2019 Mobile Industry Impact Report: Sustainable Development Goals

Executive Summary

The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, uniting more than 750 operators with almost 400 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset and device makers, software companies, equipment providers and internet companies, as well as organisations in adjacent industry sectors. The GSMA also produces the industry-leading MWC events held annually in Barcelona, Los Angeles and Shanghai, as well as the Mobile 360 Series of regional conferences.

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GSMA Intelligence

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Table of contents

Forewords

A message from Mats Granryd, GSMA Director General

In 2016, the mobile industry took the landmark decision to commit fully to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Every year since, we have produced this report to monitor progress, showcase our success stories and identify areas where we can do better.

This year's edition reveals that the mobile industry once again increased its contribution across all 17 Goals in 2018 as a result of ever-increasing mobile broadband and smartphone adoption. This has allowed almost half the world's population to get online via mobile. Almost 1 billion people have begun using mobile internet services since 2015, gaining access to essential communications and a vast array of services that improve their lives on a daily basis.

To maximise our impact over the next decade, we need to bring the other half of the world online too. This isn't simply a case of building new networks; it's about ensuring that getting online is affordable, applicable and safe, and that everyone is equipped with the digital skills to do so.

Accelerating digital inclusion for all will play a key role in reducing inequalities and driving global prosperity. But economic growth cannot succeed without environmental responsibility. That's why this year's report highlights SDG 13: Climate Action and how mobile technology is providing the backbone to a modern, global economy as part of a sustainable, low-carbon – eventually zero-carbon – future.

Limiting warming to 1.5°C, which would substantially reduce the risks and effects of climate change, requires dramatic emission reductions by 2030 and the transition to a zero-carbon economy by 2050. Mobile operators are developing an industry-wide climate action plan, in line with the Paris Agreement, to achieve just that with regard to their own emissions. But there is also a unique opportunity for mobile to enable effective energy-efficient solutions across other sectors, which could ultimately drive a much greater impact.

This report outlines a number of examples of where mobile technology is already driving positive environmental change.

We should celebrate the strong progress we have made in contributing to the SDGs over the past four years. This has been achieved despite increasing political, social and economic upheaval in many places around the world, while the pace of technological change has required us to take on new responsibilities and respond to new challenges.

However, we must also recognise that we must do more, faster, if we are to achieve the 2030 SDG targets, in a little over a decade. We need to extend mobile connectivity to those that remain digitally excluded, and scale mobile-enabled solutions that can deliver measurable impact in tackling urgent global issues such as climate change.

By coming together, by collaborating across industries and across the public and private sectors, I'm confident we can deliver on our ambition.

Mats Granryd
Director General
GSMA

A message from the GSMA Board

On behalf of the GSMA Board, I welcome this report measuring our industry's impact on the world's most important to-do list, the Sustainable Development Goals. We are pleased to see inspiring efforts from operators all over the world to preserve our planet, protect the stability of societies and promote people's well-being.

Our industry has the power to change lives. More than 5 billion people are now connected to a mobile network, equivalent to roughly two-thirds of the world's population. Almost half the world's citizens also use their mobile phones to access the internet, providing them with access to a range of life-enhancing services in areas such healthcare, skills and education, and jobs. We are enabling digital birth registrations for millions of children who lack a formal identity and financial inclusion for the estimated 1.7 billion people excluded from the traditional banking system.

However, half of the world's population is still not connected to the internet. Our challenge is to bring these people with us and to ensure digital inclusion for all with special attention to the most vulnerable. We are making progress: from increasing mobile phone ownership among women to bringing support to more than 30 million people caught up in epidemics and natural disasters.

Our role is very important to reverse or slow the impact of climate change. Through our core products and services, we have the power to enable a global transition to a low-carbon economy. Through 5G and frontier technologies, we can innovate to further help businesses, consumers and communities move towards a more energy-efficient future.

It is encouraging to see more operators starting to set science-based emissions targets, committing to 100% renewable energy commitments and using new technologies to support a cleaner planet. The Board welcomes the industry's resolute commitment to climate action and supports the inspiring leadership and bold ambition for our industry to be net zero by 2050.

Stéphane Richard
CEO Orange and
Chairman of GSMA Board


#BetterFuture

01

Introduction and key findings

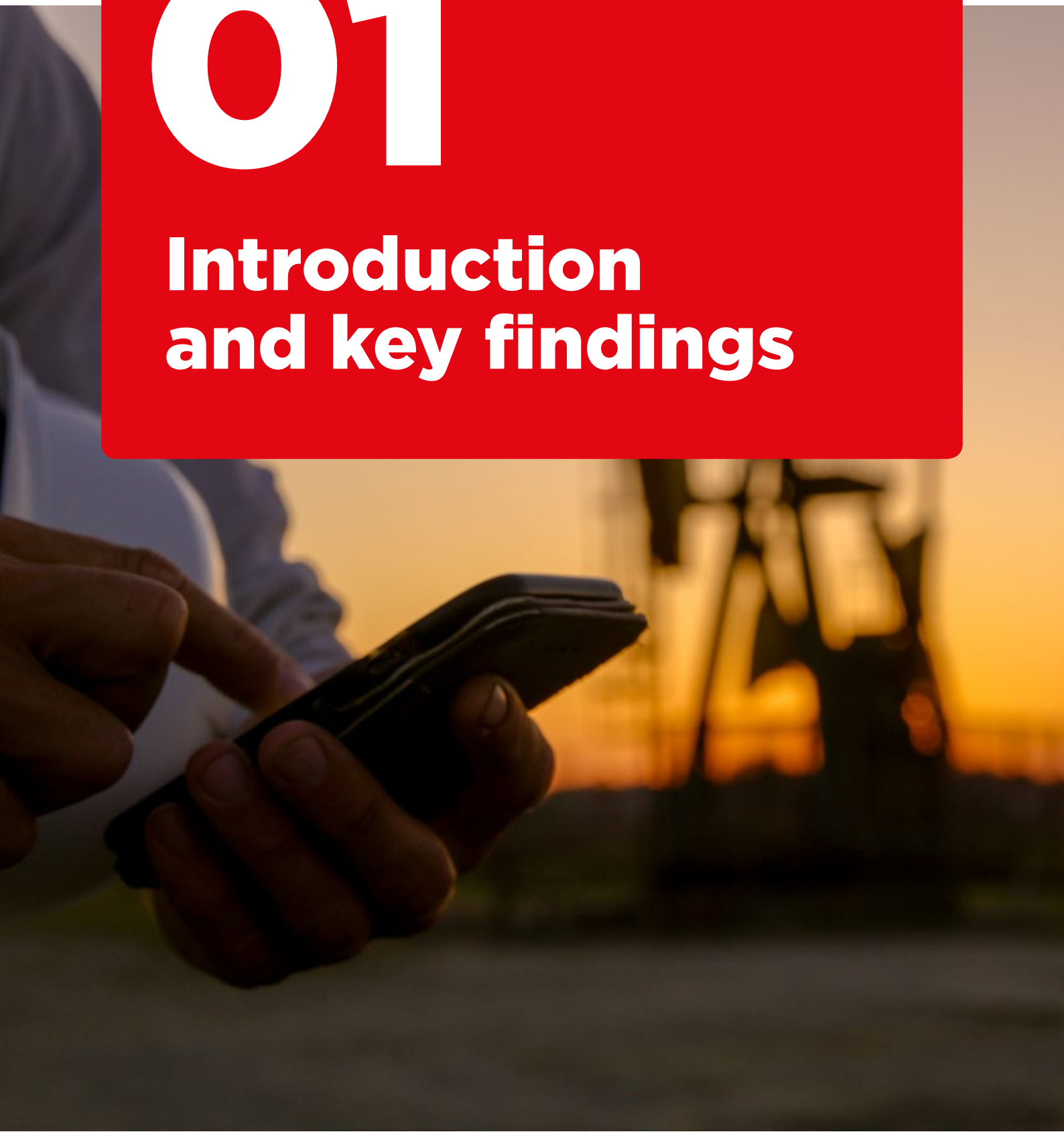


Figure 1

UN Sustainable Development Goals

With more than 5 billion unique subscribers worldwide, and more than 7 billion people covered by a mobile network, individuals are increasingly using mobile to access an array of life-enhancing services that contribute to and catalyse the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Despite its global reach, the benefits of mobile have not been spread equitably. For example, more than half the world's population are still unable to take advantage of the social and economic benefits that mobile internet can enable. Even among those using mobile and mobile internet services, the majority are not realising the full benefits that are potentially available in terms of accessing health information, public services and digital payments – both in developed and developing countries. New technologies supported by the Internet of Things (IoT) also need to achieve scale if mobile operators are to maximise their impact on the SDGs – for example, solutions in smart cities that can reduce pollution, and smart buildings and homes that can increase energy efficiency.

In 2016, mobile became the first industry to commit to the SDGs. In this fourth annual Mobile Industry Impact Report, we show how and why the mobile industry continued to contribute to all 17 Goals in 2018, together with recommendations to accelerate the industry's SDG impact going forward. As well as highlighting where operators are achieving their biggest and improved impacts, we also take a deep dive into the industry's impact on climate change – the biggest and most urgent risk facing the world.

We need to act fast to fulfil our commitment by 2030. Much more can be done to leverage the power of mobile and support the delivery of the SDG 2030 targets. In the coming years, operators must continue to expand connectivity for the underserved and continue innovating to enable more people to realise the benefits of life-enhancing, mobile-enabled services. They must also operate responsibly by integrating social, environmental and ethical issues into their business practices. This will lead to more positive impacts in the communities in which they operate and drive a substantial contribution to sustainable development.

2018 in numbers

3G COVERAGE

6.6bn
2017

6.9bn
2018

people covered

88% (2017) → 90% (2018)

4G COVERAGE

5.7bn
2017

6.1bn
2018

people covered

74% (2017) → 79% (2018)

MOBILE ADOPTION

4.9bn
2017

5.1bn
2018

mobile subscribers

65% (2017) → 66% (2018)

MOBILE INTERNET ADOPTION

3.2bn
2017

3.5bn
2018

mobile internet subscribers

43% (2017) → 47% (2018)

MOBILE-ENABLED SERVICES

IMPROVING EDUCATION

1.2bn
2017

1.4bn
2018

mobile subscribers

25% → 28%
2017 2018

IMPROVING / MONITORING HEALTH

1bn
2017

1.3bn
2018

mobile subscribers

21% → 26%
2017 2018

PURCHASING GOODS

1.8bn
2017

1.9bn
2018

mobile subscribers

36% → 39%
2017 2018

READING NEWS

2.5bn
2017

2.7bn
2018

mobile subscribers

52% → 56%
2017 2018

CELLULAR IOT CONNECTIONS

673m → 1.2bn
2017 2018

Key findings

Mobile technology acts as a platform for innovation and sustainable development

GREATER CONNECTIVITY HAS INCREASED THE INDUSTRY'S IMPACT ACROSS ALL 17 SDGS

400m

people have started using mobile

Since 2015, **400 million** people have started using mobile, bringing global penetration to **66%**. More than **850 million** people have started using mobile internet, bringing global penetration to **47%**.

USE OF MOBILE-ENABLED SERVICES HAS INCREASED

This is the other main driver behind the industry's increased impact. For example, **1.9 billion** mobile subscribers use their phone to purchase goods and services – an increase of **160 million** since 2017. Some **1.3 billion** subscribers use mobile health services – an increase of **230 million** since 2017.

SDG 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE REMAINS THE HIGHEST IMPACTED GOAL

HIGHEST IMPACT

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Since 2015, an additional **900 million** people have been covered by a 3G network, which now stands at **90%** global coverage. An additional **2.2 billion** have been covered by a 4G network, which now stands at almost **80%** global coverage. This reflects the role of mobile networks in providing critical infrastructure that spurs inclusive and sustainable development, in addition to greater innovation.

MORE TO BE DONE

Despite its achievements, the mobile industry is not on track to deliver **the full potential of mobile's contribution to the SDGs by 2030**. SDG 9 remains the only SDG where mobile has reached more than half its potential impact. Improvements in other SDGs are not enough. **Faster adoption of mobile technology and enabling life-enhancing services can help to maximise the full contribution of mobile to deliver all 17 SDGs**.

THE INDUSTRY ACHIEVED ITS MOST IMPROVED IMPACT ON SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

MOST IMPROVED

This is also the second highest impacted Goal, with **1.4 billion** mobile subscribers using their phone to improve their education or that of their children – an increase of **140 million** users since 2017.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

1.4bn

use their phone to **improve their education** or that of their children

DIGITAL INCLUSION

Addressing barriers to digital inclusion will accelerate the industry's impact on the SDGs. Affordability, low levels of literacy and digital skills, a lack of relevance, and safety and security concerns are the biggest barriers to mobile internet use from consumers' point of view.

ACCELERATING IOT DEPLOYMENT

9.1bn 2018

IoT connections worldwide

Accelerating IoT deployment is critical to maximise the industry's impact on the SDGs. IoT connections increased by 1.5 billion in 2018, reaching 9.1 billion worldwide. Nevertheless, the majority of IoT deployments remain small or medium scale as the market is in its early stages. Scaling IoT solutions such as smart cities, smart homes and smart manufacturing will be crucial to achieving the SDGs.

IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Operators are striving to minimise their own climate impact by improving energy efficiency, sourcing renewable energy, and working with stakeholders to decrease value chain emissions.

13 CLIMATE ACTION

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Many mobile operators avoid more greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions than they generate, by enabling other sectors of the economy to reduce their GHG emissions. This is through providing the connectivity for digital solutions that reduce energy use, reduce travel and transport, or otherwise reduce GHG emissions.

COLLABORATION IS KEY

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnerships are essential to achieve the SDGs. Partnerships with the public sector, NGOs and other industries underpin our potential to achieve the Goals by 2030.

OPERATING RESPONSIBLY

Accelerating connectivity and operating responsibly must go hand-in-hand for the industry to maximise its impact. Operating responsibly – that is, understanding and responding to the social, environmental and ethical issues relevant to operators and their stakeholders – supports sustainable development.

02

Measuring SDG Impact

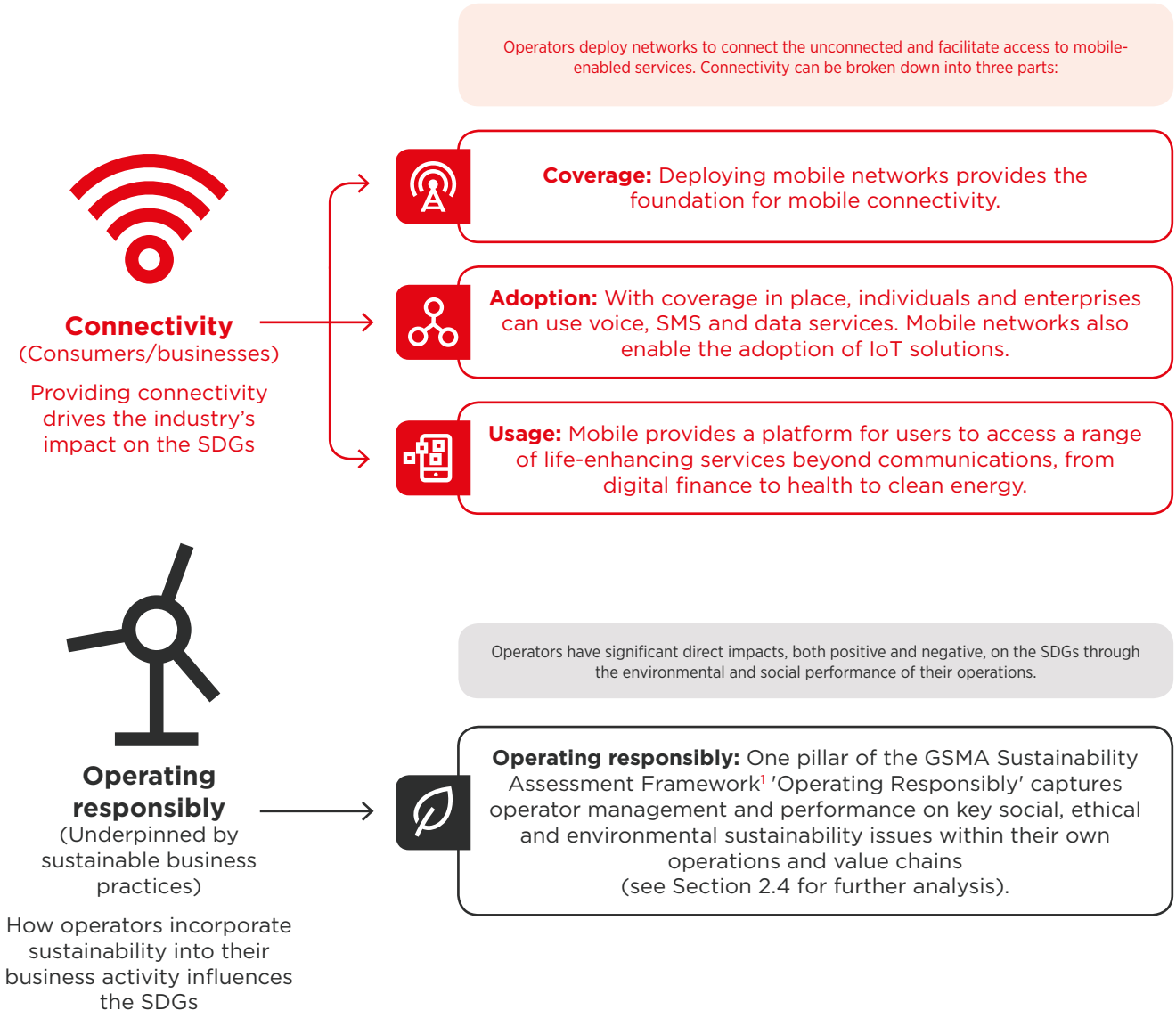
Measuring SDG Impact

Transparency and trust are more important today than ever before. As part of the industry commitment to the SDGs, the GSMA annually measures and publishes the mobile industry's impact on the SDGs.

The impact scores are underpinned by two enablers: connectivity and sustainable business practices.

Figure 2

The two impact enablers



1. Incorporating Sustainability and the SDGs into Core Business, GSMA, 2018

The industry's impact increased across all 17 SDGs in 2018, but it is not on track to maximise impact by 2030. It is currently achieving 41% of its potential impact on the SDGs.

As in previous years, the industry's greatest influence is on SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, with mobile currently achieving almost 60% of its potential impact. At the end of 2018, mobile broadband networks covered 90% of the world's population and 66% of the population subscribed to a mobile service. This reflects the role of mobile networks in providing critical infrastructure that spurs inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, in addition to greater innovation.

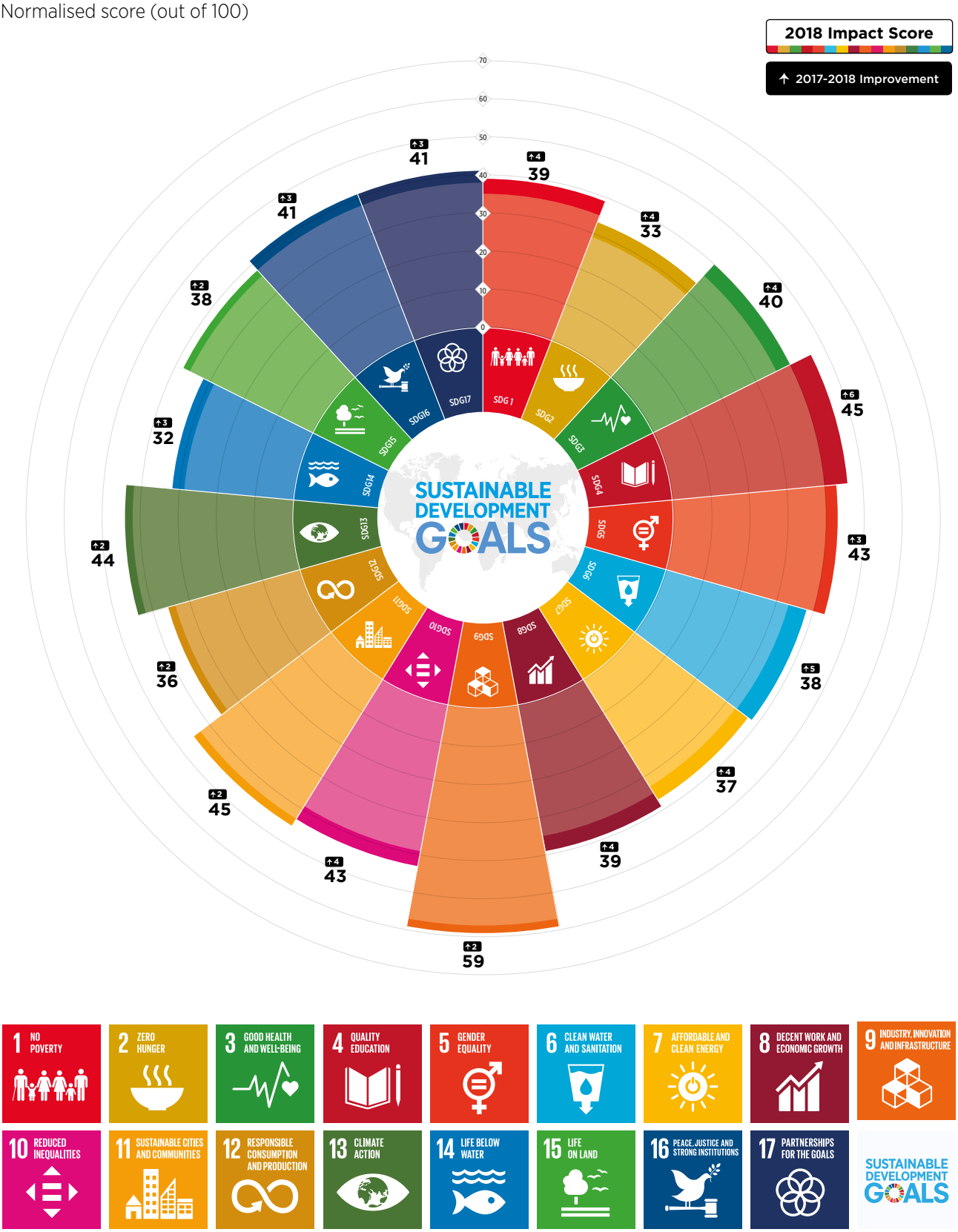
The industry enhanced its impact across all SDGs in 2018, with significant progress on SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation. These improvements were particularly strong in developing countries, where an increasing proportion of users are accessing educational information, as well as basic services such as utilities, via mobile (see Section 2.3).

Despite this progress, SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure is the only SDG where mobile has reached over half of its potential impact. Greater support from public and private stakeholders is needed for the industry to achieve its maximum impact by 2030. Throughout the rest of this chapter, we identify several calls to action for the mobile industry as well as other stakeholders (including governments, international organisations and other sectors) to accelerate impact.

Figure 3

SDG mobile impact scores

Normalised score (out of 100)



2.1
Connectivity underpins the industry's contribution to the SDGs

Extensive network coverage underpins mobile's contribution to SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. However, the rural-urban coverage gap remains significant in low-income countries.

Network coverage is a key driver of SDG 9. With 6.8 billion people covered by mobile broadband networks, the industry's impact score is higher for this SDG than any other. Mobile operators have invested heavily in deploying mobile broadband networks to connect the unconnected. Figure 5 shows that between 2015 and 2018, 3G population coverage increased from 81% to 90% (equivalent to 900 million additional people covered), while 4G population coverage grew from 53% to almost 80% (equivalent to 2 billion additional people covered).

A key challenge will be to deploy networks to the final 10% of the population still lacking 3G or 4G coverage. These tend to be in remote areas of low-income countries, where it can cost up to twice as much to deploy and three times more expensive to run new base stations. Furthermore, average revenues can be ten times lower than an urban deployment, highlighting the economic challenge facing operators.[2]

In low-income countries,[3] more than half of rural populations are not covered by 3G or 4G networks.[4]

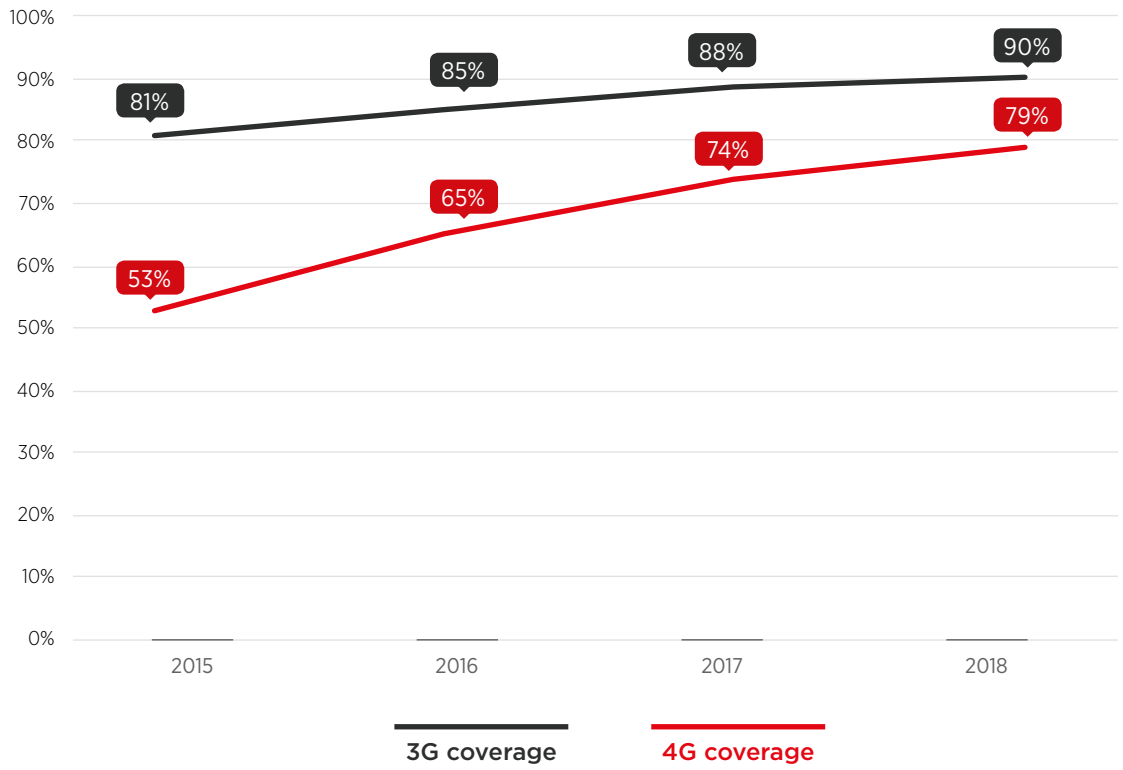
2. Enabling Rural Coverage, GSMA, 2018
3. This categorisation is based on the World Bank's country classification and includes countries the World Bank classifies as low-income (but not lower-middle income or upper-middle income).
4. The State of Mobile Internet Connectivity 2019, GSMA, 2019

Figure 4

Source: GSMA Intelligence

Mobile broadband coverage

% of population covered. *Base: Total population*



Coverage data is sourced from GSMA Intelligence, combining data reported by mobile operators and national regulatory authorities. Mobile adoption data is sourced from GSMA Intelligence, combining data reported by mobile operators with the annual GSMA Intelligence Consumer Survey.

Rising mobile and mobile internet adoption drive improvements for all SDG impact scores

By the end of 2018, 5.1 billion people (two thirds of the global population) were using a mobile phone, an increase of 130 million people compared to 2017 and 515 million since 2015 (see Figure 6). Furthermore, 3.5 billion people (47% of the global population) used the mobile internet, an increase of 300 million people compared to 2017 and 865 million since 2015.

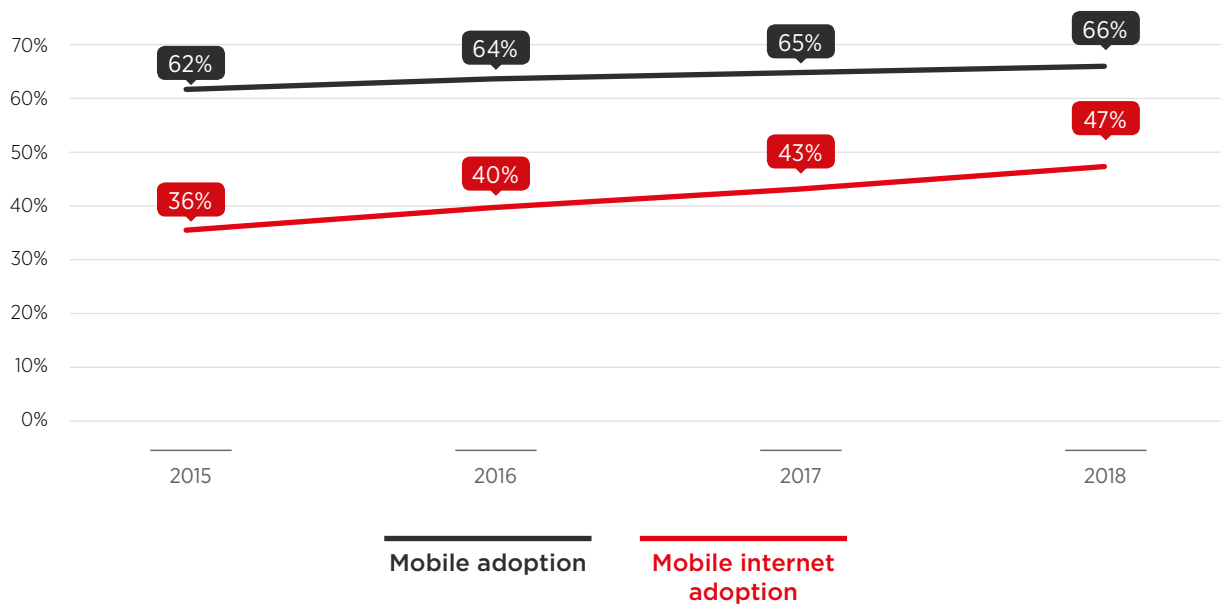
Mobile adoption and mobile internet adoption impact all the SDGs and are the main reason why the industry's impact increased across the board. For example, mobile adoption accelerates economic growth, driving the industry's contribution to SDG 1: No Poverty and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. Mobile allows users to access information and services (education, health, finance, utilities, e-government) and enables social and political inclusion (for example, through social media and accessing the news), which ultimately impacts every SDG. It even impacts SDG 15: Life on Land through enabling communication and information to support conservation initiatives, and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, as rising mobile adoption accelerates capacity building in developing economies.

Figure 5

Source: GSMA Intelligence

Mobile and mobile internet adoption

% of population connected. *Base: Total population*



Coverage data is sourced from GSMA Intelligence, combining data reported by mobile operators and national regulatory authorities. Mobile adoption data is sourced from GSMA Intelligence, combining data reported by mobile operators with the annual GSMA Intelligence Consumer Survey.

2.2
Mobile-enabled services transform lives

Consumers are doing more with their mobile phones. While voice, SMS and basic internet browsing can drive a significant impact on the SDGs, mobile technology also enables users to access a wide range of services and information including health, financial services and job search.

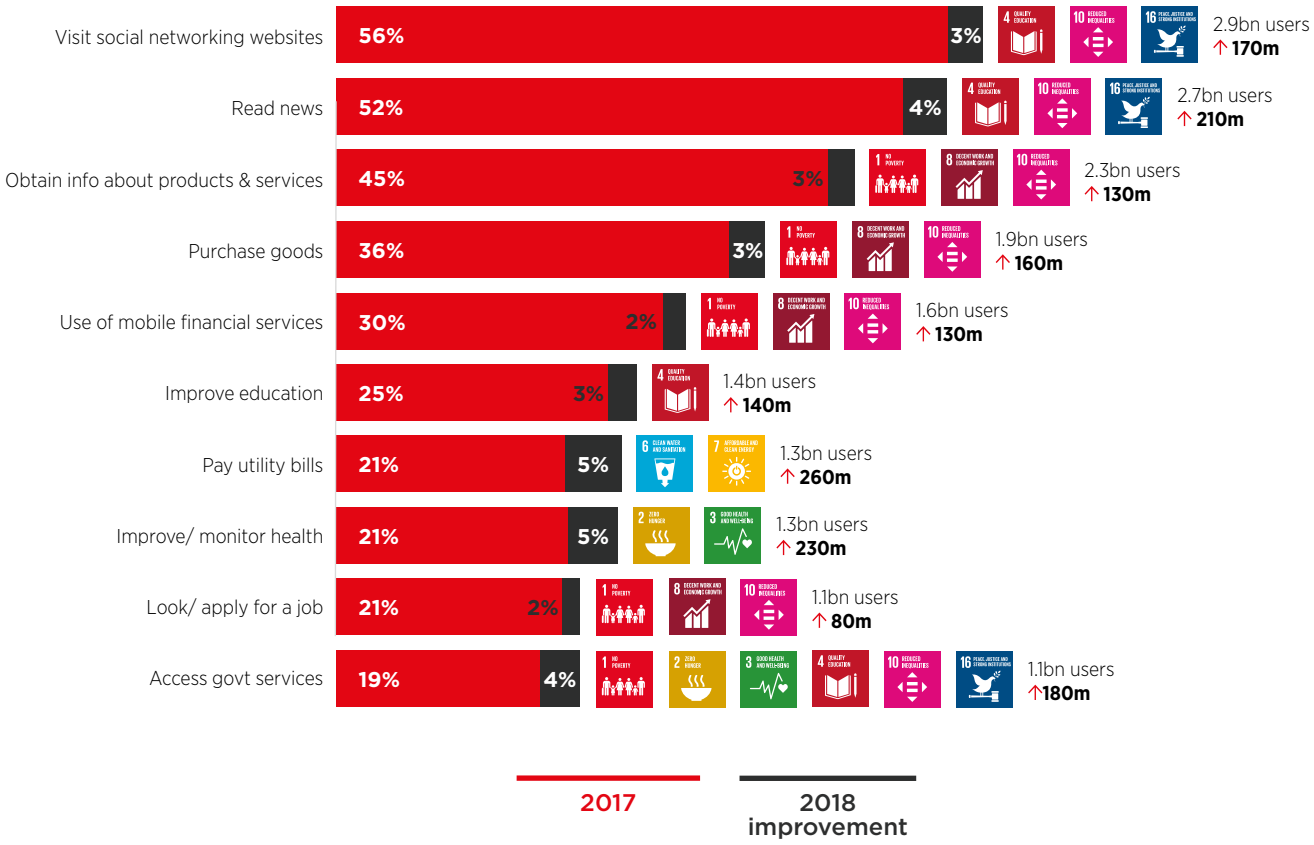
The proportion of mobile subscribers that engaged in activities on their phones relevant to the SDGs increased in 2018. This is another key driver of the industry's increased impact across all the SDGs.

Figure 6

Source: GSMA Intelligence

Mobile usage by activity

Activity, % of respondents



Data is sourced from the GSMA Intelligence Consumer Survey, which has more than 30,000 respondents covering 34 countries.

The number of users is calculated by multiplying unique mobile subscribers by the percentage of survey respondents that answered yes to performing a particular activity (e.g. reading the news) on a mobile phone.

Unique subscriber data is sourced from GSMA Intelligence, combining data reported by mobile operators with the annual GSMA Intelligence Consumer Survey.

03

Mobile technology and climate change

Climate change threatens sustainable development everywhere. Collaboration, on a global scale, is key to mitigating the catastrophic impacts of the world's rising temperatures.

The SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change[5] signal a global effort to transition to a sustainable, low-carbon future. The Paris Agreement commits governments to act to keep global temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit temperature rise even further to 1.5°C.

Since Paris, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has issued its starkest warning yet on the consequences of climate inaction and the importance of limiting global heating to 1.5°C. It recommends that countries reduce carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 and to net zero by 2050.[6]

Encouragingly, recent analysis launched at the 2018 UN climate meeting outlined that 16% of global GDP was now covered by a net zero target.[7] Yet the level of urgency and action needed to meet these targets is lagging behind the harsh reality of what climate science is telling us. There is an increasingly powerful voice from civil society calling for bolder, faster action.[8]

Compared to many other sectors, the mobile industry is not the largest contributor of carbon emissions, but as we increasingly enter a digitised world, it can be part of the solution. Collaboration is needed to limit the industry's own emissions and maximise its potential to help other sectors reduce their impact. In support of this, the GSMA has announced an industry-wide plan for disclosure and emissions target setting and along with many of its members, has committed itself to be net zero by 2050.

3.1
Enabling the transition towards a zero carbon economy

Mobile technology's biggest impact on climate change is from its ability to enable other sectors of the economy to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

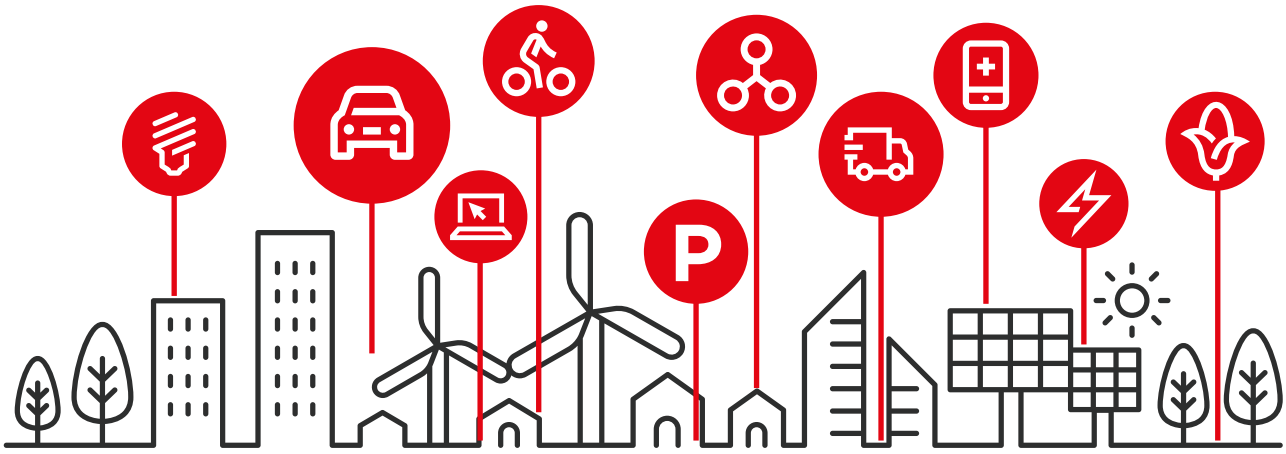
This is through providing the connectivity for digital solutions that reduce energy use, reduce travel and transport, or otherwise reduce GHG emissions. Examples include connectivity for buildings to support energy management and for vehicle telematics (reducing fuel consumption and optimising routing). This is in addition to more traditional areas of remote and mobile working, reducing emissions from travel and commuting. Emerging areas with significant potential for future emissions reductions include agriculture, health, the sharing economy and smart cities.

With the impact of mobile-based solutions closely linked to improvements in connectivity, operators' networks offer a scalable, secure and standardised way to connect assets across a variety of services in an economically sustainable manner.

5. https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/what-is-the-paris-agreement
6. Global Warming of 1.5 ºC, IPCC, 2018
7. "One-sixth of global economy under net zero targets", Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit, June 2019
8. See for example: https://rebellion.earth and https://www.schoolstrike4climate.com

Figure 7

How mobile is enabling a low-carbon future



Smart traffic management: This enables more efficient traffic flows, thereby easing congestion and lowering vehicle pollution. Verizon is using intelligent asphalt, with embedded sensors that monitor traffic flow, permitting cities to adjust traffic signals to reduce commuting times and carbon emissions.[9]

Smart urban lighting: Intelligent street lighting can lower electricity demand by switching off when not required. Using IoT technology, in the city of Guadalajara, Spain, Vodafone connected 13,500 LED lights to a central management system, reducing street lighting energy consumption by 68%.[10]

Smart parking: Mobile apps help drivers find available parking spaces, reducing congestion and GHG emissions. Deutsche Telekom's Park and Joy app shortens the time spent looking for a parking spot. In 2018, users could search around 30,000 parking spots in 45 cities with the app.[11]

Smart logistics: Mobile connectivity allows the collection of vehicle data. This can then be used for optimisation of route planning, load optimisation, and improvement of driver behaviour. Smart vehicle or fleet management solutions reduce fuel consumption and associated GHG emissions. AT&T-enabled wireless fleet management technology allows fleet managers to use data to more efficiently deploy and route vehicles to help reduce delivery and idle time, improve mileage and reduce fuel costs.[12]

Building energy management systems: Machine-to-machine (M2M) connectivity allows for the automation and monitoring of building systems remotely – for example, allowing systems to be switched on and off depending on occupancy or temperature. It can also apply analytical tools for predictive maintenance and more sophisticated building control policies, such as adjusting heating in line with the weather forecast and historical data. For example, Telefónica's Big Data Service LUCA Energy optimises energy consumption and forecasts future energy consumption costs.[13]

9. https://www.verizon.com/about/sites/default/files/corporate-responsibility-report/2018/environment/efficiency.html
10. Sustainable Business Report 2019, Vodafone Group, 2019
11. https://www.cr-report.telekom.com/site19/customers-products/sustainable-products-and-services#atn-15804-15812
12. Progress to 2025 — 10x Goal Update, AT&T, 2019
13. https://luca-d3.com/energy-cost-savings/index.html

Remote working: Smartphones and mobile connectivity enable remote working and collaboration, reducing the need for travel and therefore reducing GHG emissions. For AT&T, its mobile work tools and virtual collaboration technology represent its largest source of technology-enabled carbon reduction in 2018. Desk-based video conferencing using AT&T voice and data connectivity reduce the need for travel. [14]

Sharing economy: Ride-sharing, car-sharing, bike-sharing and other exchange activities such as finding new owners for unwanted goods or offering unused space for accommodation help to reduce travel emissions or emissions from manufacturing new goods. In addition, smartphones can provide remote access to personal services such as mobile banking and smart home control, reducing energy consumption.

Smart grids: M2M technology is important for the functioning of smart grids to actively manage and monitor the generation and distribution of electricity. This enables greater amounts of renewable energy generation to be connected to the grid, as the greater decentralisation and intermittence of renewables needs different and more distributed management systems. Vodafone is helping utilities deliver electricity sustainably and efficiently through remote data management and monitoring capabilities, automation and control.[15]

Connected health: Mobile solutions are expanding access to medical and health services. Using solutions such as remote patient monitoring, patients can reduce the number of trips to see a medical provider, saving time and reducing fuel usage and hospital emissions. In 2018, Verizon avoided 147,023 tonnes of CO2e through remote patient monitoring and reduced travel and days in hospital.[16]

Precision agriculture: This refers to the combination of monitoring crops with satellites, thermal imaging and sensors. Data collected can help farmers precisely optimise yields and reduce fertiliser and pesticide use, as well as improving water efficiency in irrigation, saving GHG emissions. For example, Telefónica is using big data to support small and medium-sized cattle ranchers in Ecuador.

For more on how operators are reducing emissions and driving energy efficiency, see full report.

14. Progress to 2025 — 10x Goal Update, AT&T, 2019
15. https://www.vodafone.com/business/iot/end-to-end-solutions/smart-grid-and-metering
16. https://www.verizon.com/about/sites/default/files/corporate-responsibility-report/2018/environment/efficiency.html

04

Accelerating impact through partnerships

Effective collaboration between the public and private sectors, as well as collaboration between different industries and sectors, drives significant improvements in the mobile industry's contribution to the SDGs.

This is reflected in SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, which seeks to strengthen global partnerships to support and achieve the 2030 targets, bringing together national governments, the international community, civil society, the private sector and other players.

This report has shown that the mobile industry – through the connectivity that it enables and the way in which it operates – continues to drive significant impact across all SDGs. This brings the world closer to the ambitious targets set out in the 2030 Agenda.[17]

To achieve these targets however, current trends need to be accelerated. Significant challenges persist around unlocking the full potential of mobile, particularly in terms of connecting the unconnected and scaling mobile-enabled services and nascent IoT technologies. In Sections 2 and 3, we identified several calls to action for mobile operators, governments and other stakeholders. One of the most important actions required, however, cuts across all SDGs – the collaboration between the public and private sectors as well as collaboration between different industries and sectors.

This report has highlighted that many of the industry's current impacts could not be achieved without multi-stakeholder partnerships – for example, the provision of mobile-enabled financial services and supporting populations affected by disasters. Furthermore, the industry cannot meet its commitments to the SDGs or maximise its impact in the future without effective partnerships. This is particularly the case for achieving a net-zero carbon future, which will require operators to collaborate with the public sector to reduce emissions of the mobile industry and will involve working with other sectors to enable wider GHG reductions through enabling mobile technologies.

The mobile industry and the GSMA fully realise the importance of collaboration in addressing the most pressing global issues, as evidenced by its participation – and in some cases leadership – in several multi-stakeholder partnerships.

17. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations, 2015

Examples of partnerships and GSMA initiatives accelerating SDG progress

Big Data for Social Good (BD4SG)

In partnership with UN agencies, international organisations and mobile operators, the Big Data for Social Good initiative leverages mobile operators' big data capabilities to enable governments to respond effectively and efficiently to many of the world's most pressing health, humanitarian and environmental problems. Mobile data-driven solutions strengthen governments' planning capabilities, enabling them to mitigate risks through better predictions. These solutions also provide new insight to improve decision making and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their response.[18]

EQUALS

EQUALS is a multi-stakeholder partnership which was co-founded by the GSMA, UN Women, ITU, ITC and UN University in 2016. The partnership brings together international organisations, the private sector, governments, non-governmental organisations, regulatory agencies and academic institutions with a common goal: to bridge the gender digital divide. The network works to ensure that women and girls are given access, equipped with skills and able to develop the leadership potential to work and succeed in the ICT sector.

M4D and partners

The GSMA Foundation works with donor partners to drive innovation in digital technology to reduce inequalities in our world. Through these partnerships, the GSMA Mobile for Development (M4D) programmes deliver both sustainable business and large-scale socioeconomic impact for the underserved, in the areas of mobile connectivity, mobile money, energy, water, sanitation, agriculture, climate, identity, disability, humanitarian response and the reduction of the mobile gender gap.[19] Current donors are the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, DFAT, DFID, Flourish, the Mastercard Foundation, Sida, SOGE and USAID.

GSMA National Dialogues

This initiative works at a national level to convene key government ministries and leaders of the mobile industry. GSMA National Dialogues explore the ways in which mobile can act as a positive force for societal change, and facilitate and support collaborative action to drive digital transformation through mobile. Convenings focus on targeted actions, in response to market-specific demand as identified by key public and private sector stakeholders.[20] The GSMA is facilitating these National Dialogues in partnership with Sida and DFID, and is supported by the United Nations Development Programme.

Nordic CEOs for a Sustainable Future

The GSMA, alongside CEOs of some of the Nordic region's largest listed companies, have joined hands in a common commitment to integrate the SDGs in their respective business strategies, and create a forum for exchange of experiences and exploration of shared initiatives - all with the ambition to speed up the realisation of the world's most important "to-do" list. The initiative also creates a platform for the Nordic Prime Ministers to engage directly with CEOs on how to move from sustainability as a compliance exercise to purpose-driven companies.

18. https://www.gsma.com/betterfuture/bd4sg
19. For further information see https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/10yearsofm4d/
20. See for example "The Government of Uganda and Stakeholders Commit to Pursue Mobile-Enabled Digital Transformation", GSMA, March 2019.

UN Secretary General's Task Force on Digital Financing of the SDGs

Recognising that digital financing holds enormous potential to facilitate achievement of the SDGs, the Task Force was set up to bring together a group of leaders from governments, businesses – including the GSMA – the financial community, international organisations and civil society to advance proposals that can help ensure that technologies supporting the digitalisation of finance will advance the SDGs.

We Care

The We Care initiative convenes mobile operators in a specific country to join forces, as an industry, to deliver solutions with a positive impact on society. Government representatives, regulators, civil society and UN agencies often participate in the initiative ensuring a multi-stakeholder approach to providing responsible and impactful solutions. These in-country initiatives support the mobile industry's commitment to the UN SDG[21] and the Digital Declaration, allowing operators to drive impact at a local level. Through We Care, 64 local mobile operators across 19 countries in Latin America and Africa have committed to deliver solutions on topics such as digital inclusion, environmental care, disaster response, privacy, infrastructure deployment and handset theft.

THESE INITIATIVES CONTRIBUTE TO ALL SDGS

The GSMA will continue to work with governments, the international community, other industries and other stakeholders on these initiatives and will consider involvement in new partnerships where they are likely to achieve impact.

At the same time, the GSMA and the mobile industry will continue to report on its progress each year. We will continue to develop and improve the evidence and data used to track operators' impact on the SDGs. With this framework in place, both the industry and the international community will be able to enhance its understanding of impact, progress, challenges and ultimately the action needed for the mobile industry to harness its full potential to deliver the SDGs.

21. https://www.gsma.com/latinamerica/wecare/

Partnerships for cross-cutting impact

Ubiquitous, mobile supercomputing. Intelligent robots. Self-driving cars. The evidence of dramatic change is all around us and it's happening at exponential speed. We have the potential to connect billions more people to digital networks, improve the efficiency of organisations and even manage assets in ways that can help regenerate the natural environment, potentially undoing the damage of previous industrial revolutions. We need to remind ourselves that all of these new technologies are first and foremost tools made by people for people.

The SDGs give us all a framework within which to take collective responsibility for and collaboration on issues of our mutual interests – with the last and most important SDG17 to "...revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development". Without this one, the rest just won't be possible.

The World Economic Forum fully realises and promotes the importance of public-private collaboration in addressing global issues. We work alongside organisations such as the GSMA in support of private sector efforts towards achieving the SDGs. This report shows great examples of how the mobile industry is turning commitment into action. I call on the industry to continue to help shape a future that works for all, where no one is left behind.

Professor Klaus Schwab
Executive Chairman
World Economic Forum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