

# ITU Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI)



15<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 25-26 September 2024, Geneva Switzerland

## SUMMARY

### Overview

1. The [15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ITU Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators \(EGTI\)](#) took place in Geneva, Switzerland, with the option of remote participation, from 25 to 26 September 2024. It was held in conjunction with the [12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ITU Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators \(EGH\)](#) which was held 25 September 2024.
2. A total of 263 participants attended the EGH and EGTI meetings, which included experts representing 85 Member States countries, participants from the State of Palestine<sup>1</sup>, 18 participants from ITU-D Sector Members, 3 from UN and its Specialized Agencies and 51 from other organizations, from all world regions. Women made up 45 per cent of participants and 57 per cent of participants attended physically. Experts from the ITU-R and ITU-D sector, including ITU Regional Offices also attended the meeting.
3. The affiliation of participants included international and regional organizations (Caribbean Telecommunications Union, CIS Statcommittee, Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTA), European Commission, LIRNEasia, OECD, UNCTAD, UNESCAP and The World Bank) as well as Operating Agencies and Scientific and Industrial organizations (China Telecommunications Corporation, Empresa de Telecomunicaciones de Cuba (ETECSA), GSM Association, Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd., Saudi Telecom). Members of Academia was affiliated with the Colegio Oficial de Ingenieros de Telecomunicación (COIT), Spain, Universidad de San Andres, Argentina, University of the Philippines, and York University, Canada.
4. Mr. Bernard Banda, Director for Economic Regulation and Consumer Protection at Zambia Information & Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA), and Chair of EGTI, chaired the meeting. ITU staff from the ICT Data and Analytics Division acted as the secretariat.
5. The purpose of the 15<sup>th</sup> EGTI meeting was to report on the outcomes of the work of the EGTI subgroups and examine the contributions received from members of the EGTI online discussion [forum](#) over the current working period, with a view to finalizing the items under discussion. The topics that were discussed during the EGTI meeting were those identified by the EGTI Work Programme for 2024, which included discussing the report of the subgroup on the development of the ICT Development Indicator (IDI) (jointly with EGH) and the report of the subgroup on ICT Price Baskets. The meeting also offered an opportunity to discuss the measurement of quality of service and quality of experience, explore the approaches to measuring the environmental footprint of the ICT sector, and exchange national best practices on collecting ICT/telecommunication market data.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 99 (Rev. Dubai, 2018).

## Topics discussed

1. On Day 1, the **joint session of EGH and EGTI** discussed the [Report of the joint EGH-EGTI subgroup on the ICT Development Index \(IDI\)](#). 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.
2. 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.
3. 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 total numbers of households in line with recommendations from the fixed-broadband subgroup. She specifically highlighted the progress of a task force on the topic established by the UN Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) and led by ITU. She mentioned that a report to the UN Statistical Commission 2025 on population census will include a proposal for the need to calculate the total number of households and will call for support from countries to designate the UN Population Division to lead this work. Additionally, the proposal will include forming a group of experts, including country representatives, to develop the methodology and requested the allocation of necessary resources to support the effort.
4. EGTI and EGH members noted the importance of this work in guiding future updates of the IDI. **EGTI (and 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.
5. On Day 2, the Mr. Bernard Banda, the EGTI Chair, presented the established working methods of EGTI along with the agenda, which was approved by the participants.
6. The first item on the agenda was the measurement of **quality of service (QoS) and quality of experience (QoE)**. The first part of the session was dedicated to sharing country experience on the topic. Mr. Yuldashev (Ministry of Digital Technologies, Uzbekistan) and Mr. Azimov (Republican Telecommunications Management Center of Uzbekistan) [presented](#) the legal and institutional context and shared innovative technological solutions for broadband QoS measurements in Uzbekistan. Mr. Nor Azhar Hassan (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission) [presented](#) the Broadband QoE Survey carried out in Malaysia, along with the Consumer Satisfaction Index and the service quality gap measurements methodology and results. The presentations triggered lively ensuing discussion, with participants sharing best practices and seeking additional details about the measurement practices, also raising questions on which stakeholder and at what time should conduct unbiased QoS and QoE measurement, how to aggregate data, etc. The second topic addressed in the session were focused on the broadband QoS indicators defined by the ITU in 2020<sup>2</sup>. The presentation by Prof. Inigo Herguera

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<sup>2</sup> See methodology at: [https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/handbook/QoS\\_2020\\_indicators\\_methodology\\_web.pdf](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/handbook/QoS_2020_indicators_methodology_web.pdf)

[summarized](#) the quality of the QoS data collected in the ITU WTI Long Questionnaires. The findings highlighted the low response rate to these indicators, the variety of measurement units used, data discrepancy with reasonably expected values, and user observations about the lack of clarity in how to report differentiated findings based on network technology. The presentation also served to open a discussion about how to improve data collection on QoS indicators. Initial proposals included (1) the need to better define units (in Mbps) and the provision of some guidance on expected speeds and latency by technology and network type (fixed or mobile); (2) the need to better define methodology for sampling and aggregating measurement data, or, provide details in a note about the methods used and breakdowns, if available; (3) the possibility of using other, commercially available sources for speed measurement; and (4) for prioritizing the list of QoS indicators to avoid burden on respondents. In light of the richness of comments that followed, the Chair suggested to continue the exchange of best practices either in the online forum, or, if there is sufficient interest, create a subgroup on the topic.

7. The following session was dedicated to the **review of ICT Price Basket methodology**. Mr. Daniel Vertesy (ITU) provided a short summary of the current ITU ICT Price data collection methodology as a scene setter. This was followed by the [presentation](#) of the [Report of the subgroup on ICT prices](#) and its recommendation by Ms. Shazna Zuhyle, the subgroup coordinator. The speaker highlighted that due to evolution in the market, changing consumption patterns, the baskets need to be updated in order to ensure that ICT services price statistics remain relevant and meaningful.

The **subgroup recommended** (I) revising the rule on contract modality when selecting the reference plan for a basket. Currently, the cheapest available plan was to be selected irrespective of modality, at the same time, taking into consideration commitment period and early termination fee in case when a postpaid plan is the cheapest. (In other words, a prepaid plan with slightly higher monthly subscription fees than a postpaid plan was assessed cheaper if the postpaid one had an annual commitment period and implied breakout fees higher than the difference between the two. The rationale behind this was that commitment period is the user's prerogative and should not be used to presume or determine penalty fees.) The subgroup reviewed the pros and cons in both approaches, and while it noted that many members of the sub-group were in favour of 'Option 2' that advocated for the cheapest plan, irrespective of modality and disregarding breakout fees, however, the majority recommended 'Option 1', where the selection would be based on the cheapest plan of the most common contract modality in a country.

The subgroup, having reviewed changes in voice, SMS and data consumption patterns in recent years in low- middle- and high-income economies, **also made recommendations** to (II) revise the basket compositions in terms of monthly minimum data, voice and SMS allowance and remove one basket, as follows (second column in the table below):

Current baskets	Revisions recommended by the subgroup	Revisions agreed by EGTI 2024
<b>Mobile-cellular low-usage (voice + SMS only) basket</b> (70 mins + 20 SMS)	Remove	Remove
<b>Mobile data and voice low-consumption basket</b> (70 mins + 20 SMS + 500 MB)	70 mins + 50 SMS + 1 GB	70 mins + 50 SMS + 1 GB
<b>Mobile data and voice high-consumption Basket</b> (140 mins + 70 SMS + 2 GB)	140 mins + 20 SMS + 4 GB	140 mins + 20 SMS + 5 GB; and temporarily, keep: 140 mins + 70 SMS + 2 GB
<b>Data-only mobile-broadband basket</b> (2GB)	4 GB	5 GB
<b>Fixed broadband basket</b> (5GB)	Unchanged	Unchanged

As for the fixed broadband basket, the speaker noted that the subgroup reviewed the speed definition and minimum monthly data allowance, and concluded that while the 256 Kbps speed applied for broadband was very low, given the plurality of national definitions and in the absence of an ITU-T recommendation, EGTI is not in the position to change this. As for the minimum monthly allowance of 5GB, given that close to 150 economies had unlimited allowance in the cheapest fixed broadband plan on the market, the subgroup concluded that changing it would not have any effect on data collection, and decided to keep it unchanged.

**EGTI Members discussed** in detail the revised ICT price basket composition and contract modality rules. Propositions were made for not considering most common contract modality in the market and to disregard the commitment period (that is, instead of what was presented as 'Option 1', support shifted to 'Option 2') as well as to revise the data allowance (increase the 4 GB recommended threshold to 5 GB). While a few participants noted that voice- and SMS-only subscriptions were still relevant in their markets, the majority agreed that ITU should not collect statistics for the mobile cellular low-usage basket for global comparisons. Members also called for continuing data collection according to the current definition of the Mobile data- and voice high-consumption basket to allow the possibility of continuity beyond 2027 for one of the affordability indicators of the IDI.

8. Finally, **EGTI agreed** to
  - a. revise the rule on *contract modality* (prepaid/postpaid): "option 2": select the cheapest plan, irrespective of contract modality; from the service provider with the highest market share (based on the number of active mobile-cellular subscriptions); without consideration of breakout or early termination fees;
  - b. To discontinue the collection of the *Mobile-cellular low usage basket* (70 min + 20 SMS);
  - c. To revise the threshold of the *Mobile data and voice Low Consumption Basket*, from (70 mins + 20 SMS + 500 MB) to 70 mins + 50 SMS + 1 GB;
  - d. To revise the *Mobile data and voice High Consumption Basket*, from 140 mins + 70 SMS + 2 GB to 140 mins + 20 SMS + 5 GB;
  - e. To revise the *Data-only mobile broadband basket*, from 2GB to 5 GB;
  - f. To retain the *Fixed broadband basket* (5GB) as is;
  - g. To start the data collection in 2025 for the new indicators; but still collect data for the old definition of the Mobile data and voice High Consumption Basket (that is, 140 mins + 70 SMS + 2 GB) for comparability on a temporary basis;
  - h. Close the subgroup and move item to forum discussion; report to EGTI on the initial results of the 2025 data collection
9. The subsequent forward-looking session was dedicated to **Developing new indicators: measuring the environmental footprint of key players in the ICT sector**. Mr. Seth Ayers (The World Bank) [presented](#) the World Bank's work on the topic of 'green digital', Ms. Rosie McDonald (ITU) [presented](#) recent ITU work on advancing green digital action towards a net-zero ICT sector, and shared the results of the ad-hoc survey on regulators' data collection of greenhouse gas emission indicators. In the ensuing discussion, members highlighted country experience (France, Portugal, Malaysia), while BEREC representatives shared their work (including a 2023 report<sup>3</sup> and ongoing working group) in defining environmental indicators and the data collection at country level. It was concluded that EGTI may open the measurement of

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<sup>3</sup> [BEREC Report on Sustainability Indicators for Electronic Communications Networks and Services](#)

the environmental footprint of the ICT sector as a topic for experience sharing, and if there is sufficient support, a dedicated subgroup could be opened that may explore possible indicators that could be developed for consideration for EGTI.

10. The following session, titled Building the foundations for high-quality ICT statistics from administrative sources, provided an opportunity to share and exchange best practices in data collection from operators by national ICT regulatory authorities and ministries, a continuous challenge faced many EGTI members. First, Mr. Bernard Banda presented the [data collection and management platform](#) recently developed for use by ZICTA, Zambia, an advanced tool allowing the review of indicators, market segments, user management, and shared useful considerations for others wishing to engage in similar platform development. Next, Mr. Diego Larriera (URSEC) presented the [Uruguayan experience](#) in telecommunications data management, highlighting the strong legal framework, the data collection tool and dissemination, as well as a use case and best practice in traffic data measurement. Ms. Grace Hernan (ECTEL) presented the innovative tool and approach used in a multi-country context in the [Eastern Caribbean](#) for data collection, management and visualization. It provided steps in terms of the project management, as well as highlighted the challenges of continuous development of a platform. Finally, first of the two presenters from Peru, [Ms. Liz Pineda](#) introduced the Ministry of Transport and Communications' efforts to collect and process telecommunications data, the legal and institutional basis, and how the adaptable, recent online system helped decision-making for public policies and sector development. [Mr. Marvin Padilla \(OSIPTEL\)](#) presented PUNKU, the regulatory authority's open data tool used to collect and disseminate telecommunications data for market transparency, relying on standardized formats and user-friendly reporting and visualization at different levels of aggregation.

The presentations triggered a lively conversation on the various approaches. **EGTI members agreed** that robust data collection at the level of regulators is a prerequisite for high-quality world telecommunication/ICT statistics, and the experience shared will help the global community in improving the quality, timeliness and reliability of administrative data. EGTI members will continue sharing best practices on data collection and dissemination in the online forum.

11. In the session on [future work](#) for 2025, EGTI Members discussed a wide range of possible topics to address. Based on the guidelines presented by the EGTI Chair, for a subgroup to be launched, at least ten committed participants should sign up by 25 October 2024 during the meeting or in the [online forum](#) (otherwise a discussion topic will be opened on the EGTI forum instead), encouraging regional diversity, and establishing a priority so that no more than three subgroups (including joint ones with EGH) would be launched in a year. As is customary for EGTI, the scope of work will be established by the Chair in consultation with the Secretariat. The subgroup lead will be appointed by ITU in agreement with the Chair.

12. **EGTI agreed** that the following topics would feature on its future work agenda: extension of the mandate of the joint EGTI-EGH subgroup on reviewing the IDI; Submarine cables; Network sharing (raised in the forum); Environmental/sustainability of ICT sector indicators; Refinement of QoS / speed indicators; Satellite-based broadband Internet indicators; Developing Middle-mile connectivity indicators; (data centers, cloud computing, secure Internet servers, IXPs); OTT use indicators; Emerging technologies.

The meeting resolved to subject all the decisions regarding the Agenda to comments until 25 October 2024, after which they would become final.