



POLICY IN ACTION

Spectrum Access and Pricing Key Factors in Gulf States' 5G Leadership

Market context

5G is well established in the Middle East, thanks to the pioneering efforts of countries including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. Their governments and regulators recognised the need for 5G

spectrum to be made available on favourable, investment-friendly terms, enabling mobile operators in these countries to deploy some of the world's first 5G networks.

Policy or regulatory action

GCC countries Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE are the 5G pioneers of the Middle East. In 2019 and 2020, these countries' governments and regulators offered spectrum for 5G in the 2.6 GHz band and C-band to accelerate deployment. As a result, mobile operators in these countries are deploying some of the world's first 5G networks. Specific actions included the following:

- **Saudi Arabia** — Auctioned 2.3/2.6 GHz and 3.5–3.8 GHz spectrum under 15-year licences
- **Kuwait** — Set an up-front fee of KWD 1 million (\$3.3 million) plus an annual recurring fee of KWD 2 million for 5G authorisation; accompanying spectrum was 100 MHz in the C-Band, but authorisation entitles MNOs to use new and existing spectrum
- **Bahrain** — Auctioned 2.6 GHz spectrum; MNOs expect to pay a sum of money for use of the C-Band for 5G, amount to be determined in 2022
- **UAE** — Made 5G spectrum available with no extra annual royalty fees
- **Qatar** — Set low annual fees with heavy roll-out and coverage obligations

Why this is good practice

These actions resulted in GCC MNOs deploying some of the world's first 5G networks. This enhances the

competitiveness of their economy and also sets the scene for more innovation and economic growth.

Read more at:
gsma.com/publicpolicy/policy-good-practice

Copyright © March 2022 GSMA