

Press release

OPTICAL FIBRE

Public-initiative network economics: Arcep publishes an operational maintenance cost model for public consultation

Paris, 24 March 2026

Arcep has been working with infrastructure operators and local authorities since 2024 to identify the key economic issues for public-initiative fibre networks in their operational phase, to obtain an objective account of the associated operational maintenance costs and to analyse the drivers of those costs.

Today, Arcep is opening a public consultation on an operational maintenance costs model for public-initiative FttH networks. It is also presenting its recommendations on the rules for factoring these costs into the access prices charged for ultrafast public-initiative networks.

The work was able to draw on multiple contributions

On 24 July 2025, Arcep launched an initial public consultation whose purpose was to provide a common analytical framework and to recover data generated by operators' experience, and thereby contribute to establishing an objective cost benchmark that is shared by stakeholders.

Forty three stakeholders – including operators, local authorities and federations – responded to the consultation, some of whom included detailed data, along with their analyses.

All of these contributions were examined by the Authority, and informed its work to identify a set of economic issues that are proper to public-initiative FttH networks, to define the scope of operational maintenance for these networks and, lastly, to design a model for estimating costs within this scope.

A benchmark model and rules for factoring costs into access prices

The contributions to the consultation being opened today will help in finalising a benchmark operational maintenance cost model for optical fibre networks being operated by an efficient infrastructure operator.

The draft model being published today for public consultation highlights cost drivers associated with the operation of public-initiative networks in the most rural areas. These higher costs in the least densely populated areas are due in particular to the need for longer trips to ensure network maintenance, lower network fulfilment rates, given the higher proportion of secondary residences, and greater exposure to the vagaries of weather, associated with a longer overhead network.

Arcep recommends that all of these costs be assumed by commercial operators (ISPs) when they are not covered by the prices currently being charged by infrastructure operators. The Authority is calling on all concerned stakeholders to undertake negotiations to this end.

This model and the recommended rules for recovering the associated costs seek to make it easier for contracting local authorities and Arcep to examine pricing policies. They are intended to serve as benchmarks for negotiations between infrastructure operators and ISPs. They will also help promote more fair and effective competition during the procedures for renewing public service contracts that will begin at the end of the decade.

Responses to the public consultation must be submitted by 22 May 2026

Associated documents

- [The public consultation](#)
- [Operational maintenance cost model for a public-initiative optical fibre network](#)
- [Responses to the public consultation held in summer 2025](#)

Arcep at a glance

The Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications, Postal Affairs and Press Distribution (Arcep), a neutral and expert arbitrator with the status of independent administrative authority (IAA), is the architect and guardian of internet, fixed and mobile electronic communications, postal and press distribution networks in France

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