MOD

QUESTION 4/2

Availability and affordability of user devices, and telecommunication/ICT equipment issues, including conformance and interoperability

1 Statement of the situation or problem

Indicator 5.b.1 – the proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by gender – is one of the seven ICT indicators agreed by the UN General Assembly to measure global progress along the Sustainable Development Goals (A/RES/71/313) and is also an indicator within the ICT Development Index. Latest ITU data suggests this indicator rests at 81% of men and 75% of women worldwide, with notable disparities by geographic region and by gender (ITU, 2023).

Several factors relate to the availability and affordability of users' devices, across the globe. The policies and regulations adopted by ITU Member States around affordability of users' devices, conformance and interoperability, counterfeits, and device theft, each have an influential impact on the ultimate price that consumers pay for the devices they use. In addition, barriers such as gender norms can impede also limit the availability of users' devices and ultimately our collective attainment of the ICT-related Sustainable Development Goals.

This challenge and its related policy and regulatory levers merit study by the ITU-D membership and the provision of guidance to the ICT community.

2 Question or issue for study

Study Question 4/2 is expected to examine issues related to the availability and affordability of users' device. The work covers the following items:

2.1 Sharing national experiences and best practices of users' devices within broadband policy and regulation, such as national broadband plans, ICT strategies, and mandates of Universal Service Funds (USFs) (in collaboration with Questions 1/1 and 4/1).

2.2 Sharing national experiences and best practices in collecting data and measuring the availability and affordability (in collaboration with Question 4/1) of user's devices, with emphasis on disaggregation across geography and other relevant socio-economic indicators.

2.3 Sharing national experiences and best practices in the public provision of users' devices, such as through schools, libraries, and other public access points.

2.4 Analysing of the impacts of availability and affordability (in collaboration with Question 4/1) of users' devices on the attainment of universal meaningful connectivity.

2.5 Sharing national experiences and best practices on the impact of the availability of users' devices on digital skills development (in collaboration with Question 5/2).

2.6 Sharing national experiences and best practices in consumer awareness of issues relevant to users' devices, including device theft (in possible collaboration with Question 5/1).

2.7 Sharing innovations and developments in conformance and interoperability (C&I) best practices.

2.8 Examining how capacity development can strengthen the ability of developing countries to reduce risks associated with low-quality equipment and equipment interoperability issues.

2.9 Sharing information regarding the establishment of mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) between countries.

Assessing the impact of the number of ICT devices on the radiocommunication environment, including the Internet of Things (IoT), and providing guidelines to the ITU-D membership for ICT-readiness related to C&I (in possible collaboration with Question 1/2.

Sharing national experiences and best practices on combating counterfeit, sub-standard, tampered devices, and theft of mobile devices.

3 Expected output

Studies on topics outlined in section 2 related to the availability and affordability of user devices and related telecommunication/ICT equipment issues are to be reported. Outputs are to be arranged as decided appropriate by the study Question.

4 Timing

1) Annual progress reports will be submitted to ITU-D Study Group 2.

2) A final report will be submitted to ITU-D Study Group 2.

5 Proposers/sponsors

ITU-D Study Group 2.

6 Sources of input

1) Member States, Sector Members and relevant experts.

2) Examination of regulations, policies and practices in countries that have created systems to manage these matters.

3) Other relevant international organizations.

4) Interviews, existing reports and surveys should also be used to gather data and information for the finalization of comprehensive sets of best-practice guidelines.

5) Material from regional telecommunication organizations, telecommunication research centres, manufacturers and working groups should also be utilized in order to avoid duplication of work.

6) Close cooperation with ITU-T study groups, in particular Study Group 11 and the Joint Coordination Activity on C&I testing, and with other organizations (e.g. ILAC, IAF, ISO, IEC) involved in C&I activities and other actions within ITU-D is required and extremely important.

7 Target audience

Target audience	Developed countries	Developing countries
Telecom policy-makers	Yes	Yes
Telecom regulators	Yes	Yes
Service providers/operators	Yes	Yes
Manufacturers	Yes	Yes
Consumers/end users	Yes	Yes
Standards-development organizations, including consortia	Yes	Yes
Testing laboratories	Yes	Yes
Certification bodies	Yes	Yes

a) Target audience

Depending on the nature of the output, policy- and decision-makers, middle to upper-level managers in operators, laboratories, standards-development organizations (SDOs), certification bodies, market-research agencies, regulators and ministries in developed, developing and least developed countries (LDCs) will be the predominant users of the output. Compliance managers at equipment manufacturers and system integrators could also use the output for information.

b) Proposed methods for implementation of the results

The results of the study Question are to be distributed through ITU-D interim and final reports. This will provide a means for the audience to have periodic updates of the work carried out and to provide input and/or seek clarification/more information from ITU-D Study Group 2 should they need it.

8 Proposed methods of handling the Question or issue

The study Question will be addressed within a study group over a four-year study period (with submission of interim results),and will be managed by a rapporteur and vice-rapporteurs. This will enable Member States and Sector Members to contribute their experiences and lessons learned with respect to conformity assessment, type-approval and interoperability, testing laboratories, recognition of testing reports, as well as combating counterfeit devices.

9 Coordination and collaboration

The ITU-D study group dealing with this study Question will need to coordinate with:

– Relevant ITU-T study groups, particularly Study Group 11
– Relevant focal points in BDT and ITU regional offices
– Coordinators of relevant project activities in BDT
– SDOs
– Conformity-assessment bodies (including testing organizations and laboratories, accreditation organizations, etc.) and industry consortia
– Consumers/end users
– Experts in this field

10 BDT programme link

a) WTDC Resolution 47 (Rev. Kigali, 2022)

b) WTSA Resolution 76 (Rev. New Delhi, 2024)

c) Resolution 123 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference

d) ITU C&I Programme.

Links to BDT programmes aimed at human capacity development and assistance to operators in developing countries and LDCs, programmes that deal with technical assistance and programmes concerning C&I.

11 Other relevant information

As may become apparent within the life of the Question.