIn is making "Emergency Remote Work Kits" available for free for three months. Those kits are designed for nonprofits, schools, and health care organizations that aren't already customers. The kits include GoToMeeting, GoToWebinar--where users can host presentations for up to 3,000 users--and LogMeIn, which provides remote desktop access from numerous devices.³</p> <p>Cisco is offering the free version of its Webex service with no time restrictions. In addition, it will allow up to 100 meeting participants and has added toll-free dial-in features with a 90-day license for businesses that are not already customers.⁴</p> <p>Slack already offers a free tier, but the company is offering live Q&A and webinars to get the influx of new users up to speed.⁵</p>

¹ <https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/3/11/21173449/microsoft-google-zoom-slack-increased-demand-free-work-from-home-software>

² Ibid.

³ <https://www.inc.com/jason-aten/these-5-tech-companies-are-providing-free-remote-working-tools-during-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/demand-for-microsoft-google-and-zooms-video-conferencing-software-surges-amid-the>

SUPPORTING APPENDIX

1. Short-Term Regulatory Initiatives

Initiative	Country	Examples
Increasing Broadband Speeds	Israel	The MOC has <i>inter alia</i> : (i) expanded connectivity between infrastructure providers and providers of retail services to end-users. (ii) Expanded connectivity between local providers and submarine cable operators, and (iii) Working with the Israeli Internet Association to expand connectivity to the Israel Internet Exchange (IIX).
	Lebanon	The Communications Minister announced the government’s intention to double the speed of the Internet and consumption limits for Internet subscribers through the end of April
	Qatar	CRA State of Qatar coordinated with telecom service providers to double the speed of Internet for residential and business customers and ensured telecom networks continuity without affecting QoS. ⁶
Providing free services to customers	Azerbaijan	The short number “8103” was allocated in order to provide the service of obtaining permission to leave private houses and apartments by sending an SMS to a short number. This number was approved in telecommunication operators networks and SMS are provided for free of charge.
	Dominican Republic	The resolution published by INDOTEL provides that the user's or consumer's telecommunications services may not be suspended or cancelled, as long as the state of emergency lasts. In that same period and for 5 days after its termination, the document prohibits the generation of late payment charges or delay in the payment of telecommunications services.
	Egypt	NTRA agreed with the 4 telecom operators, in coordination with the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), on granting 3,000 minutes and 10 gigabytes per month, for free, for all mobile networks, to all doctors, nurses, administrative personnel and staff working in the isolation hospitals for COVID-19 patients, nationwide.
	Kuwait	Communication & Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) has provided additional free services and frequencies to mobile companies & main ISP’s and in return the companies have provided 5GBc of Internet and local free calls daily to their

⁶ <https://cra.gov.qa/press-releases/impacts-of-covid-19-telecom-sector-helps-in-reducing-direct-communication-between-individuals>

Initiative	Country	Examples
		customers within the 3 networks for a period of one month starting until 20 April 2020 due to the coronavirus
	Iraq	The Iraqi Ministry of Telecommunications has announced that in order to facilitate the use of voice connectivity, they will ban all roaming charges on cellular calls, and require a 50% reduction in tariffs for local voice telephony and 25% reduction for international voice telephony
	Japan	The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan requested four associations related to telecommunications carriers to extend the payment deadline for fixed-line and mobile phones due to COVID-19.
	Malaysia	The Government has mandated that MNOs provide 1 GB of wireless data per day free to their customers.
	Paraguay	ONATEL, as Telecommunications Regulator of the Republic of Paraguay, has inter alia has granted the special service number 154 for the National Contingency Program COVID-19, the operators have facilitated the navigation without data consumption of the official pages of the Ministry of Health and the WHO, and it has collaborated for Service Providers to send free text messages to their users with the warnings and recommendations of the Ministry of Health.
	Qatar	The CRA Qatar coordinated with telecom service providers to double the speed of Internet for existing residential customers and double the mobile data for residential and business customers, free of additional charges
	Saudi Arabia	The Communications and Information Technology Commission in Saudi Arabia has announced zero-ratings on educational platforms as well as approved educational and digital health platforms
	Vietnam	The Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC) Viet Nam is accordance with the Prime Minister's Directive No. 16/CT-TTg dated on March 31, 2020 on the implementation of some urgent measures to mitigate, prevent and combat COVID-19 pandemic, all mobile services suppliers to provide free data access fees for students and teachers when implementing distance learning programs in education and training. Further, all telecommunications companies to support the Ministry of Health to deploy a remote health care system to nearly 14,000 health facilities to reduce the burden of direct medical examination and treatment at hospitals.

Initiative	Country	Examples
	Uganda	Telecom operators to waive transactional charges on Mobile money transfers in order to encourage more cashless transactions
New Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) networks	China	China Telecom was tasked with the deployment of 5G network at the Wuhan Leishenshan Temporary Hospital. This was done within 24 hours and provided high-speed 200 Mbps plus services with stable Wi-Fi coverage for 25,000 users involved in telemedicine, health records, monitoring and related fields.
	Oman	As part of a range of measures the TRA-Oman allowed licensees to provide telecommunications services by activating the wireless broadband service through WFBB-LTE-FDD using the 4G frequencies that were temporarily licensed for the mobile telecommunications services. ⁷
Allowing more flexible IMT spectrum use	Australia	To ensure citizens who only have access to 3G mobile technology do not lose access to the quickly diminishing 3G network, the Australian government has also asked operators to keep the system running at a time in which it is being slowly dismantled to make way for 5G
	Cape Verde	ARME allocated additional spectrum to mobile communications operators, at no additional cost, as long as this COVID-19 situation continues. ARME also authorised the implementation of technological neutrality in the 900 MHz band so that, and depending on the operators' needs, 3G could also be used.
	Ireland	The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) in Ireland is temporarily releasing extra radio spectrum in the 700 MHz and 2.6 GHz bands to provide additional capacity for mobile phone and broadband provision and allowing the use of 2.1 GHz for 4G and other technologies, rather than just for 3G.
	Israel	700MHz frequencies have been temporarily allocated to improve reception.
	Oman	As part of a range of measures the TRA-Oman offered licensees an opportunity to use additional frequency bands without obtaining radio license during this period, if necessary, to allow them to use the planned frequencies required for delivering services or connect the base stations. Further, licensed companies were offered additional spectrum,

⁷ <https://tra.gov.om/media-center/media-center/1848-notice-issued-by-tra-oman-on-the-measures-taken-by-the-sultanate-of-oman-to-guarantee-the-provision-of-telecommunication-services-limit-the-spread-of-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-and-mitigate-its-effects>

Initiative	Country	Examples
		especially in the C-band, to improve the quality of service and mitigate the pressure on the telecommunication networks.
	Panama	Panama assigned more radio spectrum temporarily to operators, helping to considerably increase the traffic of messages. ASEP authorized to provide free of charge (for 90 days) an additional 120 MHz of the AWS band to each mobile phone operator to support the increase in traffic on their networks.
	Portugal	Portugal’s national regulatory authority announced the suspension of a digital terrestrial television migration process that had been ongoing across their 700 MHz band. The justification provided was to ensure that no citizen would be left without access to a functioning television signal during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the process is expected to resume upon improved conditions related to the coronavirus crisis.
	South Africa	In April 2020, ICASA released plans to assign high-demand spectrum in the 700MHz, 800MHz, 2.3GHz, 2.6GHz and 3.5GHz bands to ease network congestion, maintain good quality broadband services and allow licensees to lower the cost of access to consumers during the country’s COVID-19 lockdown. As at 14 April 2020, it had received 35 applications.
	Trinidad and Tobago	TATT has assigned more spectrum to mobile operators, at no additional cost, for the next two months. It will consider an extension if necessary. ⁸
	US	FCC USA proposed new rules for the 6 GHz band, unleashing 1,200 Megahertz for unlicensed use - draft rules would provide a boost to Wi-Fi and other unlicensed uses while protecting incumbent services in the band.
	Yemen	The Ministry has indicated its readiness to grant additional temporary frequency packages to licensed mobile phone companies during the Corona pandemic.

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https://tatt.org.tt/DesktopModules/Bring2mind/DMX/API/Entries/Download?Command=Core_Download&EntryId=1336&PortalId=0&TabId=222%E2%80%8B

Initiative	Country	Examples
Government subsidised broadband services	Egypt	MCIT is supporting e-learning during the education suspension period, including increasing the download quota of home Internet packages by 20%, at a cost of EGP200 million (USD12.6 million), borne by the state, and enabling free browsing of educational platforms and websites, to ensure education is not affected. MCIT also enabled free access to the hotlines dedicated for the MoHP, and added 200 staff to increase the call receiving capacity.
	Thailand	The Thai MNOs are providing every Thai phone user with a national ID number (99+% of citizens) 10GB for free for a month. The Thai regulator, the NBTC through its Broadcasting and Telecommunications Research Fund (BTRF) approved allocating THB 3 billion (USD90 million) to support such assistance. ⁹
Generally easing regulatory requirements on licensees	Bahrain	The Authority has granted an additional two months to telecommunications companies to submit their financial documents without any fine or legal action.
	Belgium	BIPT extends the deadline for submitting applications for obtaining additional spectrum for 4G.
	Brazil	In support of mobile phone, pay TV and fixed Internet users, the IFT and operators agree to contingency measures by COVID-19 (Communiqué 36/2020). Circular issued by the Federal Telecommunication Institute to request the municipal and state authorities of the country to provide telecommunications and broadcasting concessionaires with the development and execution of actions aimed at the installation, operation and maintenance, both preventive and corrective, of their infrastructure; as well as authorizing, procuring and safeguarding their entry, exit and transit.
	Peru	The Ministry of Transport and Communications (MTC) of Peru suspended administrative procedures related to broadcasting and private telecommunications services, therefore, they will not be affected by the lack of compliance with obligations, during the State of National Emergency
Addressing fake COVID-19 news initiatives	Myanmar, Romania, UK etc.	Requirement to block fake news sites regarding COVID-19 including in relation to 5G
	South Africa	The Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies issued Electronic Communications, Postal and Broadcasting Directions imposing an obligation on broadcasting licensees are obliged to carry public service announcements related to the national effort

⁹ <https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/1890240/mobile-users-get-10gb-perk-from-april-10>

Initiative	Country	Examples
		to combat COVID-19 and its impact. Further, all Electronic Communication licensees, OTTs and ISPs have the responsibility to remove fake news related to COVID-19 from their platforms immediately after it is identified as such.
	Uganda	The Commission found it important to create a "Fact Checker" platform to help combat the false news and is encouraging the public to run the content through the platform before blindly sharing it to their contacts.

Initiative	Country	Examples
Voluntary Network management	Argentina	The National Communications Agency and the state telecommunications company Arsat agreed with the telephone and Internet providers to intensify joint work to ensure federal connectivity so that all parts of the country have guaranteed network service during preventive isolation and required. ¹⁰
	Austria	Austria's regulatory authority is allowing for certain bandwidth-heavy online services like video streaming to be throttled if need to ensure more essential services like government information portals can be transmitted at a constant speed. This is not being mandated due to EU regulation around net neutrality, and so it is up to operators and ISPs to decide if and when they will apply this measure (EU regulation does allow temporary exceptions to the net neutrality rule).
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA) inter alia appealed to the operators of public telecommunications networks and services to -Act jointly and cooperatively concerning technical support, elimination of interference and malfunctions, and capacity sharing if necessary and to maintain the current level and quality of services and to provide priority in traffic to the competent institutions, bodies, and organizations if requested, or at the request of relevant authorities, i.e., to provide priority access to emergency numbers.
	Brazil	The major telecommunications operator Telefonica has voluntarily offered to grant zero-rating for collaboration platform usage amongst corporate customers. One of their competitors, Claro, has voluntarily opened up their public Wi-Fi networks to everyone, including non-customers. This move came after the Brazilian regulator Anatel asked operators to voluntarily take such measures, which further included free SMS and zero-rating of certain applications that could help citizens cope with the COVID-19

¹⁰ https://www.enacom.gov.ar/institucional/acuerdo-para-asegurar-conectividad-entre-enacom-y-arsat-con-empresas-prestadoras_n2249

Initiative	Country	Examples
		outbreak. Anatel also requested companies to not terminate service for any customers due to inability to pay for bills.
	Cambodia	The telecommunication regulator of Cambodia has urged Internet operators to “broaden and effectively facilitate convenient connection and ensure proper backup to avoid interruption.”
	Chile	Ministerio de Transportes y Telecomunicaciones (MTT) of Chile activated a solidarity plan to guarantee connectivity during the COVID-19 outbreak. Telecommunications companies in Chile join the request of SUBTEL to establish measures in favor of users to address the COVID-19 contingencies. ¹¹
	Germany	The BNetzA published guidelines with solutions and measures for permissible traffic management to handle unexpected overload situations in the telecommunications network.
	Peru	The Peruvian regulator has requested citizens prioritize their use of Internet services for work, education and health purposes during working hours, and also encourages the use of instant messaging platforms to communicate to lighten the load of the network. They also included a plan to provide operators with more bandwidth to help operators ensure a continuity of services. The regulator has also requested – though not required – that heavy capacity streaming services only be used outside of the 8:00-18:00 time window
	South Africa	ICASA is requesting all network service providers to heed the call to enable the country to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, by facilitating easy and affordable (and/or free) access to data. In this regard, the Authority is engaging the sector on possible ways of radio frequency spectrum relief for the duration of the declared state of disaster to ease congestion, ensure good quality of broadband services, and enable licensees to lower cost of access to consumers (particularly in relation to education, emergency and other social services). Furthermore, to the extent that the licensees will wish to tailor packages (specifically data packages) to respond to the pandemic, the Authority will consider relaxation of the tariff notification filing requirements to enable speedy roll-out of such packages. ¹²
	Spain	The Government and the telecommunications operators sign an agreement by which they extend the measures to guarantee the connectivity of people and companies. Companies commit to make

¹¹ <https://www.subtel.gob.cl/mtt-activa-plan-solidario-para-que-los-usuarios-no-pierdan-la-conectividad-durante-la-emergencia-por-coronavirus/>

¹² <https://www.icasa.org.za/news/2020/icasa-engages-with-licensees-to-open-their-services-to-all-south-africans-as-the-country-fights-the-scourge-of-the-covid-19-pandemic>

Initiative	Country	Examples
		every effort to ensure connectivity, network monitoring and operation capabilities, and speedy response to incidents, especially with regard to networks supporting emergency services. ¹³
	US	FCC Chairman Ajit Pai recently announced the Keep Americans Connected Initiative. In order to ensure that Americans do not lose their broadband or telephone connectivity as a result of these exceptional circumstances, he specifically asked broadband and telephone service providers, and trade associations, to take the Keep Americans Connected Pledge. So far, more than 700 companies and associations have signed the Chairman's pledge to Keep Americans Connected. ¹⁴
Mandatory Network Management	Colombia	Through Decree 464 of 2020, where specific measures are adopted to guarantee that Colombians have access to communication services during the state of economic, social and ecological emergency, the national government determined the declaration of telecommunications, broadcasting services sound, television and postcards as essential, therefore, its installation, maintenance and operation must be guaranteed. ¹⁵
	Peru	OSIPTEL today ordered that companies operating public telecommunications services may not suspend or terminate such services for lack of payment while the State of Emergency decreed by the Government lasts. ¹⁶
	Poland	The President of UKE asks telecommunications operators to take the necessary actions to guarantee service continuity by preventing and removing the effects of network congestion resulting from increased demand during the SARS-CoV-2 virus outbreak. The regular ban on the use of non-standard traffic management measures is relaxed.
	Italy	The Authority has implemented art. 82 of the "Cura Italia" decree and adopted the first timely measures and initiatives for the market, aimed at enhancing the network infrastructures and guaranteeing their functioning and operability, improving their availability, capacity and quality.
	Vietnam	The Ministry of Information and Communications released Document No.1103 to demand that relevant organs ensure the quality and

¹³<https://www.mineco.gob.es/portal/site/mineco/menuitem.ac30f9268750bd56a0b0240e026041a0/?vgnnextoid=7537dfde518f0710VgnVCM1000001d04140aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=864e154527515310VgnVCM1000001d04140aRCRD>

¹⁴<https://www.fcc.gov/keep-americans-connected>

¹⁵<https://www.mintic.gov.co/portal/inicio/Sala-de-Prensa/Noticias/126323:Medidas-del-Gobierno-Nacional-para-garantizar-la-prestacion-de-los-servicios-de-comunicaciones-durante-el-estado-de-emergencia-economica-social-y-ecologica>

¹⁶<https://www.osiptel.gob.pe/noticia/np-resolucion-estado-emergencia>

Initiative	Country	Examples
		effectiveness of telecommunications, especially Internet connections, during the time of COVID-19 outbreak in Vietnam for operation and management tasks of state offices as well as teleworking of citizens
General Traffic Management	Germany	German BNetzA published guidelines with solutions and measures for permissible traffic management to handle unexpected overload situations in the telecommunications network during the COVID-19 outbreak.
	Poland	Pursuant to Regulation 2015/2120 of the European Parliament and of the Council, during such threats as the coronavirus epidemic, the regular ban on the use of non-standard traffic management measures may be reduced. The Regulation allows measures to be taken in order to preserve the integrity and security of the network, of services provided via that network and of the terminal equipment of end users; and prevent impending network congestion and mitigate the effects of exceptional or temporary network congestion. ¹⁷
	Portugal	Under the terms of the Open Internet Regulation (Article 3.3 of Regulation (EU) 2015/2120), operators are authorized to apply traffic management measures, to mitigate the congestion effects of the networks, exceptional or temporary, provided that equivalent categories of traffic treated in an equivalent manner.
Tracking applications	Australia	At 6pm on 26 April the Australian Government released the COVID-19 Safe application. The application uses Bluetooth technology to trace a person's 'digital handshake'.
	European Union	EU Member States are converging towards effective app solutions that minimize the processing of personal data, and recognize that interoperability between these apps can support public health authorities and support the reopening of the EU's internal borders.
	Uzbekistan	Ministry for Development of Information Technologies and Communications launched the website coronavirus.uz", which allows providing relevant information on COVID-19. The website provides information on epidemiological route for patients with confirmed infection and real-time data of infected citizens.

¹⁷ <https://uke.gov.pl/en/newsroom/ensuring-the-continuity-of-telecommunications-services-in-the-age-of-coronavirus%2c273.html>

2. Short-Term Commercial Initiatives

Initiative	Country	Examples
Additional Data Allowances	Australia	Australia's second largest telecommunications company Optus is offering one-off data quote boosts for the month of April. Telstra, another Australian operator, has also announced, they will be providing unlimited data at no additional charge for their home broadband customers for six weeks, and more data to use within a 30 day period for their mobile pre-paid and post-paid customers.
	Bahrain	Zain Bahrain has removed usage caps on all fiber broadband packages until the end of May
	Bolivia	Bolivia ENTEL national state-owned service provider is now offering low tariffs combinations in the wake of the COVID-19 emergency.
	Brazil	Claro has voluntarily increased data consumption limits for their users
	India	ACT Fibernet has announced unlimited data consumption for all subscribers for the month of March
	Lebanon	OGERO doubles free of charge, the ceiling of Internet consumption and speed for the unlimited packages.
	Portugal	MEO offered to its clients 10GB of mobile data and sports premium IPTV content, has created a dedicated COVID-19 channel in its SAPO portal and has partnered for the creation of the "SOS Vizinho" solidarity support line.
	Spain	Telefónica Spain announced measures related to COVID-19 by increasing, at no extra cost the GB enjoyed by the Fusion and Movistar mobile customers with an additional 30 GB every month, for two months. ¹⁸
	Sri Lanka	Based on TRCSL guidance all operators have agreed and now have a mechanism to provide emergency credit and extra talk time for prepaid customers who may face difficulty purchasing top-ups due to curfew. TRSCL advised operators to continue services for all consumers ensuring no service disconnections based on non payment and to extend a grace period until end of April. Hutch is offering a 25% discount on all Cliq data packages. Dialog Axiata and Mobitel are running offers to double your data with each data pack you purchase if you're a postpaid customer. Sri Lanka Telecom is offering unlimited data for its PEO TV app.

¹⁸ <https://www.telefonica.com/en/web/press-office/-/telefonica-announces-measures-related-to-covid-19>

Initiative	Country	Examples
	UK	Virgin Media's postpaid customers will be offered unlimited minutes to landlines and other mobile numbers, as well as a 10 GB data boost for the month at no extra cost. For broadband, any data caps on legacy products will be lifted. All operators have also committed to remove all data caps on fixed broadband services. They have agreed to offer some new mobile and home phone packages to help people stay connected. Some of these packages include data boosts at low prices and free calls from home phones or mobiles. ¹⁹ Some providers have agreed to work with customers who are finding it difficult to pay their bill, have committed to remove all data caps on fixed broadband services. These providers will also make sure vulnerable customers or those who are self-isolating receive alternative methods of communication where possible, if the providers cannot fix priority repairs with their broadband or home phone services.
	Uruguay	Antel has announced extra data for pre-paid and post-paid mobile, as well as extra data for fixed data services
Going digital in terms of recharges etc	India	Facilitate prepaid mobile recharges being made online rather through physical scratch cards etc. to improve connectivity during any lockdowns. Before lock-down, only about 35% of Airtel consumers were recharging digitally on a regular basis. Remaining 65% consumers were still dependent on retailers, most of which were now shut. To solve for this, Airtel accelerated its digital trajectory and moved from 35% to 70% online in a span of 10 days. This also involved Airtel extending airtime validity for over 80 million under-privileged customers during crisis period.
Free access by customers to online learning resources	Bahrain	Batelco offered free web browsing for customers on a number of sites for education purposes. The selected sites are Google Classroom, Schoology, Class Dojo, Microsoft Teams for Education, UOB website, Ministry of Education website and Polytechnic website. Free web browsing will enable open and free access to these sites without consuming customers' fixed home broadband allowances.
	Croatia	In Croatia, children will be able to watch Da Vici Learning. With its interesting shows, educational TV channel inspires viewers to both learn and have fun
	Poland	UKE prepared interesting educational materials for children and parents, during this challenging COVID-19 time.

¹⁹ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/features-and-news/broadband-and-mobile-firms-commit-helping-customers-during-coronavirus>

Initiative	Country	Examples
	Romania	Telekom Romania plans to offer free 4G Internet and licenses in the Adservio educational platform, to teachers, students and parents, by the end of the year.
	South Africa	Telkom in South Africa has announced it will zero-rate dozens of educational websites so that students can continue to learn while away from physical classrooms
	Spain	Telefonica's non-profit arm is planning to increase educational content through the online learning platform
	Turkey	Turkish Ministry of Education teamed up with TRT (Turkish National Broadcaster) and TURKSAT (Turkish National Satellite Operator) to create three TV Channels for broadcasting educational videos. This service is aimed to provide necessary education for elementary, middle and high school students in line with their school curriculum while they are staying home.
	Uzbekistan	IT Center Uzbekistan developed online lessons for distance learning in the field of information technology and posted on free of charge.
Facilitating mobile money transactions	Ghana	The mobile industry of Ghana has committed to collaborating with the Bank of Ghana to implement free mobile service transactions within certain bands to promote digital forms of payments
	Kenya	Airtel Kenya offers free transactions on Airtel money across all bands due to the COVID-19 outbreak, making possible for Kenyans to send and receive money for free. ²⁰
	Rwanda	In Rwanda, banks and telecommunications companies have engaged with the country's National Bank to enable free transactions for users for three months. In the same announcement from the National Bank, zero charges on push-and-pulls services between mobile money wallets and traditional bank accounts has also been established. Commission fees have also been removed for digitally-enabled and contactless payment assessment at the point-of-sale, while at the same the mobile money transfer limit cap has also been increased (at varying rates for different categories of customers). This series of decrees has significantly mitigated much of the extant obstacles to mobile money transactions
	Uganda	Airtel created Airtel Money In order to ensure the free flow of funds among loved ones and also ensure payment of bills and essentials is done remotely to avoid the need for physical cash.

²⁰ https://www.airtelkenya.com/Airtel_offer_free

Initiative	Country	Examples
		MTN customers can now send any amount of Mobile Money every day to other MTN MoMo customers free of charge.
Increasing broadband capacity and speeds	Costa Rica	Internet service providers including Kolbi Hogar and Kolbi Pymes are automatically upgrading download speeds to 50Mbps for customers currently on plans of 30Mbps or less
	India	Nationwide, ACT Fibernet has announced an upgrade to 300Mbps speed for users. Within Kerala, the state government asked ISPs to increase Internet speed by 30-40% of present capacity, which they've agreed to do
	US	Comcast has announced they will increase Internet speed for their package that targets low-income families
Free access to health/ government information	Bangladesh	Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC) has been mobilizing all community radios for developing and broadcasting awareness building programs on COVID-19.
	Bolivia	The state carrier, Entel Bolivia, is providing zero-ratings for access to health services
	Ghana	The mobile industry of Ghana has committed to zero-rating websites that provide COVID-19 awareness and safety protocols, and pledged to offer further packages for educational websites.
	Lao PDR	The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications in co-operation with a Lao ICT company recently launched an official website so the public can access factual information during the country's COVID-19 crisis. The site is an information source to distribute the government's orders, announcements, and measures to control the coronavirus pandemic.
	Paraguay	The Millicom telecommunications group is providing zero-rating for government communication channels and official information pages
	Uzbekistan	Ministry for development of information technologies and communications launched the website coronavirus.uz , which allows providing relevant information on the fight against Coronavirus infection in Republic of Uzbekistan:- epidemiological route for patients with confirmed Coronavirus infection COVID-19#- real-time data of infected citizens- other relevant information and advices to prevent the infection.
	UK	O2 has said all NHS UK and some social welfare websites will be 'zero rated', meaning any data used on these sites won't count towards a customer's monthly allowance, while it will make efforts to help those who are not able to pay their monthly bill.

Initiative	Country	Examples
Providing other free services to customers	Australia	NBN Co announced it will waive charges for additional capacity of up to 40 per cent to Retail Service Providers for at least three months to help them support Australian residential and business nbn customers. The additional capacity pricing relief will apply to all fixed line, fixed wireless and satellite nbn technologies. ²¹
	Canada	Shaw will provide free access to its Shaw Go WiFi network, which runs across Western Canada. It will give everyone, even non-Shaw customers, free and unrestricted access until further notice to its Shaw Go WiFi network hotspots.
	Egypt	In Egypt mobile operators have offered FWA packages during the coronavirus epidemic, with significant discounts of up to 50 percent for consumers.
	Guatemala	Tigo has pledged it will not make service cuts due to non-payment in both mobile and residential invoiced services. On the contrary, if mobile prepaid users are active and have a delay in the payment of 2 consecutive invoices, instead of making the service cut, they will be credited call minutes, text messages and pages to browse. ²²
	Thailand	AIS Thailand and Truemove have launched the FWA package, which supports such activity from home. .
	Uganda	MTN Uganda is offering day-time data bundle that is enabling Ugandans to stay on-line and work from home. Customers get 1GB of data at just Ushs 2,000 valid between 9 am and 5 pm.
	US	AT&T offers relief for U.S. customers by waiving domestic wireless plan overage charges for data, voice or text that are incurred because of the COVID-19 pandemic; and across the US, AT&T offers advanced capabilities and free smart phone devices to first responders and public safety agencies on FirstNet.

²¹ <https://www.nbnco.com.au/blog/the-nbn-project/coronavirus-covid-19-and-nbn-working-from-home-tips-and-faqs>

²² <https://ayuda.tigo.com.gt/hc/es/articles/360045620733-Medidas-sustitutivas-por-COVID-19-a-usuarios-Postpago-M%C3%B3vil%E2%80%8B>