



12<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 25 September 2024, Geneva, Switzerland

## SUMMARY

1. The [12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators \(EGH\)](#) took place on 25 September 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland with full remote participation offered. The EGH meeting was held in conjunction with the [15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators \(EGTI\)](#). This report summarises the EGH sessions.
2. A total of 263 participants attended the meeting – 151 participated in-person and 112 remotely. Participants included experts from regulators, telecommunication operators, ministries and national statistical offices (NSOs) from 85 countries, as well as ITU-D Sector Members, other UN agencies and regional organizations. Women made up 45 per cent of participants.
3. Ms [Linah Ngumba](#), Head of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics' ICT Statistics Section, and Chair of EGH, chaired the meeting. ITU staff from the ICT Data and Analytics Division acted as the Secretariat.
4. The meeting discussed the contributions received in the [EGH online forum](#) on the 2024 Work Programme agreed by EGH at its previous meeting. Background documents on key topics of the agenda were prepared and disseminated to all EGH members in advance of the meeting. They were also shared during the meeting. These background documents aimed to provide relevant information to be used by EGH members and to support the debate and decisions to be taken during the meeting. Furthermore, the documents were prepared to advance these topics and make proposals to the whole EGH.
5. The discussions focused on progressing measurement and data collection across various topics. The agenda included an item related to the measurement of ICT skills. A joint session with EGTI explored the topic of the ICT Development Index. A representative from York University also provided an informative session on how ICT indicators can be translated into survey questions that respondents understand. In addition, Eurostat presented its experience with developing new questions to measure individuals' use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) through the Eurostat model questionnaire. The meeting further discussed the future work of EGH, including the identification of topics that required further review and discussion related to indicators derived from household surveys of ICT access and use. Throughout the meeting, participants' discussions and inputs enriched the topics at hand.

6. The first substantive agenda item was on [Measuring ICT skills using household surveys to monitor universal and meaningful connectivity](#). The lead of the **subgroup on measuring ICT skills using household surveys**, Riina Vuorikari, presented the subgroup's [report](#). She highlighted the need to adapt ICT skills indicators to increase their relevance and robustness and presented the subgroup's recommendations for new wordings for several indicators. She also presented the subgroup's proposal to begin to collect data for overall skill levels of individuals and noted that developing a common reduced set of ICT skills indicators across countries remains a challenge. Underlining the usefulness of collecting ICT skill levels, Nathan Menton from the ITU ICT Data and Analytics Division presented the [results of its 2024 questionnaire](#) where data on ICT skill levels were provided by 40 countries. These data are currently available on the [ITU DataHub](#) and new data will be collected through the ITU ICT Household Long Questionnaire. This questionnaire was sent to countries on 16 September with a deadline of 16 October.

7. The subgroup lead then presented the subgroup's recommendations:

- To adapt the wording of ICT skills indicators and dropping two indicators from the set of skills indicators;
- For countries to report overall ICT skill levels for individuals;
- For interested countries to investigate the possibility of using a reduced set of indicators by comparing results against the full set;
- To close the subgroup with the understanding that ICT skills will continue to evolve and should be revisited in several years.

8. In the discussion that followed, EGH members asked for and received clarification on the calculation of ICT skill levels and how the indicators were selected and weighted in each skill area. Members also noted the additional levels of analysis that will be possible as more countries provide data and socio-demographic comparisons are available. Costa Rica also indicated its intention to calculate ICT skill levels by area in its next data collection. EGH members thanked Ms Vuorikari, Mr Menton and the subgroup for their work on the topic.

9. **EGH agreed to the recommendations of the subgroup** including the changes to the wordings of ICT skills indicator and the collection of overall ICT skill levels for individuals. **EGH agreed to close the subgroup** and recognized that the subgroup will likely be reopened in the future as ICT skills continue to evolve. EGH also recommended keeping ICT skills measurement as a discussion topic in the EGH Forum.

10. The next agenda item, [From concept to implementation: designing ICT survey questions](#), featured a presentation by Kerry Scott of York University on [insights from her team's experience with cognitive testing of ICT survey questions](#) in several low or lower-middle-income countries. Ms Scott highlighted the need to simplify questions to ensure respondent

comprehension. She provided information on both general principles for question design as well as specific principles related to measuring digital skills. Lastly, she provided detailed suggestions for improving survey questions for certain ICT skills indicators.

11. In the discussion that followed, EGH members thanked Ms Scott for her presentation on the topic and some noted challenges in designing their own survey questions. Members also noted that prescribed or even practical limits on the number of questions in many surveys can create incentives to add more information into a single question rather than breaking out an indicator into several short, clear questions. The ITU noted that they plan to work with Ms Scott and her team in the future to modify the existing sample ICT household survey in the [Manual for Measuring ICT Access and Use by Households and Individuals](#) using the principles highlighted in the presentation.

12. Following this presentation there was a session on [Measuring AI use in household surveys](#). Andrea Attwenger of Eurostat presented their work to add new questions on [measuring the use of artificial intelligence \(AI\) by individuals](#). The presentation focused on the motivation and the challenges in capturing the true usage of AI through household surveys. Ms Attwenger also noted that this is an evolving field and that the questions developed for Eurostat are likely to be amended in the future.

13. EGH members highlighted the interest in other aspects of individuals' use of AI and connected the challenge of developing clear, concise questions on AI with Ms Scott's earlier presentation on designing survey questions. EGH members also thanked Ms Attwenger for the presentation.

14. In the afternoon session on [Country experiences](#), Jacques N'Guessan of Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Côte d'Ivoire (ARTCI) and Lamin Dibba of the Gambia Bureau of Statistics each presented how their country has worked to collect ICT data from household surveys in recent years. Mr N'Guessan's [presentation](#) demonstrated the benefits of conducting regular ICT household surveys. It also highlighted the importance of collaboration between telecom regulators and national statistics offices to undertake such surveys. Mr Lamin [presented a different perspective](#) relevant to countries where funding is not yet available to conduct regular, dedicated ICT household surveys. Gambia will include ICT questions in its next census and is investigating ways to use mobile phone data to complement these data.

15. EGH members asked and received responses to several questions on survey methodology in Côte d'Ivoire from Mr N'Guessan and from Mr Dibba on the modalities of working with World Bank in Gambia. Members thanked Mr N'Guessan and Mr Dibba. The EGH Chair also encouraged members to continue to share their experiences and discuss on the EGH Forum.

16. The next item of the agenda addressed future work of the EGH. The Chair led discussion on the work programme for the coming year. EGH members clearly confirmed their support for the creation of a new subgroup on **Measuring use of AI through household surveys** as members from many countries<sup>1</sup> indicated their interest in participating in this subgroup.

17. EGH also agreed to a new discussion topic on **Improving survey questions to increase respondent comprehension** given the interest and relevance to countries.

18. During the session, the Russian Federation raised a proposal from the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communication (RCC) to amend the terms of reference of EGH and EGTI. Several EGH and EGTI members commented that given the fundamental changes proposed to the terms of reference, specifically to the governance of the expert groups, the current meeting was not the proper venue for taking these decisions. EGH and EGTI members recommended that the topic be discussed in meetings related to the preparatory process for the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) as the preparations have commenced.

19. The next item concerned the [Report of the joint EGH-EGTI subgroup on the ICT Development Index \(IDI\)](#) and was introduced through a joint session with EGTI. The subgroup leads, Teddy Woodhouse of Ofcom (UK) and Winston Oyadomari of Cetic.br (Brazil), presented a summary of the [joint report](#), highlighting the development of a candidate indicators framework that can be used to identify and assess indicators that could be considered in a revision of the IDI methodology if EGTI/EGH decide to do so after the 4 year validity of the current methodology expire.

20. The subgroup recommended to:

- Continue to use universal and meaningful connectivity as the underpinning conceptual framework of the IDI;
- Adopt the candidate indicators framework;
- Extend the mandate of the subgroup.

21. EGH and EGTI members commented on the shifting relevance of indicators and highlighted the work of last year's subgroup on measuring fixed-broadband penetration rates. Esperanza Magpantay from the ITU ICT Data and Analytics Division provided an update on improving the availability of data on numbers of households in line with recommendations from the fixed-broadband subgroup. She specifically highlighted the

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<sup>1</sup> Members from Algeria, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Paraguay, and Philippines expressed interest in creating and joining a subgroup of measuring use of AI through household surveys during the session. Members from Canada, Gabon, South Africa, and Zimbabwe also expressed their interest to the ITU in discussions between sessions.

progress of a task force on the topic established by the UN Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) and led by ITU.

22. EGH members noted the importance of this work in guiding future updates of the IDI. **EGH agreed to extend the mandate of the subgroup** to comprehensively assess candidate indicators and to work toward possible recommendations of indicators for the next update of the IDI.

23. Following the joint session, EGH then identified the following topics for the future work of the EGH:

- EGH agreed to establish a new subgroup on measuring the use of AI through household surveys;
- EGH agreed to extend the mandate of the joint subgroup with EGTI on the ICT Development Index;
- EGH agreed to keep the following topics open as discussion topics of the EGH Forum:
  - i. Review of the household long questionnaire;
  - ii. Relevance of household Internet access;
  - iii. Measuring e-waste;
- EGH agreed to open new discussion topics on:
  - i. Measuring ICT skills;
  - ii. Improving survey questions to increase respondent comprehension.

24. The EGH Chair presented the draft conclusions and recommendations of the 12<sup>th</sup> EGH meeting, noting that all decisions will be subject to comments until 25 October 2024, after which they will become final. She also encouraged members to contact the ITU directly ([indicators@itu.int](mailto:indicators@itu.int)) if they are interested in joining either of the subgroups. Lastly, the EGH Chair thanked all the speakers and presenters and closed the meeting.