

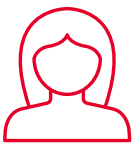
GSMA

Connected Women

Accelerating digital inclusion for women



The opportunity



There is an opportunity to contribute to the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls through mobile.



Mobile can make women more connected, safer and provide access to information, services and life-enhancing opportunities.



But there is a significant gender gap in access to and use of mobile phones and mobile internet in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where women are around **15% less likely than men** to adopt mobile internet.



Closing this mobile gender gap could improve the lives and livelihoods of millions of women and their families, improve industry revenues and drive economic growth. We estimate that closing the gender gap in mobile internet adoption in LMICs is estimated to add **\$1.3 trillion in additional GDP** over the period from 2023-2030.



Closing the mobile gender gap would also contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 5.



With less than five years to achieve the 2030 SDGs, urgent action and collaboration is required from policymakers, the mobile industry, the development community and other stakeholders to address the barriers preventing women from accessing and using mobile phones and the internet.



What we need

To close the mobile gender gap we need to address issues of gender equality and social norms and focus on:

Affordability



Includes the inability to afford devices, data plans and other service fees.

Knowledge and digital skills



Includes a lack of digital skills and literacy, and a lack of awareness and understanding of mobile internet and its benefits.

Safety and security



Includes concerns about the negative aspects and risks of mobile and the internet, such as harassment, theft, fraud and online security.

Access



Includes a lack of access to networks and enablers (such as internet-enabled handsets, agents and formal identification documents), or devices and services that are not accessible or easy to use.

Relevance



Includes a lack of relevant content, products and services that meet women's needs, capabilities and preferences.



[GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report](#)



[GSMA Connected Women Programme](#)

Recommendations for policymakers to address the mobile gender gap

1. Understand the context of digital inclusion for women and girls.

- Collect, analyse and track gender-disaggregated data related to mobile and mobile internet access and use.
- Conduct and support research on women's access to and use of mobile, mobile services and the internet.
- Publish and share gender-disaggregated data and research.

2. Integrate a gender perspective in strategies, policies, plans and budgets.

- Ensure digital gender equality goals and considerations are included across information and communication technologies (ICTs) and other relevant policies and when they are implemented.
- Set and track clear gender equality targets in relevant strategies, policies, budgets and plans.
- Ensure there are appropriate organisational structures, capacity and processes to effectively incorporate gender goals and considerations in strategies, policies, plans and budgets.



Recommendations for policymakers to address the mobile gender gap continued

- d) Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions across all relevant strategies, policies, plans and budgets with a gender lens.

3. Address the key barriers to mobile internet adoption and use.

Affordability. There is a need to:

- a) Ensure policies and regulations help lower the cost of handsets and data for consumers, which is likely to disproportionately benefit women.
- b) Adopt policies and regulations that help users improve their ability to pay, especially women.
- c) Consider subsidy programmes in consultation with the private sector to help improve the affordability of handsets and data services.
- d) Address wider policy and regulatory barriers that are discriminatory to women accessing finance and, in turn, impede their ability to afford handsets and data.

Knowledge and digital skills. There is a need to:

- a) Develop and deliver digital skills training programmes that meet women's preferences for what and how they want to learn.
- b) Invest in public education initiatives that improve the confidence and digital skills of women and girls.

Safety and security. There is a need to:

- a) Raise awareness of online safety and security threats and how they can be mitigated.
- b) Strengthen measures to protect women against internet-related abuse and harassment.
- c) Encourage the development and uptake of applications and services that make it safer for women to access and use the internet.

Access. There is a need to:

- a) Create an enabling policy and regulatory environment to help women purchase and access mobile services.
- b) Ensure mobile-related sales, access and training facilities are accessible for women as well as men.
- c) Ensure digital government content and services are accessible for those with lower literacy levels and digital skills.
- d) Raise awareness of the benefits of mobile for women to help address social norms that restrict women from accessing or using mobile.

Relevance. There is a need to:

- a) Raise awareness of mobile internet-enabled content, applications and services and how they can be relevant to women's lives.
- b) Create an enabling environment that supports the development of content, applications and services that meet women's needs.
- c) Ensure that digital public services are developed to meet the needs of women.

4. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders. There is a need to:

- a) Ensure and support multistakeholder collaboration.
- b) Facilitate knowledge sharing and lessons learned among other stakeholder groups.



The full set of policy recommendations can be found in the GSMA's report, **'Policy considerations to accelerate digital inclusion for women in LMICs'**

