Chad

Expansion of the national fibre-optic backbone is a top national priority for the landlocked country to access the needed international Internet capacity from neighbouring countries.

Mobile services: There are three mobile operators: TIGO, a subsidiary of the Luxembourg-based MILLICOM mobile group; AIRTEL, a subsidiary of the Indian mobile group; and Salam, the mobile arm of the State-owned incumbent Telecommunications Society of Chad (SOTEL). In 2015, 59 per cent of households had mobile telephones, with a significant difference between urban (85 per cent) and rural areas (52 per cent).[124] One challenge is the limited coverage in rural areas. Another is the relatively high tax burden on mobile use (e.g. additional SIM card tax, daily usage tax and per call tax) that decrease affordability. Mobile-broadband has been deployed relatively recently. Both AIRTEL and TIGO launched 3G services in 2014, with TIGO simultaneously launching LTE in 2014, the first by a MILLICOM operation in Africa.

Fixed services: SOTEL is the sole provider of fixed-telephone services using copper lines and CDMA wireless local loop. Fixed-telephone connections have been dropping due to the popularity of mobile services. Fixed-broadband connections are very limited and most fixed-broadband connections are based on fixed wireless technologies, which are provided by several operators. As a landlocked country, Chad relies on the backbone connectivity of neighbouring countries to access undersea fibre-optic cables. A fibre-optic backbone network running along oil pipelines to Cameroon was completed in 2012, although the capacity contracted remains low. There are two other projects supported by development partners to extend fibre-optic backbones. The CAB project is sponsored by the World Bank and would link Chad to neighbouring countries. The African Development Bank is sponsoring the Trans-Sahara Optic Fibre Backbone Project, which would lay fibre-optic cable along the Trans-Sahara Highway connecting Chad to Algeria via Niger, as well as Chad to Nigeria. Meanwhile, Chad continues to rely on satellite for a substantial portion of its international Internet bandwidth.

Government policy: The Ministry of Posts and New Information Technologies is responsible for the sector policy and overseeing the national agencies responsible for various aspects of ICTs. The Ministry's Action Plan for ICT Development has seven strategic axes: (a) development of infrastructure, with an emphasis on the national backbone; (b) ICT for poverty reduction; (c) reinforcing the legal and regulatory framework; (d) content development; (e) reinforcing human capacity; (f) e-Government; and (g) enhancing ICT access for vulnerable groups. The Government is also considering the privatization of SOTEL, despite several unsuccessful attempts in the past. The main sector legislation is the 2014 Law Covering Electronic Communications and Postal Activities. The Authority for Regulation of Electronic Communications and Posts replaced the former Chad Office of Telecommunications Regulation following the adoption of the new telecommunications law.

Key indicators for Chad (2017)		Africa	World
Fixed-telephone sub. per 100 inhab.	*0.1*	0.9	13.0
Mobile-cellular sub. per 100 inhab.	*38.3*	74.4	103.6
Active mobile-broadband sub. per 100 inhab.	*22.6*	24.8	61.9
3G coverage (% of population)	*26.6*	62.7	87.9
LTE/WiMAX coverage (% of population)	*26.6*	28.4	76.3
Individuals using the Internet (%)	*6.5*	22.1	48.6
Households with a computer (%)	*3.3*	8.9	47.1
Households with Internet access (%)	*3.4*	19.4	54.7
International bandwidth per Internet user (kbit/s)	1.5	11.2	76.6
Fixed-broadband sub. per 100 inhab.	0.1	0.6	13.6
Fixed-broadband sub. by speed tiers, % distribution			
-256 kbit/s to 2 Mbit/s	*71.1*	38.7	4.2
-2 to 10 Mbit/s	*14.9*	37.2	13.2
-equal to or above 10 Mbit/s	*14.0*	24.1	82.6

Note: Data in italics are ITU estimates. Source: ITU (as of June 2018).

Conclusion: The landlocked country faces challenges to expand access to rural areas. Planned projects to build out the national backbone with multiple cross-border connections should help to increase coverage while lowering costs due to increased choices in undersea fibre-optic cables. At the same time, a reduction in telecommunication usage charges could increase affordability.