Fibrus: factsheet

Deal information

Deal announced	August 2024
Sector	Digital
Location	Northern England
Counterparty	Fibrus Networks Ltd[i]
NWF Finance	£55m
Product	Debt

Summary

The National Wealth Fund is providing £55 million debt to support full fibre roll out to an additional 169,000 homes and businesses in the UK. The investment in Fibrus' rollout will improve connectivity in digitally underserved areas and create direct employment opportunities. Further, this project supports the Government's objective to improve access to gigabit broadband.

Sector context

The Government target is for at least 99% of UK premises to have access to gigabit capable broadband by 2030. The increase in demand for connectivity requires a transformation of the digital infrastructure on which the telecoms sector is built. As of October 2024, 85% of homes and businesses have access to gigabit-capable internet and over 71% have Fibre-to-the-Premises ("FTTP") based broadband[ii]. The NWF is supporting the Government's target by supporting full fibre rollout in BDUK 'white' areas (postcode areas whose premises have no gigabit network infrastructure, and no plans for any to be developed within 3 years)[iii].

Impact and additionality

This project supports Fibrus' rollout of FTTP across rural Cumbria and western Northumberland. This contributes to the NWF's strategic objectives because:

- The project supports the rollout of full fibre broadband to 169,000 additional premises of which approximately 71,000 (40%) are in postcodes defined by BDUK as 'white', indicating that they are unlikely to be served by commercial operators without intervention.

- This rollout in turn contributes to our regional and local economic growth (RLEG) objectives by supporting jobs and investment, boosting their competitiveness through better connectivity, productivity, and quality of life.
- Fibrus is creating network installation jobs in the region, as well as supporting staff in their head offices in Belfast.
- This project also aligns with our net zero mandate through greater resilience to climate change and lower emissions than energy intensive copper. Modern gigabit-capable fibre also delivers data with lower emissions released per data bit than outdated fibre[iv].
- NWF's involvement has crowded in private investment, mobilising £45 million of private capital in uncertain market conditions to invest in full fibre rollout that would otherwise be scaled back.

ESRG considerations

The project aligns with our ESRG framework. Fibrus has very strong ESG credentials with established policies. Furthermore, full fibre is resilient to climate change, and more efficient and future proof than copper.

Impact metrics

Impact	Metric
£1.425bn	Total Investment in Sector
234 FTE	Direct Jobs Created and Supported[v]
5.2 ktCO2e	Emissions[vi]
£45m	Private Finance Mobilised
169,000	Homes passed[vii]

[i] Fibrus Networks Ltd, Lanyon Plaza West Tower, 8 Lanyon Place, Belfast, BT1 3LP
[ii] https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/broadband-map#2/-37.5/51.3/allfttp/
[iii] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/project-gigabit-national-rolling-open-market-review-september-2023/outcome/closure-of-the-september-2023-national-rolling-open-market-review
[iv] Energy consumption of telecommunication access networks
[v] 129 FTE attributable to NWF finance
[vi] 2.9ktCO2e attributable to NWF finance
[vii] Rounded. 76,000 attributable to NWF finance.