

Saint Lucia

All segments of the telecommunication sector are under competition in Saint Lucia, and service pricing is typically below regional and international levels. Industry investment has undergone a substantial decrease in recent years, and most of the previous investment was directed towards upgrading mobile networks. Operators' revenues also experienced a decrease in 2015; nevertheless, the sector revenues amounted to approximately 6 per cent of the national GDP of Saint Lucia in the same year.

Mobile services: There are two operators providing mobile services in Saint Lucia, the incumbent LIME and Digicel.³⁹⁰ Mobile services revenue accounts for over half of the industry's total revenues, and mobile phones are the primary means to access the Internet in the country. Mobile-broadband has been available to consumers since 2013, and has been the segment producing the most substantial increase in terms of service uptake in recent years.³⁹¹ Saint Lucia is one of the five members of the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL), an overarching regulatory body that assists in the creation and implementation of relevant policies and regulation.

Fixed services: Fixed-telephone penetration has remained relatively stable over the past couple of years in Saint Lucia, despite the regional and global downward trends. The market has been largely dominated by the incumbent LIME, which was cemented with the acquisition of the only other competitor, Flow.³⁹³ The fixed-broadband segment has also seen an increase in penetration levels in recent years.

Government policy: The sector regulator, the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC), was created in 2000, and advises the sector Ministry on various matters to ensure the sustainable and harmonized development of ICT services in Saint Lucia.³⁹⁴ NTRC is also responsible for price regulation and fostering competition, as well as managing the national universal service fund. The current outlined priorities for the universal service fund are ensuring and expanding Internet access, and bringing telecommunication services to schools and other public institutions, among others.³⁹⁵ The regulator also works closely with ECTEL to

Key indicators for Saint Lucia (2017)		The Americas	World
Fixed-telephone sub. per 100 inhab.	19.6	23.9	13.0
Mobile-cellular sub. per 100 inhab.	98.8	111.8	103.6
Active mobile-broadband sub. per 100 inhab.	40.8	89.5	61.9
3G coverage (% of population)	70.0	93.9	87.9
LTE/WiMAX coverage (% of population)	0.0	84.3	76.3
Individuals using the Internet (%)	50.8	67.5	48.6
Households with a computer (%)	45.7	64.8	47.1
Households with Internet access (%)	45.7	68.3	54.7
International bandwidth per Internet user (kbit/s)	6.9	77.1	76.6
Fixed-broadband sub. per 100 inhab.	17.8	19.9	13.6
Fixed-broadband sub. by speed tiers, % distribution			
<i>-256 kbit/s to 2 Mbit/s</i>	31.4	6.6	4.2
<i>-2 to 10 Mbit/s</i>	47.6	23.1	13.2
<i>-equal to or above 10 Mbit/s</i>	21.0	70.3	82.6

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

develop and implement various policies on various subjects: for instance, net neutrality, consumer protection and submarine cable legislation, the latter two being covered by the recently approved Electronic Communications Bill.³⁹⁶

Conclusion: Saint Lucia's telecommunication sector presents enormous potential for development, especially in terms of both fixed- and mobile-broadband, as there is an untapped part of the population that has yet to adopt these services. The collaboration with the regional regulator, ECTEL, provides an invaluable opportunity, not only to learn and partner with its neighbouring countries, but also to ensure that ICT development remains a priority within the scope of public policies.