There are now more than 3.8 billion mobile internet subscribers globally, representing 49% of the world’s population. However, adoption has not been equitable, with mobile internet adoption standing at 26% in Sub-Saharan Africa at the end of 2019. The region accounts for almost half of the global population not covered by a mobile broadband network.

The GSMA Connected Society’s Mobile Connectivity Index (MCI) supports the mobile industry’s commitment to connect everyone and everything to a better future by measuring the performance of 170 countries – representing 99% of the global population – against the four key enablers of mobile internet adoption: infrastructure; affordability; consumer readiness; and content and services. The data the MCI provides can help focus the deliberate and strategic efforts that are required by the mobile industry, governments and the international community to accelerate mobile internet uptake.

The index is built up through 41 indicators feeding into 14 dimensions that are aggregated to give a score for each of the four enablers. Scores fall within a range of 0-100.

The GSMA Connected Society programme works with the mobile industry and key stakeholders to increase access to and adoption of mobile internet and all the benefits that it can deliver. Get in touch to find out more: connectedsociety@gsma.com
There has been a continued acceleration in mobile broadband coverage, as operators upgrade existing 2G sites to 3G and 4G (with 4G networks now covering almost half the regional population).

2019 marked the first year that there were more mobile broadband connections than 2G, as consumers benefitted from more affordable smartphones and smart-feature phones.

A large gender gap and rural-urban gap in mobile internet use persist, standing at 37% and 60%, respectively.

The biggest barrier to mobile internet adoption reported by consumers who are aware of it is a lack of digital skills, especially for women and rural populations.