

Ethiopia

The country is the most populated landlocked nation in the world, which presents a challenge for ICT deployment. The ICT sector is State-run, with the Government dedicating significant resources to its development.

Mobile services: Government-owned Ethio Telecom is the sole provider of telecommunication services in the country. The Government considers that this arrangement best ensures ICT development in line with national goals. The GSM mobile network was launched in 1999. In 2014, just under half the households (49 per cent) in the country had mobile phones with a wide spread between urban (84 per cent) and rural areas (40 per cent).¹⁸⁵ Ethio Telecom deployed 3G services in January 2009 and LTE in Addis Ababa in March 2015.

Fixed services: Ethio Telecom offers fixed-telephone service through copper landlines and CDMA wireless local loop. Fixed broadband is offered via ADSL2+ and fibre-optic technologies, and generally used in urban areas. Fixed wireless broadband is provided through CDMA EVDO. The nationwide fibre-optic backbone network essentially reaches all main towns and key border crossings in the North, East and South. Traffic in other areas is backhauled via microwave and satellite technology. Though landlocked, Ethiopia has diverse access to capacity on several international undersea cables through three border crossings: (a) via three submarine cables landing in Djibouti; (b) on two cables landing in Sudan; and (c) on two cables landing in Kenya. There is also a fibre link to Somaliland in Somalia.

Government policy: The Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) (2015/16-2019/20) is the guiding national policy instrument for development in Ethiopia. GTP II has the overall objective of Ethiopia becoming a lower-middle-income country by 2025. ICT is recognized as a vital economic infrastructure in GTP II. The plan calls for (a) enhancing the role of the sector in socio-economic activities to enable the country to grow rapidly; (b) expanding ICT coverage in all parts of the country; (c) providing competitive ICT services in terms of cost and quality; and (d) creating a conducive environment for the private sector to use ICT. The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology is responsible for the sector, including regulatory supervision as well

Key indicators for Ethiopia (2017)	Africa	World	
Fixed-telephone sub. per 100 inhab.	1.1	0.9	13.0
Mobile-cellular sub. per 100 inhab.	59.7	74.4	103.6
Active mobile-broadband sub. per 100 inhab.	7.1	24.8	61.9
3G coverage (% of population)	85.0	62.7	87.9
LTE/WiMAX coverage (% of population)	10.0	28.4	76.3
Individuals using the Internet (%)	18.6	22.1	48.6
Households with a computer (%)	4.9	8.9	47.1
Households with Internet access (%)	18.0	19.4	54.7
International bandwidth per Internet user (kbit/s)	2.0	11.2	76.6
Fixed-broadband sub. per 100 inhab.	0.6	0.6	13.6
Fixed-broadband sub. by speed tiers, % distribution			
<i>-256 kbit/s to 2 Mbit/s</i>	23.3	38.7	4.2
<i>-2 to 10 Mbit/s</i>	47.4	37.2	13.2
<i>-equal to or above 10 Mbit/s</i>	29.3	24.1	82.6

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

as e-government infrastructure deployment and e-services coordination. The Ministry is drafting a new ICT policy and broadband strategy to reflect the goals of the GTP. The Telecommunications Proclamation of 1996 and its 2002 amendment are the relevant laws guiding the sector. An IT Park called EthioICT-Village is being developed in the outskirts of the capital, Addis Ababa. With a state-of-the-art infrastructure including fibre-optic connectivity and data centre, EthioICT-Village will serve as the headquarters of both Ethio Telecom and the Ministry with the aim of becoming a leading ICT hub in Africa.

Conclusion: Despite the challenges in deploying ICTs in this large, landlocked and mainly rural nation, the Government has devoted substantial resources recently to boost infrastructure, including last mile access, to achieve the ambitious targets in the country's national development plan.