



REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION

13-14 MARCH 2024 | PALAIS DES NATIONS | GENEVA

Rural Connectivity Armenia Project

Bridging the Digital Divide

Kristine Gyonjyan
Director, Union of Operators of Armenia

Rural Connectivity Armenia Project

Bridging the Digital Divide



Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the critical significance of the Internet, reshaping our methods of work, learning, and communication

36.85% of Armenian population lives in rural areas

100% mobile connection coverage. Thanks to 4G license buildout obligations, most Armenians have access to 4G networks, but still there is a place to grow

66.5% broadband network coverage

Rural Connectivity Armenia Project

Bridging the Digital Divide



Bridging the Digital Divide in Armenia



- **Equal Opportunities for All Citizens**
 - Commitment to providing equal opportunities to every citizen of Armenia.
 - Ensuring equitable access to essential digital services.
- **Universal Access to High-Quality Internet**
 - Extending high-quality internet services to every corner of Armenia.
 - Including remote rural and mountainous areas in the coverage.

Rural Connectivity Project

Bridging the Digital Divide



Pilot Project: Bringing High-Speed Internet to Underserved Rural Areas

Addressing Connectivity Challenges

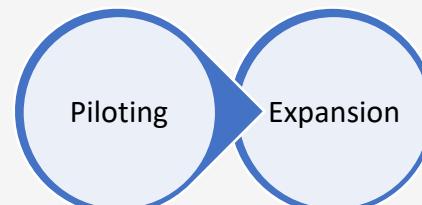
Objective of the Pilot Project

- Bringing high-speed internet to underserved rural areas.
- Targeting regions where conventional private sector providers face challenges in meeting telecom service demand.

Challenges Faced by Internet Service Providers

- Operating expenses surpass expected revenues over an extended period.
- Difficulty in meeting the growing demand for telecom services.

Project phases



Rural Connectivity Armenia Project

Bridging the Digital Divide



- Shaghap has 230 households
- Population 1023, Territory 6.2sq2
- Agriculture and Animal Husbandry
- Vedi – Shaghap Optical line – 17.9 km



Rural Connectivity Armenia Project

Bridging the Digital Divide



Community Benefits of High-Speed Internet Expansion

➤ High-speed Fiber Optic Internet for Every Household:

Enables access to reliable and fast internet connectivity, facilitating various online activities such as education, work, and entertainment.

➤ Expanded Cable TV Options:

Access to over 100 TV channels compared to the limited selection previously available, enhancing entertainment choices and cultural exposure.

➤ Retention of Young People in the Community:

Encourages young individuals to remain within the community by providing essential digital infrastructure and opportunities, reducing migration to urban areas.

➤ Stimulation of New Business Ventures:

Fosters entrepreneurship and economic growth within the community by providing access to global markets, promoting innovation and creating job opportunities.



Rural Connectivity Armenia Project

Bridging the Digital Divide



Benefits for Children

➤ Free of charge High-Speed Internet at School

Provides students with equitable access to digital resources and educational materials, regardless of socio-economic status.

➤ Establishment of Robotics Laboratory

Offers hands-on learning experiences in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), fostering creativity, problem-solving skills, and innovation among students.

➤ Enhanced Remote Learning Opportunities:

Facilitates remote learning and access to educational platforms, enables instructors from other schools to deliver lessons remotely, bridging educational gaps and ensuring continuity in learning.



Rural Connectivity Armenia Project

Bridging the Digital Divide



Invaluable Partnership We Made

State Bodies



MINISTRY OF HIGH-TECH INDUSTRY
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA



International Organization



Internet
Society



Operators & Local Community Authorities



Rural Connectivity Armenia Project

Bridging the Digital Divide



Director of the Union of Operator of Armenia Kristine Gyonjyan , was awarded a special prize of Connecting the Unconnected champion by the Internet Society for her significant contribution to the establishment and development of community networks.



Rural Connectivity Armenia Project

Bridging the Digital Divide



In 2023, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) signed a project document with the Ministry of High-Tech Industry of Armenia, providing support to expand connectivity to more communities and implement capacity-building activities in the newly connected areas to maximize the impact of high-speed internet.



Rural Connectivity Armenia Project

Bridging the Digital Divide



6 New Communities in Ararat Region

- Zangakatun
- Vardashat
- Urtsalanj
- Lanjar
- Lusashogh
- Lanjanist



Rural Connectivity Armenia Project

Bridging the Digital Divide



Capacity Building Activities

- Basic Digital Literacy trainings
- Internet Safety and Security
- Communication and Collaboration Tools
- Media Literacy and Critical Thinking
- Digital Entrepreneurship and Economic Opportunities
- Etc.

Rural Connectivity Armenia Project

Bridging the Digital Divide



Partnerships: Key to Success

Robust partnerships essential for project achievements.

Collaboration with diverse stakeholders drives progress.

Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals

Direct alignment with Sustainable Development Goals:

Goal 4: Quality Education

Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Supporting Government Vision

Enabling achievement of Armenian Government's broadband coverage target.



Thank you!

Kristine Gyonjyan
Director

Union of Operators of Armenia
Date 14 | 03 | 2024, Geneva