



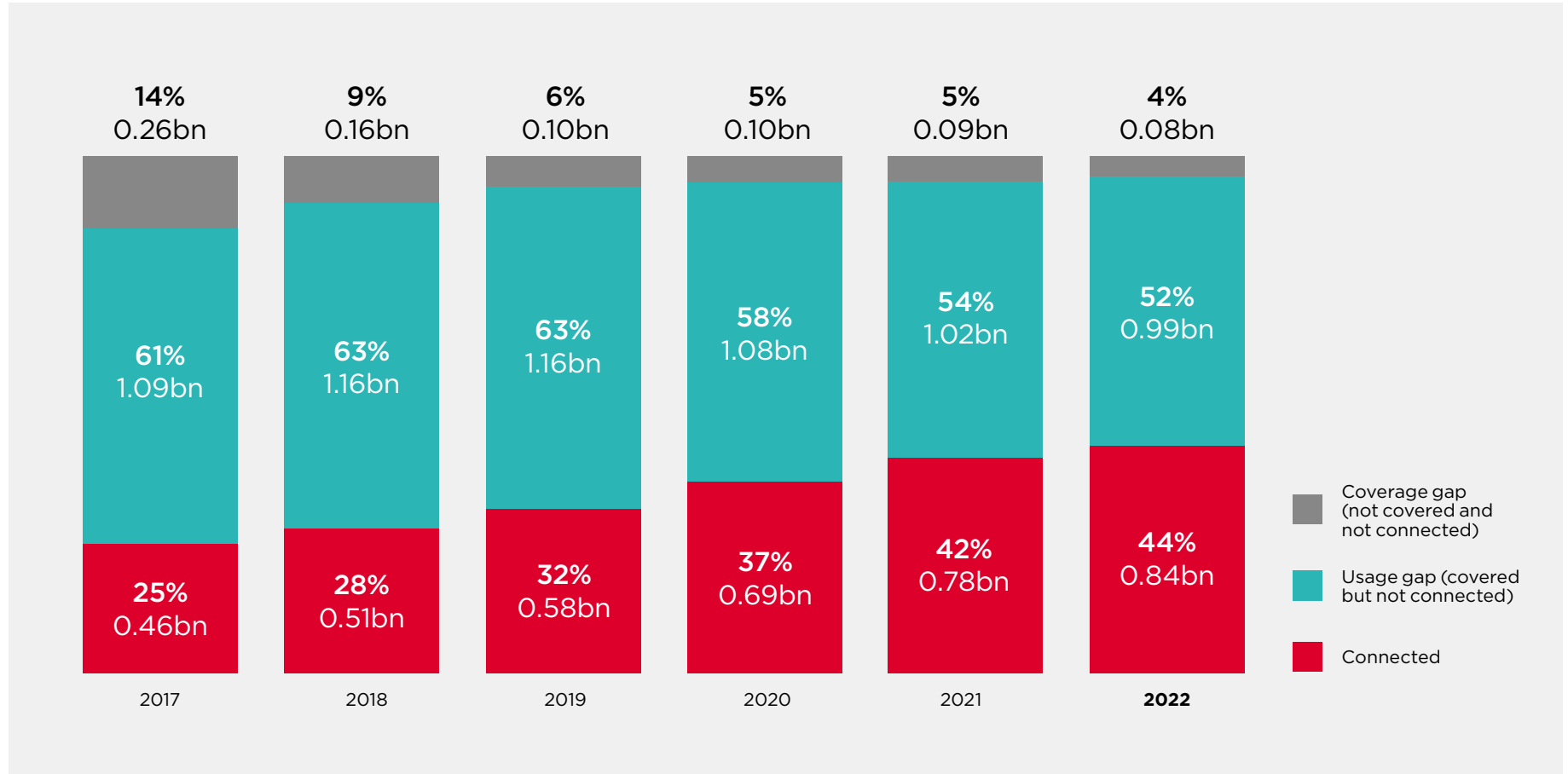
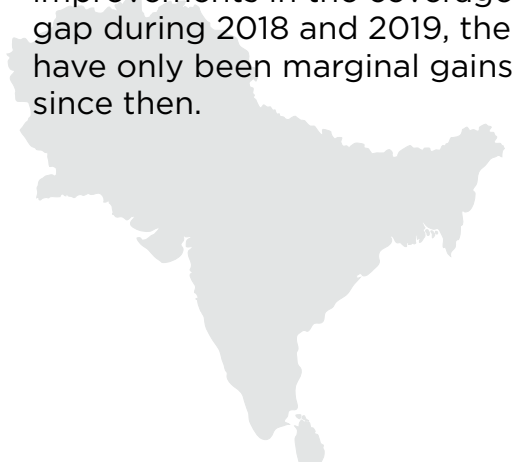
# The State of Mobile Internet Connectivity 2023

South Asia key trends

**GSMA**

# Mobile internet connectivity in South Asia

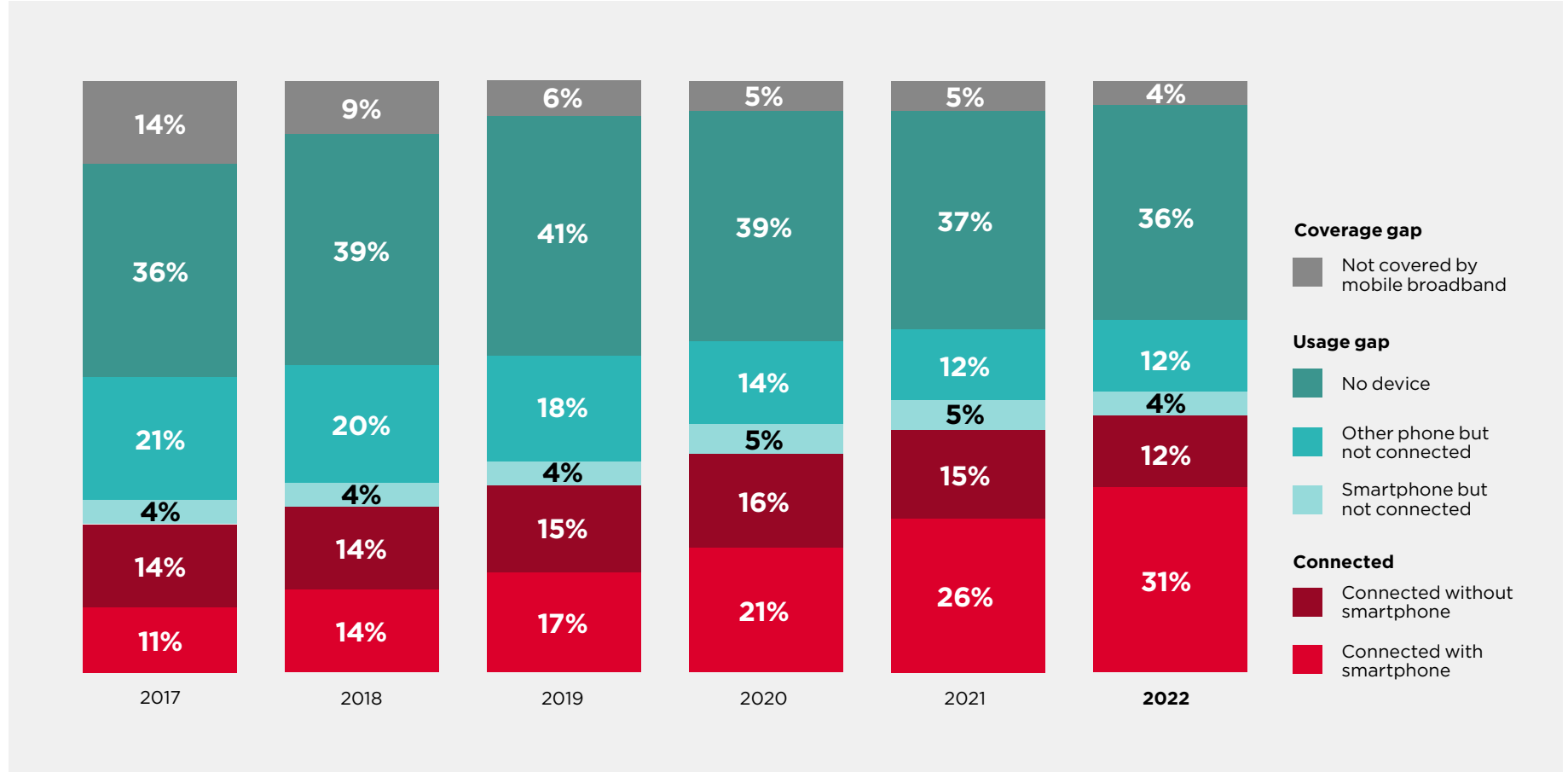
- There has been a slowdown in mobile internet adoption in South Asia, with only 60 million people starting to use mobile internet in 2022 compared to 90 million in 2021.
- There are almost 1 billion people covered by a mobile broadband network but not using it. This usage gap is 13 times larger than the coverage gap.
- Following significant improvements in the coverage gap during 2018 and 2019, there have only been marginal gains since then.



Source: GSMA Intelligence. 'Usage gap' refers to populations that live within the footprint of a mobile broadband network but who are not using mobile internet. 'Coverage gap' refers to populations that do not live within the footprint of a mobile broadband network (3G or above). NB: totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

# Mobile internet connectivity breakdown in South Asia

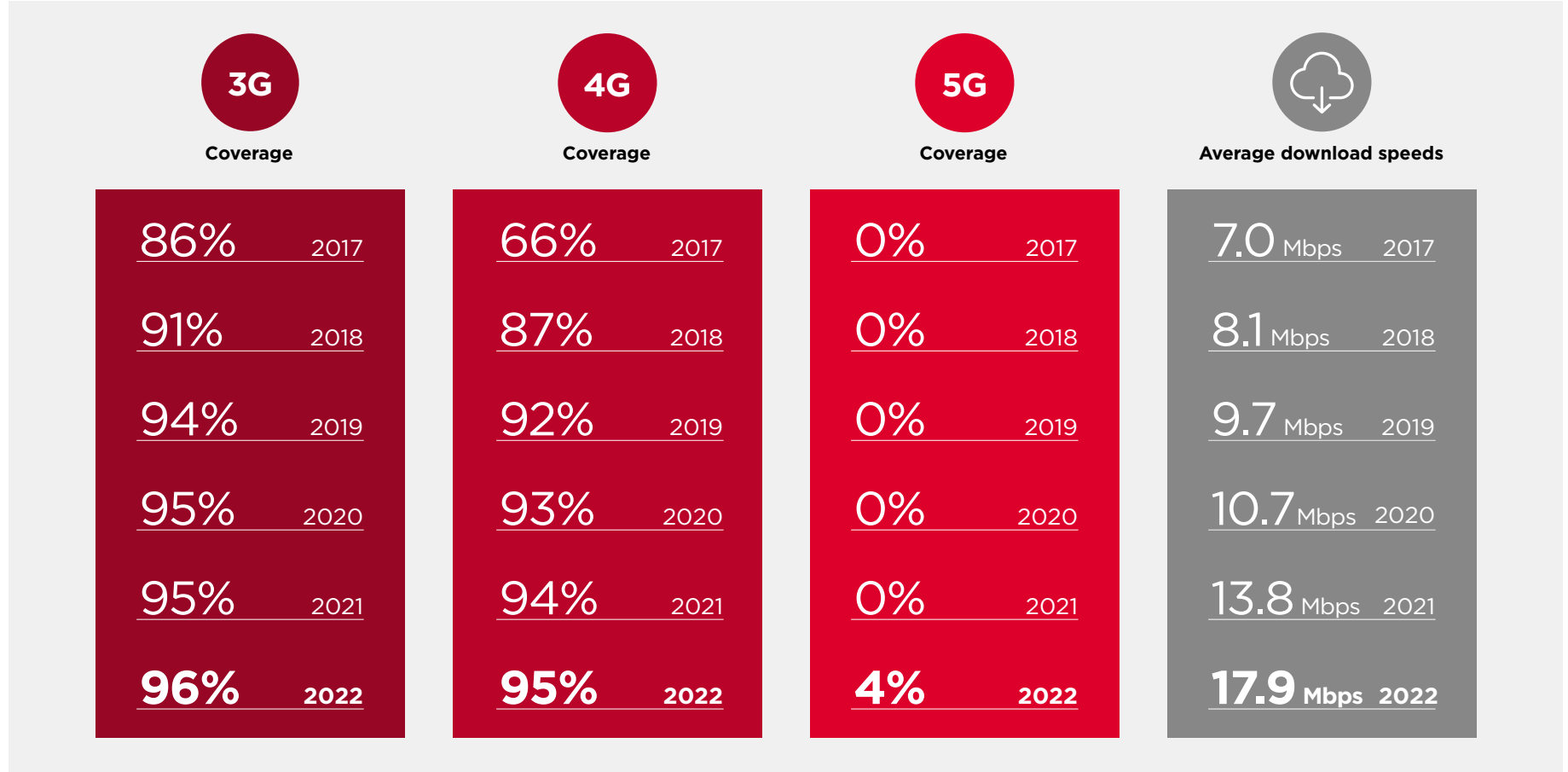
- ➔ By the end of 2022, 31% of the population in South Asia were using mobile internet on a smartphone.
- ➔ In South Asia, more than a third of the population has no mobile phone.



Source: GSMA Intelligence. 'Usage gap' refers to populations that live within the footprint of a mobile broadband network but who are not using mobile internet. 'Coverage gap' refers to populations that do not live within the footprint of a mobile broadband network (3G or above). NB: totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

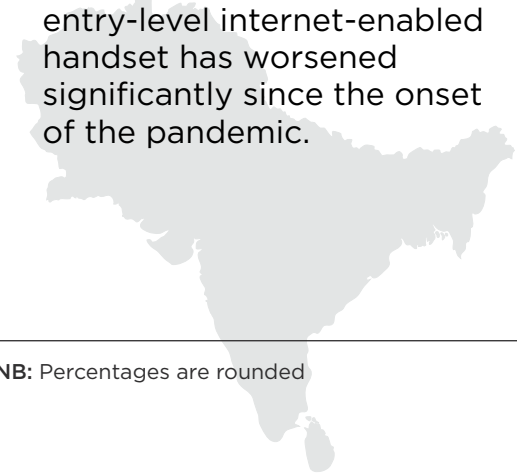
# Coverage and download speeds in South Asia

- 3G and 4G networks cover most of the population (96% and 95%, respectively).
- There has been a notably large improvement in network quality in South Asia, with download speeds increasing by 32%, from 2021 to 2022.
- 5G deployment has begun in South Asia, with 4% of the population now covered.

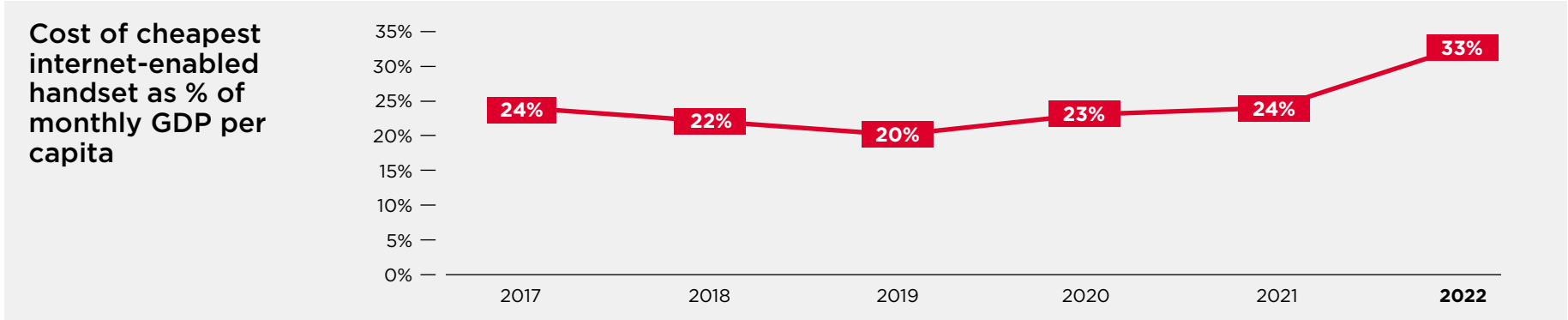
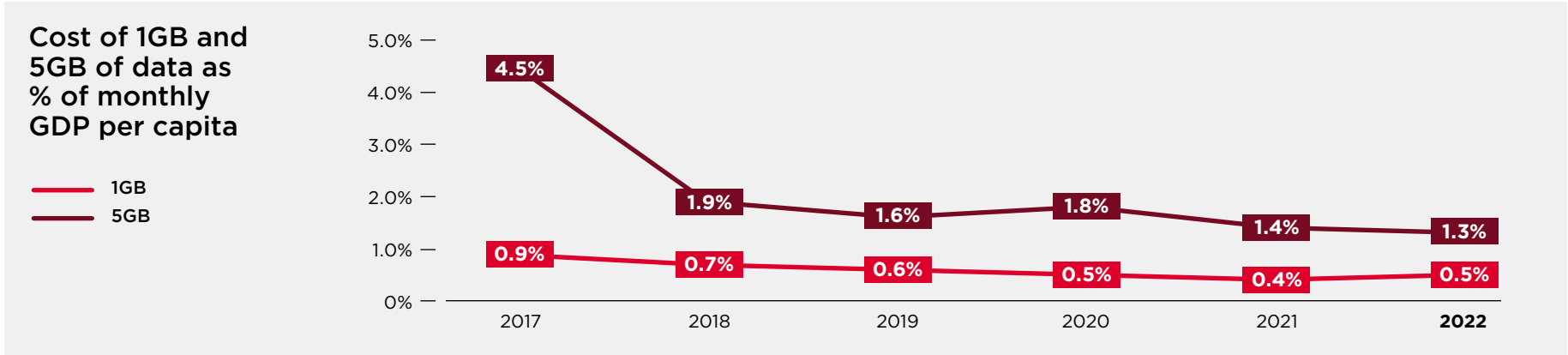


# Affordability of data plans and cheapest internet-enabled handsets across low- and middle-income countries in South Asia

- In comparison to other regions, South Asia has the most affordable data plans.
- In 7 of the 8 countries for which there is data, the cost of both a 1GB and a 5GB data package is below 2% of monthly income.
- The affordability of an entry-level internet-enabled handset has worsened significantly since the onset of the pandemic.



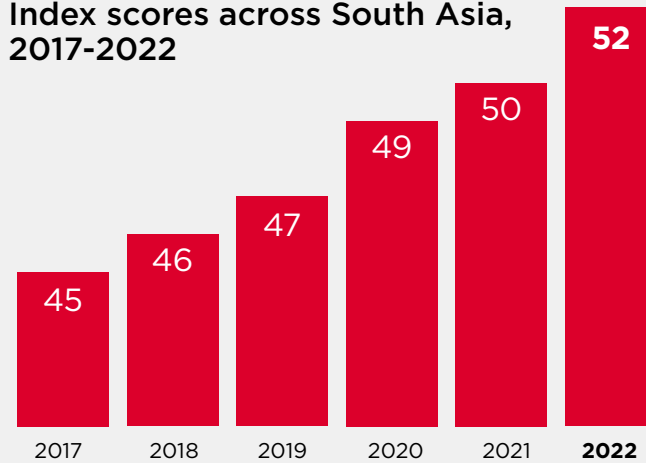
NB: Percentages are rounded



# South Asia Mobile Connectivity Index scores

The **Mobile Connectivity Index (MCI)** measures the performance of 170 countries against the four key enablers of mobile internet adoption: infrastructure; affordability; consumer readiness; and content and services. The index is built up through 32 indicators feeding into 11 dimensions that are aggregated to give a score for four enablers. Scores fall within a range of 0-100.

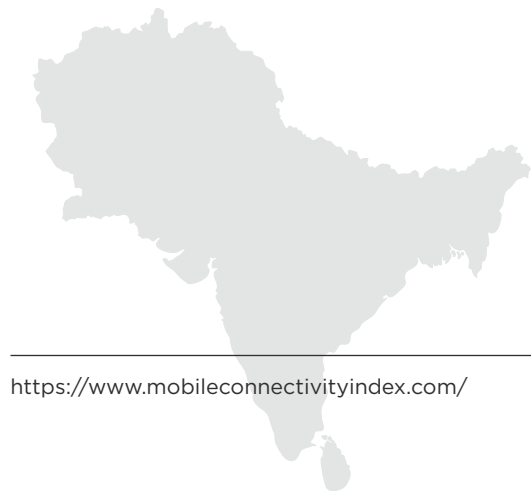
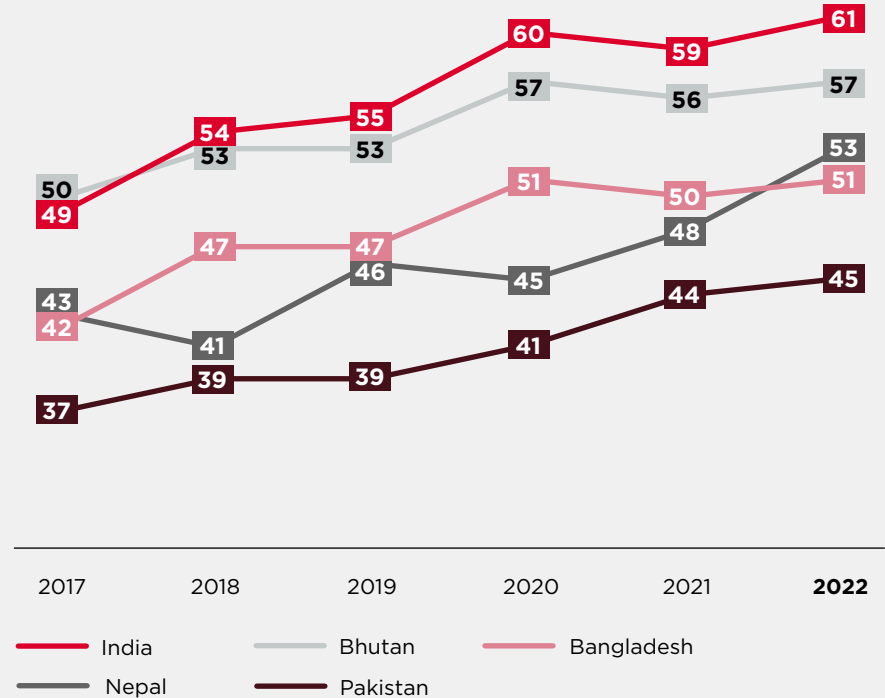
Average Mobile Connectivity Index scores across South Asia, 2017-2022



Countries at the top of the MCI in South Asia in 2022

1	India
2	Sri Lanka
3	Bhutan
4	Maldives
5	Nepal

MCI scores of most improved countries in South Asia between 2017 and 2022



<https://www.mobileconnectivityindex.com/>

## GSMA

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The GSMA is a global organisation unifying the mobile ecosystem to discover, develop and deliver innovation foundational to positive business environments and societal change. Our vision is to unlock the full power of connectivity so that people, industry and society thrive. Representing mobile operators and organisations across the mobile ecosystem and adjacent industries, the GSMA delivers for its members across three broad pillars: Connectivity for Good, Industry Services and Solutions and Outreach. This activity includes advancing policy, tackling today's biggest societal challenges, underpinning the technology and interoperability that make mobile work and providing the world's largest platform to convene the mobile ecosystem at the MWC and M360 series of events.

We invite you to find out more at [gsma.com](https://www.gsma.com)  
Follow the GSMA on Twitter/X: [@GSMA](https://twitter.com/GSMA)

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This material has been funded by UK Aid from the UK Government; however, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK Government's official policies.



## GSMA Connected Society

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The Connected Society programme works with the mobile industry, technology companies, the development community and governments to increase access to and adoption of mobile internet, focusing on underserved population groups in developing markets.

For more information, please visit  
[www.gsma.com/connectedsociety](https://www.gsma.com/connectedsociety)

To get in touch with the Connected Society team, please email [connectedsociety@gsma.com](mailto:connectedsociety@gsma.com)

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This document has been financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida. Sida does not necessarily share the views expressed in this material. Responsibility for its contents rests entirely with the author.



## GSMA Intelligence

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GSMA Intelligence is the definitive source of global mobile operator data, analysis and forecasts, and publisher of authoritative industry reports and research. Our data covers every operator group, network and MVNO in every country worldwide — from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. It is the most accurate and complete set of industry metrics available, comprising tens of millions of individual data points, updated daily.

GSMA Intelligence is relied on by leading operators, vendors, regulators, financial institutions and third-party industry players, to support strategic decision-making and long-term investment planning. The data is used as an industry reference point and is frequently cited by the media and by the industry itself. Our team of analysts and experts produce regular thought-leading research reports across a range of industry topics.

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