



Delivering digital inclusion for all

The internet has made communication quicker, information more available, businesses more efficient, and education, entertainment and public services more accessible than ever before. It is driving economic growth and societal development across the world. Mobile has already connected over **3.5 billion people** to this opportunity and continues to lead efforts to close remaining coverage and usage gaps. Close collaboration and constructive partnership between industry, the development community, policymakers and regulators is key to ensuring no citizen is left unconnected.

The Opportunity



Mobile internet has become an essential

enabler for economic growth

and societal development and a key driver for achieving progress across all of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals



Mobile continues to

promote digital inclusion

by connecting more citizens to the internet everyday



The opportunity is for mobile to

connect the 4 billion citizens

who remain unconnected



Meeting this challenge is also a significant

commercial opportunity

for the mobile industry

What we need

There is a **'Coverage Gap'** of over 750 million people still not covered by a mobile broadband network. Key to extending networks will be reducing regulatory and cost barriers to deployment, including rural infrastructure costs, which can be twice as expensive with revenues up to ten times lower than in urban areas.

In addition, there is a **'Usage Gap'** of 3.3 billion people who have access to mobile broadband coverage but are either unable or unwilling to use it.

We need to focus on:



Accessibility

Facilitating access to mobile broadband networks, handsets, electricity, agents and formal IDs



Affordability

Tackling affordability including handsets, tariffs, data and transaction fees



Usability and skills

Improving usability of handsets and services, and building digital skills and awareness



Safety and security

Enhancing security and safety by addressing harassment, theft, fraud and data protection



Relevance

Promoting local, relevant content products and services

How to get there

Our top 3 recommendations for:



the mobile industry

1

Develop and invest in operating models and technology innovations that can help bring down the cost of coverage



development community

Embrace the critical role mobile internet can play in supporting progress towards all of the SDGs



policymakers and regulators

Develop a policy and regulatory framework that encourages investment, enables innovation and builds trust in the take up and use of new digital services

2

Focus on the development of relevant and usable content and services that will help drive adoption and use of mobile internet

Partner with the private sector on commercially sustainable and scalable solutions

Support mobile operators' efforts to extend coverage by providing affordable access to sufficient spectrum, removing obstacles to deployment, and promoting best practice taxation policies

3

Develop and support solutions that address the principal consumer barriers to mobile internet adoption

Design interventions with an understanding of the barriers to mobile internet adoption and usage in low- and middle-income countries

Promote the use of mobile and digital public services across all levels of government and society, and support the development of digital skills.



For more information, please visit the Connected Society website:
www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/connected-society

Increasing access to and adoption of the mobile internet for the underserved in low- and middle-income countries

The GSMA Connected Society Programme works with the mobile industry and key stakeholders to increase access to and adoption of the mobile internet, focusing on underserved population groups.

The unconnected population is predominantly located in low- and middle-income countries, typically on low incomes and lacking basic and digital literacy skills.

Women are disproportionately affected by these challenges. Mobile represents the best opportunity for the underserved to join the digital economy.

We work with the mobile industry to reduce the key barriers to connectivity with a particular (but not exclusive) focus on a number of underserved population groups: women, rural and low-income.



Our approach



Mobile operator support



Innovation Fund for Rural Connectivity
Digital skills projects



Insights



Industry leading research, data and case studies
Mobile Connectivity Index and Coverage Maps



Advocacy



Capacity building with regulators and policymakers
Convening National Dialogues for Digital Transformation in key markets