ITU REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM

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BISHKEK 2025

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State of digital development and trends in the CIS region: Challenges and opportunities

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Measuring digital development

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Informing the WTDC-25 preparatory process

- The "State of digital development and trends" series and the associated RPM documents inform participants and stakeholders as they discuss regional digital agendas in the lead up of WTDC-25.

- Each report consists of two parts: the first provides an overview of the state of digital connectivity in the region, and the second showcases case studies.
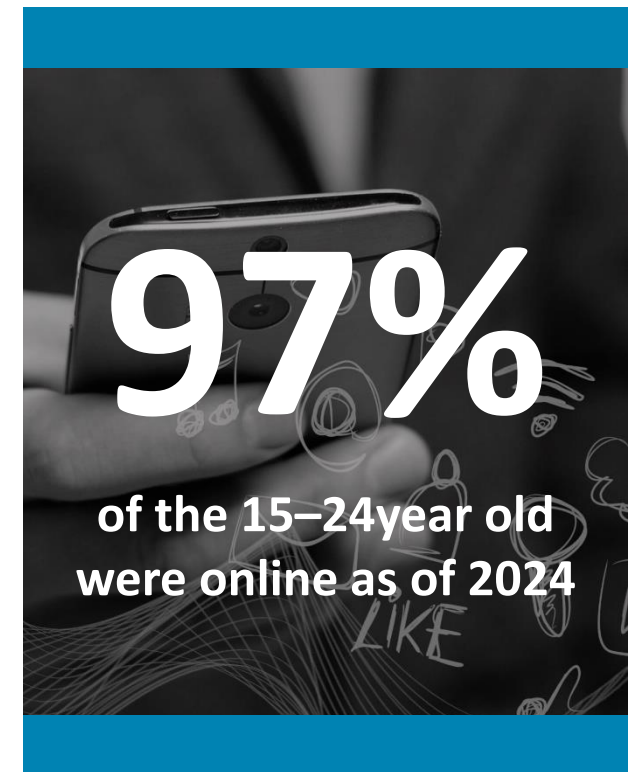
ITUWTDC

BAKU2025

17– 28 November 2025
Baku, Azerbaijan

Universal and meaningful connectivity: a policy imperative

- Universal and meaningful connectivity (UMC) is a policy imperative to fully leverage the potential of connectivity. It is a requirement for enabling digital transformation.

- UMC enables everyone to enjoy a safe, enriching, and productive online experience at an affordable cost.

- UMC does not mean everyone must be connected all the time but describes a situation where everyone can access the Internet optimally and affordably whenever and wherever needed.

Digital momentum in the CIS

- Universal access achieved, with 98% of population covered by 3G mobile network or higher

- 92% of the population online in 2024, the highest adoption rate among regions, well above the global average (68%).

- Gender parity in Internet use achieved

- Mobile broadband widely affordable

97%

of the 15–24year old were online as of 2024

Uneven progress across countries and communities

- Wide variation in digital development levels across the nine CIS economies

- 7% of the rural population has no Internet access at all, and 5G roll out is very slow

- Fixed broadband remains out of reach in several countries

- Landlocked status poses challenges for infrastructure and connectivity.

<1%

share of population covered by 5G in rural areas (18% in cities)

Gaps in digital policy and regulation

Only

1

CIS country (Armenia) in G4 regulation stage

- Only one country has reached the most advanced stage of ICT regulation ("G4")

- Lack of regulatory maturity impacts market competition, investment, and expansion of digital services.

- Greater harmonization needed to foster regional integration

- Policy alignment and investment depend on stronger regulatory capacity

Structural barriers and digital policy gaps

- CIS scored 67/100 on the Global Cybersecurity Index 2024, just above the global average (66).

- Cyber-readiness performance varies widely across CIS, with a 70-point gap between top and bottom performers

- Only three countries have e-waste regulations

- Major data gaps hinder policy planning and progress tracking, notably related to digital skills

6.5%
of e-waste
was formally recycled in
the CIS region in 2022

BDT4Impact: Featured case studies (1)

- **Armenia**: A project boosted digital connectivity to remote communities, improving access to education, health, and online services.

- **Uzbekistan:** A regional workshop helped raised awareness about the importance of UMC and its measurement.

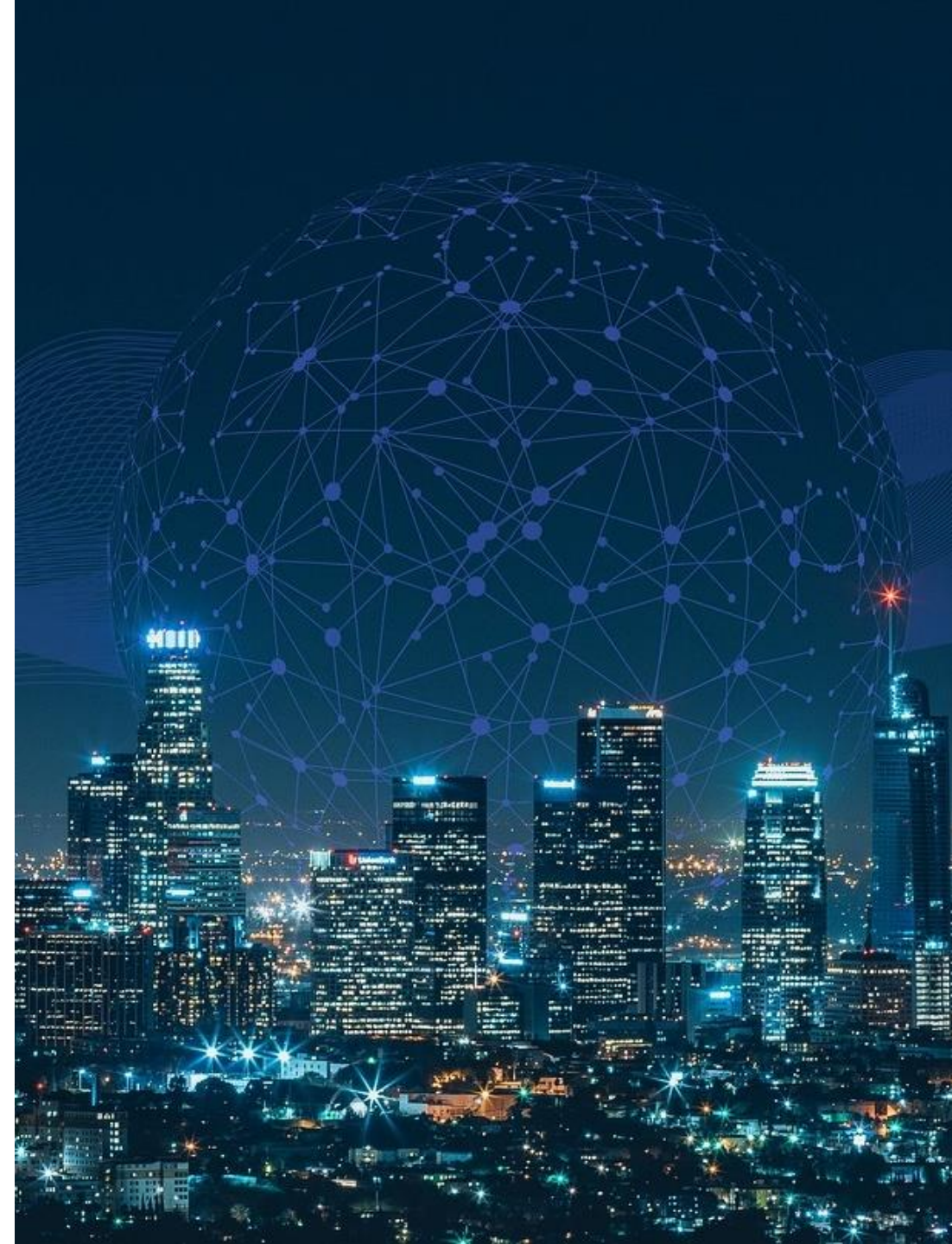- **CIS-wide**: Young people from five CIS countries learned to create and pitch startups.

BDT4Impact: Featured case studies (2)

- **Azerbaijan:** Technical assistance enhanced national ICT data-collection and analysis systems.

- **Kyrgyzstan**: Regional forum focused on developing national digital transformation strategies.

- **CIS-wide**: Cyberdrills boosted cybersecurity readiness across CIS countries.

The road ahead in the CIS

- Expand infrastructure and reduce affordability gaps

- Strengthen ICT regulation and digital governance

- Improve statistical capacity to close data gaps

- Foster collaboration on infrastructure, policy, and cybersecurity

Risks and challenges

- Regulatory fragmentation and weak institutional capacity

- Infrastructure barriers in landlocked countries

- Uneven cybersecurity and sustainability efforts

- Limited digital skills and lack of reliable data for policymaking

I Thank you!

More information:

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