

DoT has received 21 bids worth Rs 23.95 billion from telecom operators for setting up 8,000 telecom towers in rural India. They include service providers like Reliance Communications, Hutchison Essar, Bharti Airtel and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), and infrastructure service providers such as GTL, Quipo and I-Tel. The project, estimated to cost over Rs 30 billion, will be financed by the government's Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund. The final list of winners will be announced on March 26. At the end of the first round of bidding, Reliance Infrastructure, BSNL and GTL Infrastructure have emerged as the lowest bidders for setting up passive cellular infrastructure in over 200,000 villages with the support of the USO Fund.

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