Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators
Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators
Joint EGTI/EGH subgroup on the ICT Development Index (IDI)

Report of activities for the 2025 work period

This draft version: 25 June 2024

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Note: This preliminary version of the report is partial and is without prejudice to the outcomes of the remaining meetings of the subgroup. It is available in the ITU document centre as version and on the IDI subgroup's Microsoft Teams channel.[1] *Participants can send their comments to the IDI subgroup co-leads (*teddy.woodhouse@ofcom.org.uk and winston@nic.br*) or submit them via the new BDT submission tool. All comments and contributions will be published.*

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Outline

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This report summarises the activities of the joint subgroup on the ICT Development Index (IDI subgroup) for the 2

025 work period and will be submitted to the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI) and the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH) during their annual meetings on 24-25 September 2025.

1 Background and context

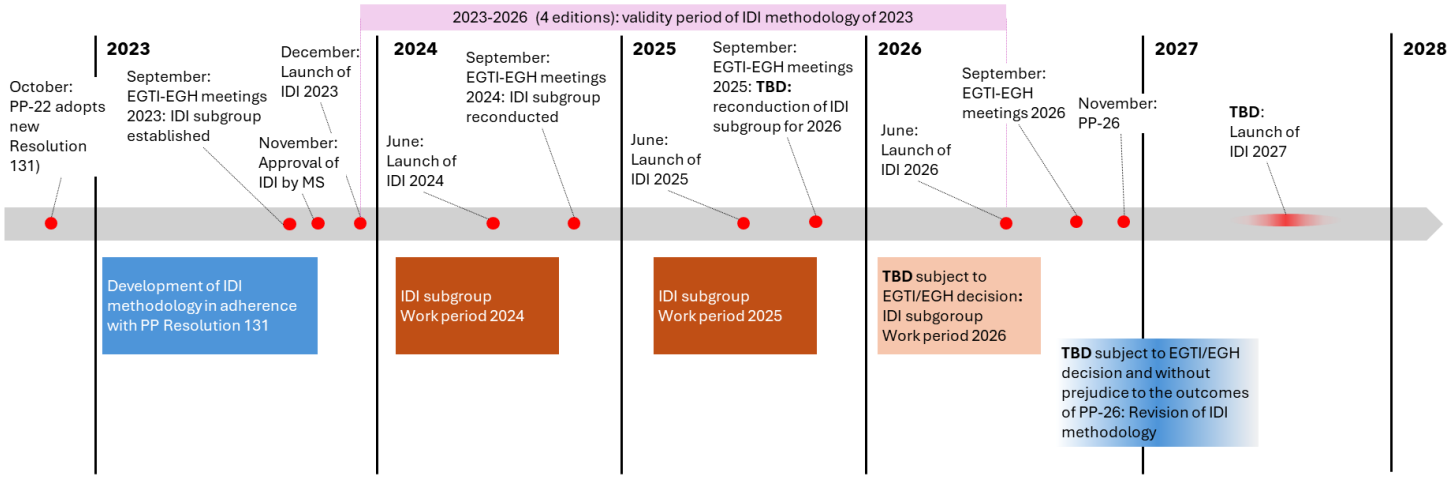
In September 2023, during a joint session of the 14th Meeting of EGTI and 11th Meeting of EGH, members agreed to establish a joint EGTI-EGH subgroup on the IDI methodology for the 2024 work period. Teddy Woodhouse , International Policy Manager, Ofcom, United Kingdom

[1] EGTI/EGH members wishing to join the IDI subgroup can write to indicators@itu.int.

(representing EGTI) and Winston Oyadomari, Senior Survey Analyst and Head of Innovation Lab, Cetic.br, Brazil (representing EGH) were appointed as co-leads.

The subgroup was tasked with reviewing the methodology and providing recommendations to inform any potential revision, should EGTI and EGH decide to update the methodology, in line with Resolution 131. In September 2024, the IDI subgroup presented its Report of activities for the 2024 work period during a joint session of the 15th Meeting of EGTI and the 12th Meeting of EGH. EGTI and EGH members agreed to extend the mandate of the subgroup for the 2025 work period.

The timeline below outlines past and potential future milestones and processes related to the IDI, some of which are contingent on decisions by EGTI and EGH members, as well as by ITU Member States.



2 Working methods

In 2025, the IDI subgroup worked from April to [July 2025]. Its Terms of Reference 2025 were presented by the co-leads during the first meeting and adopted, with the following objectives:

1. Identify indicators for potential inclusion in the IDI, based on the Candidate Indicators framework (see section 4 of the report of activities 2024).
2. Based on the work achieved above, make a recommendation to EGTI/EGH regarding the revision of the IDI, in line with Resolution 131.
3. After identifying candidate indicators, the subgroup may, time permitting, review additional methodological aspects of the IDI, such as normalization (goalposts) and aggregation.

At the onset, the subgroup established the following working methods, while tools were also developed to facilitate its work:

- A dedicated Microsoft Teams channel whose access was granted to all participants having asked to join the subgroup and provided a valid email address.
- A proposal template for new indicators/criteria/themes for the IDI (see Annex 1).
- As of June 2025, all documents related to the IDI subgroup are also available from the ITU document centre. Moreover, submissions to the IDI subgroup can be made via the BDT submission tool (TIES protected), in addition to other channels.

3 Summary of meetings

The IDI subgroup met [4 times]during the 2025 work period. Below is a succinct overview of each meeting. For longer summaries, refer to Annex 3, the Microsoft Teams channel or the ITU document centre

First meeting (13 March 2025)
The co-leads introduced the 2025 workplan and Terms of Reference, emphasizing continuity with the previous cycle and the focus on universal and meaningful connectivity. The Terms of Reference were adopted. Members reviewed potential indicators for future IDI revisions, including skills, affordability, cybersecurity, and broadband penetration. The importance of using official data sources was stressed by several participants. Updates were provided on efforts to improve household data and harmonize reference years. Concerns were raised about the use of projected data for traffic indicators. Members were encouraged to submit proposals ahead of the next meeting in April.

Second meeting (16 April 2025)
The co-leads reviewed the status of submissions and led a discussion focused on network capacity and Internet speed. The group received a proposal to include 5G coverage in the IDI, with proposals to weight it alongside 3G and 4G. The sub-group considered this proposal and agreed to propose 5G coverage in the IDI as a mature candidate indicator ready for inclusion. Suggestions were also made to add both uplink and downlink speeds for mobile broadband, primarily based on the availability of private datasets, while concerns were raised about using private data sources. Members stressed the need to address fixed broadband penetration. Additional proposals included harmonizing reference years and developing a simulator to assess the policy impact on IDI scores. Further discussion on these topics continued in subsequent meetings.

Third meeting (28 May 2025)
The co-leads outlined plans for the remainder of the work period, including early drafting of the activity report and shared its proposed structure. Three proposals were then discussed. The first addressed the challenge of setting goalposts for indicators lacking clear policy targets, such as traffic indicators, with consideration on effects on indicators' relevance and year-on-year continuity. The second proposed discussion on the inclusion of traffic indicators in the IDI considering growing concerns about the negative impacts of connectivity. The third proposed that, once available, a fixed broadband penetration indicator based on households as denominator should be placed under the meaningful connectivity pillar and introduced immediately—even mid-cycle—rather than waiting for the next revision period.

Fourth meeting (3 July 2025)

[Fifth meeting (TBC)]

4 Discussed topics

Between March and [June 2025], [16 proposals] were received through various channels. All proposals are listed in Annex 2, which features links to the PDF version posted in the ITU document centre. They are also available on the IDI subgroup's Microsoft Teams channel.

Fixed broadband penetration

Data on fixed-broadband subscriptions is available for most countries but must be scaled to reflect population size. While there is no consensus on the appropriate denominator, a majority of participants have expressed a preference for using the number of households. However, no globally comparable dataset on household counts currently exists, thus limiting the potential adoption of any such indicator with a revision of the IDI at this point.

At the request of the co-leads, the BDT Secretariat described the major efforts undertaken by the UN system to address the lack of data on the number of households. A Task Team established under the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) and led by ITU brought together key agencies, including UNSD, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, WHO, UNICEF, and the UN Population Division. In its background document to the 56th session of the Statistical Commission (UNSC), the Task Team reviewed existing data sources and methodologies, concluded that no harmonized global dataset exists, and highlighted the complexity of developing a reliable estimation methodology. It recommended further coordination and proposed a lead role for the UN Population Division.

The issue was taken up in the UNSC Secretary-General's report on population and housing censuses and added to the 56th session agenda. In its final report, the Commission acknowledged the methodological and institutional challenges, underscored the importance of internationally comparable household time series, and endorsed continued work under the 2030 Census Programme. However, the development and implementation of such data collection will require substantial resources, and that the necessary funding is currently not available.

As a result, such data will not be available in the short term – and certainly not by 2027. In this context, fixed-broadband penetration per household remains a candidate indicator. Qatar proposed that it could be introduced as soon as data become available, even mid-cycle, notwithstanding the provisions of Resolution 131.

5G mobile network coverage

Several participants proposed the inclusion of 5G mobile network coverage in the IDI, alongside the existing indicators for 3G and 4G coverage. There was consensus that 5G coverage is now a mature, relevant, and sufficiently available indicator for inclusion.

If adopted, 5G could be integrated into the existing composite mobile network coverage indicator and will necessitate a revised weighting scheme. Currently, 3G and 4G coverage are compiled into one indicator with a current weighting of 40 per cent to 3G and 60 per cent to 4G. Participants generally recommended assigning a lower weight to 5G relative to 4G in any new configuration.

Quality of services
Several proposals addressed quality-related indicators. China proposed including user-experienced speed – both downlink and uplink – as well as broader quality-of-service (QoS) metrics, currently sourced from third-party benchmarking platforms. However, multiple members expressed a strong preference for relying only on official data sources, and such data are not widely or consistently available across countries.

As a result of ongoing deliberations, these proposals are acknowledged in the subgroup's report for information, but the sub-group will not make any recommendation on these proposals at this time due to lack of availability from official sources and insufficient specificity/consistency of these proposals for inclusion.

Goalposts
Qatar submitted a detailed proposal to revise the approach used for setting goalposts. The submission recommended using the true 95th percentile of observed values, instead of "95th percentile - projected" values or static caps. The current approach, particularly for traffic indicators, was criticized for distorting scores and reducing comparability. The subgroup agreed that this topic merits further methodological review and recommended revisiting it as part of a future revision of the IDI.

Measurement period
Egypt proposed aligning the reference years across all indicators used in the IDI, emphasizing that inconsistent reference periods hinder comparability and weaken the index's policy relevance. At the request of the co-leads, the ITU Secretariat prepared a note on the challenges of achieving such alignment. Every effort is being made to (1) reduce the time lag between the year of data collection and publication, and (2) harmonize the reference periods across all IDI components. Several members supported continued efforts to improve temporal alignment as a means of enhancing indicator comparability and relevance, although there is no formal recommendation from the sub-group at this stage.

IDI simulator
Egypt proposed the creation of an IDI score simulator, allowing countries to assess the impact of hypothetical policy actions or changes in individual indicators on their overall IDI score. The subgroup welcomed the proposal and acknowledged its potential value for policy analysis and scenario testing. Members encouraged further exploration of its technical feasibility.

Topics not re-examined

Some topics had already been discussed during the 2023 methodology development and did not receive support at the time.[2] These were resubmitted to the IDI subgroup in the 2025 work period. However, in the absence of any substantive revision from their previous state, they were not re-examined in detail. These were:

- **Speed tiers in fixed broadband subscriptions**: India and China proposed to include indicators that classify fixed broadband subscriptions by speed tiers (e.g., percentage of subscriptions above 10 Mbps). Similarly, India proposed including FTTH subscriptions as a share of fixed as a share of total fixed broadband subscriptions.

[2] See summary report of the Joint EGTI/EGH session on the ICT Development Index, 18-19 September, 2023.

- **Global Cybersecurity Index:** India proposed adding the Global Cybersecurity Index to reflect the importance of online safety and resilience as a dimension of meaningful connectivity.
- **Include the ICT Regulatory Tracker**: India recommended including the ICT Regulatory Tracker Composite Index to account for the enabling regulatory environment that supports digital development.
- **Replace ICT affordability with indicators of costs in PPP$:** India suggested replacing the existing affordability indicators (cost of services as a share of gross national income per capita) with measures of ICT prices in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms, arguing it better reflects local economic realities.
- **Growth rate of indicators over the past 10 years**: India proposed incorporating the growth rates of IDI indicators over the past decade, as a measure of progress rather than absolute levels.
- **Country grouping by development status or characteristics**: India recommended restructuring the IDI results by grouping countries according to development status or structural characteristics, to allow more nuanced comparisons.
- **High share of estimated data points**: India expressed concern about the perceived over-reliance on estimated values in IDI computations, questioning their impact on reliability.

These proposals remain on record and may be revisited in future revisions, particularly if new supporting data becomes available.

5 Conclusion and recommendations

Note: Important: these preliminary conclusion and recommendations are without prejudice to the outcomes of future meetings and discussion of the IDI subgroup.

While the subgroup identified limited new data or evidence to support a major revision of the IDI methodology, there is scope for incremental improvements. The subgroup makes the following recommendations in relation to the objectives set out in its terms of reference:

Objective: Identify indicators for potential inclusion in the IDI

New indicator

- **5G mobile network coverage**. The IDI subgroup recommends incorporating 5G coverage into the existing mobile network coverage indicator, which currently includes 3G and 4G coverage. The IDI subgroup suggests further discussions in the revision process to identify a weighting scheme that would assign an appropriate distribution of values to 3G, 4G and 5G coverage.

Candidate indicator

- **Fixed broadband penetration**. There is consensus that fixed broadband penetration should be captured in the IDI, and a broad majority supports using the number of fixed broadband subscriptions per household as the preferred indicator. However, the necessary international comparable data on the number of households is not yet

available for enough countries. In this context, EGTI/EGH may wish to consider affirming it as a candidate indicator ready for reporting and publication as soon as it becomes available.

Objective: Review additional methodological aspects of the IDI

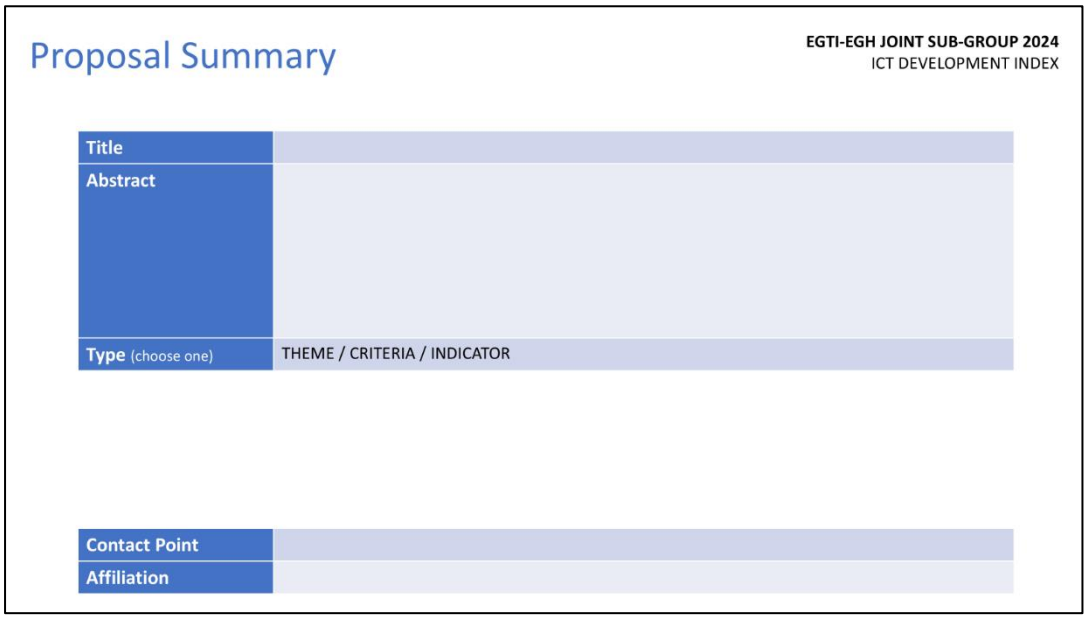
- **Goalposts and thresholds**. As part of a future revision of the IDI, the subgroup recommends a review of all goalposts, particularly those not grounded in policy targets but based on statistical distributions, to ensure their ongoing relevance, fairness and year-on-year continuity.
- **Time-lag**. Efforts should continue to minimize the time lag between the data reference year and publication, and to align the reference periods of all indicators included in the IDI. These efforts must consider the practical constraints related to national data submission cycles, reporting delays, and the availability of verified datasets from official sources.

Objective: Make a recommendation to EGTI/EGH regarding the revision of the IDI

- **IDI subgroup**. The subgroup recommends extending a revised version of its mandate into 2026 to support further work to develop formal specification of a new version of the IDI for the next validity period, subject to EGTI/EGH's oversight.
- **Revision of the IDI**. As at least one indicator has been identified as sufficiently relevant, available, and reliable for inclusion in a new methodology of the IDI, the subgroup recommends that EGTI/EGH proceeds with a formal revision of the IDI, in accordance with the process established under Resolution 131.

Annex 1 Proposal template

The template for proposals adopted by the IDI subgroup during the 2024 work period was again suggested in 2025, although proposals could be submitted in any format and through any channel.

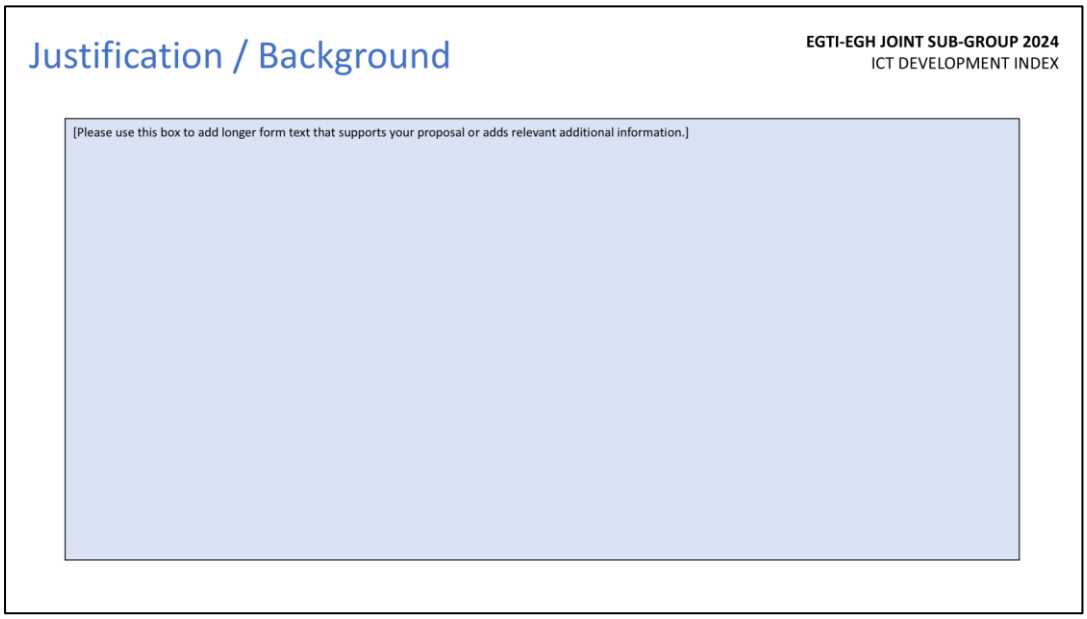


Proposal Summary

EGTI-EGH JOINT SUB-GROUP 2024
ICT DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Title	
Abstract	
Type (choose one)	THEME / CRITERIA / INDICATOR

Contact Point	
Affiliation	



Justification / Background

EGTI-EGH JOINT SUB-GROUP 2024
ICT DEVELOPMENT INDEX

[Please use this box to add longer form text that supports your proposal or adds relevant additional information.]

Indicator Criteria

Only relevant for indicator proposals. Subject to change based on sub-group activity.

Relevance	What themes apply? How does this indicator relate to the conceptual framework of universal and meaningful connectivity?
Availability	If possible, please discuss the availability of this data within the past three years across the economies where ITU data is published.
Reliability	Does the indicator have a stable data collection methodology? Has it been regularly collected at a reasonable frequency over the past decade?
Source	Does the indicator come from an official source/s?

Template Guidance

EGTI-EGH JOINT SUB-GROUP 2024
ICT DEVELOPMENT INDEX

You can use this slide as guidance for completing this template for your proposal to the EGTI-EGH Joint Sub-Group on the ICT Development Index. Once complete, you can delete this slide.

Title	Please provide a short description of your proposal.
Abstract	Please provide a 2-3 sentence summary of your proposal.
Type	Please choose one of the three options: theme, criteria, or indicator. • **Themes** discuss broad concepts relevant to the IDI and its conceptual framework and would likely hold one or more indicators within it (where appropriate). • **Criteria** are the basis by which the sub-group will review and consider indicators. So far, relevance, availability, reliability, and source have been the four bases of analysis. • **Indicator** would be a precise proposal for a new indicator to be included into the IDI. Proposals for indicators should indicate the relevant theme and respond to the evaluation criteria.
Contact Point	Please add your name and email address.
Affiliation	Please indicate your affiliation (typically the organisation of your ITU membership).
Justification / Background	This second slide can be used to add longer form information relevant to your proposal. If required to go beyond one slide for this section, please copy and paste a new slide into the presentation file.
Indicator Criteria	**For indicator proposals only.** Please use this slide to discuss how your proposed indicator relates to the relevant indicator criteria.

Annex 2 List of proposals

Below is a list of all received proposals, grouped by similarity, with the name of the submitter indicated in parentheses and a direct link to the proposal in PDF in the ITU document centre. All proposals are also available from the IDI subgroup's Microsoft Teams channel.

Themes or indicators for inclusion
Proposals suggesting the addition of new thematic areas or indicators to the ID I:

- Inclusion of fixed broadband subscription by speed (China) > link
- High-speed fixed broadband subscriptions as percent of total fixed broadband (India) > link
- User-experienced mobile broadband speed – downlink and uplink (China) > link
- Fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) subscriptions (India) > link
- Inclusion of 5G coverage (India) > link
- Cybersecurity and safety as a core enabler of meaningful connectivity, supporting the inclusion of the Global Cybersecurity Index (India) > link
- ICT regulatory environment through the ICT Regulatory Tracker index (India) > link
- Fixed broadband penetration per household (Qatar) > link

Indicators for exclusion or adjustment
Proposals questioning or modifying existing indicators in the IDI:

- Traffic indicators: reconsider scoring that rewards high data usage due to potential adverse effects (Qatar) > link
- Replace affordability indicators with indicators of costs in PPP$ (India) > link

Methodology
Proposals focused on the structure, calculation, or revision process of the IDI:

- Use true 95th percentiles for setting goalposts (Qatar) > link
- Unify reference years across indicators to improve comparability (Egypt) > link; clarification by BDT Secretariat > link
- Improve transparency and reduce use of estimated data, including publishing all used data points (India) > link
- IDI score simulator (Egypt) > link
- Growth rate of indicators over the past 10 years (India) > link
- Country grouping by development status or characteristics (India) > link

Annex 3 Meeting summaries

[Meeting summaries are available in the ITU document centre and will be appended to this report once it is finalized]