

Trinidad and Tobago

The telecommunications sector of Trinidad and Tobago has represented approximately 3 per cent of the country's annual GDP over recent years. This significant contribution echoes the increasing service adoption rates, which have been on an upward trend over the last decade, with the exception of fixed-telephony. Internet services, both mobile and fixed, are flourishing in the country, with a dynamic market and affordable pricing that encourages service adoption.

Mobile services: Mobile subscriptions have increased in the past year, with prepaid subscriptions representing over four times the number of postpaid subscriptions.⁴⁵⁴ The mobile market was liberalized in 2006 and has experienced remarkable growth since, expanding more than 70 per cent just within the first six months immediately after liberalization. Recently, the most significant increase in terms of penetration, approximately 9 per cent, has been witnessed by the mobile Internet segment.⁴⁵⁵ There are two mobile operators providing both voice and data services – Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT) and Digicel – that launched LTE in 2012.⁴⁵⁶ The mobile market is the main contributor to the industry's revenue, accounting for more than 35 per cent of the total amount.

Fixed services: Since its first decrease in adoption rates in 2007, fixed-telephone penetration rates have been on a steady decline, with regard to both subscriptions and revenue.⁴⁵⁷ Fixed-broadband, however, has experienced a more positive outlook, with increasing revenues and a competitive environment that hosts eight operators and employs a mix of technologies, among which are ADSL2+ and Fibre to the Curb (FTTC), Fibre to the Business (FTTB) or Home (FTTH).⁴⁵⁸

Government policy: The national regulator, Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT), was created in 2004 with the main objective of overseeing the transition to a liberalized competitive environment. TATT is also responsible for spectrum management, quality of service standards, encouraging industry investment and fostering competition in the sector, as well as ensuring sustainable and democratic sector development.⁴⁵⁹ For instance, the regulator signed contracts with third parties to implement fixed and mobile number portability

Key indicators for Trinidad and Tobago (2017)		The Americas	World
Fixed-telephone sub. per 100 inhab.	18.8	23.9	13.0
Mobile-cellular sub. per 100 inhab.	148.3	111.8	103.6
Active mobile-broadband sub. per 100 inhab.	46.1	89.5	61.9
3G coverage (% of population)	75.0	93.9	87.9
LTE/WiMAX coverage (% of population)	75.0	84.3	76.3
Individuals using the Internet (%)	77.3	67.5	48.6
Households with a computer (%)	75.1	64.8	47.1
Households with Internet access (%)	77.5	68.3	54.7
International bandwidth per Internet user (kbit/s)	172.5	77.1	76.6
Fixed-broadband sub. per 100 inhab.	23.9	19.9	13.6
Fixed-broadband sub. by speed tiers, % distribution			
-256 kbit/s to 2 Mbit/s	3.5	6.6	4.2
-2 to 10 Mbit/s	28.0	23.1	13.2
-equal to or above 10 Mbit/s	68.6	70.3	82.6

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

in late 2016 in an effort to increase market dynamism and consumer choice.⁴⁶⁰ Another remarkable public initiative, this one with universal service objectives, is National Free Wi-Fi, aiming at providing free public Wi-Fi at numerous locations throughout the country.

Conclusion: Despite lagging behind most of the regional services adoption rates, Trinidad and Tobago has been concentrating efforts on developing its telecommunications sector and so far has seen vast improvements. The regulator is currently undergoing an evaluation of its television white spaces to define a better strategy going forward for their use for provision of broadband.