Ref.:   Circular BDT/DNS/CYB/008   Geneva, 5 April 2023

- ITU Member States
- State of Palestine (Resolution 99 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)
- ITU Global Cybersecurity Focal Points

Subject: Invitation to participate in the fifth edition of the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCIv5) and to nominate a country focal point

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to announce the upcoming fifth edition of the ITU Global Cybersecurity Index (GCIv5) and request you to nominate a focal point responsible for coordinating the data collection process from **10 April to 16 July 2023**.

The GCI initiative, first launched in 2015 by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), aims to assess countries' commitment to cybersecurity and identify best practices. Following the support expressed by Member States in Resolution 45 at the World Telecommunications Development Conference (WTDC) held in Kigali, Rwanda from 6 to 16 June 2022, and the preceding GCI editions, The ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) is initiating a fifth edition of the Index.

ITU continues to engage in a multistakeholder approach to the fifth edition of the GCI, leveraging a wide range of expertise related to cybersecurity to improve the GCI Questionnaire through eight separate virtual meetings, numerous small-group discussions, and written feedback from Member States and cybersecurity experts. BDT has considered the discussions and feedback in the GCIv5 Questionnaire.

We request that your country nominate a focal point by **10 April 2023,** who will provide accurate responses to the GCI Questionnaire. Please note that your country's GCI focal point for the previous edition of the GCI is copied on this letter.

The Cybersecurity team will contact your assigned focal point and provide further instructions on how to access the online questionnaire, which will be closed in **July 2023**. A Reference Model, a Guideline for Countries, and additional information will be available on the GCI website. More information regarding the GCI Questionnaire can be found in the reference model at www.itu.int/gci.

We greatly appreciate a response by you or your country's focal point by **10 April 2023** to gci@itu.int. Countries who have updated or confirmed their focal points since October 2021 may opt out on responding to this message, in which case information of the most recently shared focal point will be used.

My colleague, Mr. Orhan Osmani, Senior Cybersecurity Coordinator (Orhan.Osmani@itu.int), together with the GCI team (gci@itu.int) remain at your disposal for additional inquiries and will support your focal point in answering the GCI Questionnaire.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Member States that have contributed to previous editions of the GCI, and moreover to those who have used it to strengthen cybersecurity commitments across the globe.

I look forward to continuing our collaboration.

Yours faithfully,

[Original signed]

Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava
Director

Annex: ITU Global Cybersecurity Index - Guidelines for Countries

ITU-D Cybersecurity Program

Global Cybersecurity Index – GCIv5
Guidelines for Countries

Version 1.0

April 2023

Contents

1   Introduction

This document details relevant Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) processes and engagement in those processes. Descriptions for the following processes are outlined in this document:

- development of the GCIv5 Questionnaire,
- expert consultations on the methodology and weightage,
- official invitations to designated GCI response focal points and domain experts,
- launch of the survey and data collection,
- primary data collection,
- verification and validation,
- scoring and tier allocations, and
- analysis and report development.

This guide includes a timeline to ensure clarity and timely responses from the participating countries.

1.1   Mandate and Background

The fifth edition of the Global Cybersecurity Index follows recommendations of ITU-D Resolution 45 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) that clearly defines the work done through the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) and recommends BDT "to consider the results of the GCI to guide its cybersecurity-related initiatives, especially taking into account the gaps identified through the GCI process."

The fifth edition of the GCI follows the overall framework laid out by the Global Cybersecurity Agenda pillars (Legal, Technical, Organizational, Capacity Development, and Cooperation Measures), as well as Resolution 130 (Rev. Dubai 2018), which invites Member States "to support ITU initiatives on cybersecurity, including the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), in order to promote government strategies and the sharing of information on efforts across industries and sectors."

To foster a global culture of cybersecurity and its integration at the core of information and communication technologies, the GCI is aiming towards minimizing the visible gap in the level of cybersecurity engagement between different regions around the world by providing an evidence-based assessment of countries' cybersecurity capabilities and enable them to identify gaps and priorities for improvement.

All ITU Member States and the State of Palestine (pursuant to Res. 99 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)) are invited to participate in the Global Cybersecurity Index. For simplicity, Member States and the State of Palestine will be referred to as "Countries" in this document.

More information about the GCI is available at itu.int/gci.

1.2   Role of Countries in GCIv5

The Global Cybersecurity Index processes and the methodology have been enhanced through the work of the Study Group Question 3/2, Correspondence Group, expert working group and feedback provided by the participating countries during the collection and validation of datapoints related to GCI Questionnaire. To this end, the GCI team has created this guide to provide clarity to the GCI processes and related timelines.

The updates to the fifth edition of the GCI Questionnaire are based on feedback from countries, the Study Group 2/3 Correspondence Group, and the previous GCIv4 Weightage Expert Group, and other relevant expert contributions.

2 Development of GCI Questionnaire

Role of Countries

☐ Contribute to ITU-D Study Group Question on cybersecurity (optional).
☐ Continuously provide feedback for the GCI Team to improve.

This phase involves specific actions for the initiation of each new edition of the GCI.

a) ITU's GCI team conducts a preliminary review of the existing questionnaire by creating, documenting, and identifying issues and challenges faced in previous versions of GCI. In each iteration, the questionnaire is reviewed with the goal of avoiding redundancy and reducing the amount of time required to provide responses and validation.

b) The draft questionnaire is submitted to the Study Group meeting with an open call to invite experts to join the Correspondence Expert Group that will revise the questionnaire.

c) Following the revised questionnaire, the corresponding reference model (methodology) is revised. The reference model will reflect discussions and recommendations from the current GCI Expert Group and previous expert input.

d) The current GCI Questionnaire will be published on the GCI website, including:

  o a document guide on how to complete the questionnaire.

  o the revised reference model reflecting a tier-based model.

  o the BDT Director's invitation letter inviting countries to participate.

  o timeline for all GCI processes.

3 GCI Expert Group

Role of Countries

☐ Nominated expert(s) to participate in the GCI Expert Group

As per ITU-D Resolution 45 (Rev. Kigali, 2022), the Global Cybersecurity Index will continue to be advised by a GCI Expert Group on issues related to methodology, structure, questions, and weightage.

a) To ensure inclusion of all countries, an official invitation letter from the BDT Director will be sent asking administrations to nominate an expert or experts with expertise relevant to the GCI pillars, such as legal, technical, organizational, capacity development, or cooperation measures, including experts with technical experience in index development, data science, and composite indicators.

b) Previous Correspondence Group and Weightage Expert Group participants will be invited to participate in the current GCI Expert Group meetings. Other ITU-D Members may be invited to contribute and participate in these Expert Group meetings.

c) Based on the experts' expertise and qualifications, they may be requested to contribute and participate in a specific working group meeting.

d) Meetings of the GCI Expert Group will address the following topics:

1) **Overall methodology of the Index.** The ITU-D Study Group Question 3/2 Correspondence Group held five sessions focused on the revision of the GCI draft questionnaire in late 2021/early 2022. Correspondence Group recommendations have been addressed as part of the current GCI process,

2) Relevant methodology and calculations related to the presentation and communication of tiered groupings of countries based on their performance in the GCI,

3) Relevant methodology and recommendations regarding weightages for the purposes of calculating GCI scores.

e) The GCI Expert Group will not be able to change the responses or scoring for an individual or group of countries. Recommendations will be applied to all countries.

3.1 Correspondence Group

The Correspondence Expert group was formed based on the recommendation of the chair of the Study Question (SQ) (*Securing information and communication networks: best practices for developing a culture of cybersecurity*) Rapporteur's Meetings held in October 2021. The Correspondence Expert Group provided feedback and review to the Global Cybersecurity Index – 5th edition (GCIv5) Questionnaire. The group, comprised of 90 individuals representing countries, private companies, and academia, was formed to help BDT improve the GCIv5 Questionnaire. A series of five meetings were held virtually to discuss key topics and concerns surrounding the draft GCIv5 Questionnaire submitted by BDT to the Study Group.

a) An open call will be made through the Study Group rapporteur meetings on Question *Securing information and communication networks: best practices for developing a culture of cybersecurity*, requesting, ITU-D sector members, academia, and the private sector to join the Correspondence Group.

b) The Correspondence Group reviews the draft questionnaire and proposes changes to its structure and questions.

c) Please note: Study Group meetings took place in November 2021. The GCI Team and the BDT management considered the discussions and feedback received from the Correspondence Group in formulating the final questionnaire.

3.2 Development of Tiers

In accordance with ITU-D Resolution 45 (Rev. Kigali, 2022), GCI results will be organized into levels of commitment instead of communicating country performance in terms of ranks, in order to provide a more meaningful assessment of areas of strength and improvement to countries. Thus, the GCI Expert Group is tasked to find a suitable tier model.

a) Terms of Reference (ToR) will guide experts on the objectives of tiers and other relevant background.

b) Experts will meet to discuss and develop a model for determining tiers for the GCI.

3.3 Weightage Recommendations

The GCI Expert Group will contribute to weightage recommendations, including developing recommendations for the weightage of each question, the computation of the Index, and how scores should be considered.

a) For weightage, countries may nominate up to five experts – one for each pillar. An expert may provide recommendations for more than one pillar; however, a country may not nominate more than a total of five experts. If the designated country focal point has relevant qualifications, countries may nominate them to participate in the weightage distribution process as one of, or as the singular nominated expert.

b) After the deadline for submissions of weightage recommendations, the weightage recommendations will be averaged and compiled for each question. The consolidated average weightage recommendations will be shared with the Expert Group members and published on the GCI website.

c) Note that weightage shall be used to calculate individual country sub-indicator, indicator, pillar, and overall scores. Based on scores and tier calculations recommended by the Expert Group, countries will be allocated tiers.

4 Official invitations to countries and other ITU-D Members

Role of Countries

☐ Nominate GCI focal point.
☐ Coordinate with other relevant agencies to gather data.
☐ May coordinate with GCI country expert (GCI Expert Group) (optional)

4.1 Official invitation to countries to designate/confirm GCIv5 focal point.

a) A formal invitation is sent out through the BDT Director's office or the GCI mailbox to all country administrations/representatives, and shared country missions and ITU regional offices. Each country is requested to designate a focal point or confirm the continuation of an existing focal point, who will be responsible for collecting data and completing the GCI Questionnaire.
   o The focal point is the main point of contact for any related GCI communications. He/she may coordinate with the nominated GCI Expert Group of its country.
   o The designated focal point must be able to coordinate with all relevant governmental and non-governmental entities in order to gather the necessary information to answer accurately to the GCI Questionnaire.
   o The contact information for the designated focal point should be provided to ITU's GCI team as soon as possible once the email is received.
   o For GCIv5, countries who have shared information of their focal points' details during the preceding six months may opt out of responding to the Director's email or may still confirm the appointment of the focal point.

4.2 Official invitation to countries and other ITU-D members to nominate experts to GCI Expert Group

a) A formal invitation is sent from the BDT Director's office or from GCI's mailbox to all country administrations, with a copy of the invitation shared with country missions and ITU regional offices.
b) Each country is recommended to nominate experts with relevant expertise, such as data science, cybersecurity, or other directly relevant technical or methodological expertise. A country may nominate one expert per working group or several experts.
c) Expert nominations should be accompanied by the expert's contact information, their area of expertise, and, if appropriate, which pillars/areas the expert should be engaged in.

d) Please note for GCIv5, the Correspondence Group meeting took place from November 2021 to February 2022. Any nominated expert will only be considered for input on GCI weightages and tiers.

4.3 Official invitation to countries and other ITU-D members to participate in the report launch event

a) A formal invitation is sent from the BDT Director's office or from the GCI mailbox to all country administrations/representatives/focal points, with a copy of the invitation shared with country missions and ITU regional offices. Each country is invited to attend the GCI report launch event.

b) The launch webinar will present key findings and share insights of best practices.

5 Survey and data collection

Role of Country Focal Point

☐ Review GCIv5 guidelines and timeframe.
☐ Provide responses to the questionnaire.
☐ Provide accurate supporting documents/URLs to questionnaire responses.
☐ May request GCI team for support during survey period.

a) The focal point will receive an email with information on how to complete the GCIv5 Questionnaire, including access information to the online survey platform and access instructions.

b) The GCIv5 Questionnaire will be available in English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish, and Russian.

c) When the online survey platform for the GCIv5 Questionnaire is opened, the focal point must refer to the questionnaire's guidelines to ensure accurate responses. Where possible, all responses should include supporting documentation and/or links.

d) The GCI team is available to assist the focal point throughout the survey period.

e) Focal points must submit responses to the questionnaire through the online survey platform by **July 2023**, to allow time for verification and validation of responses as well as the preparation of the report.
   o The focal point must complete their questionnaire submission by July 2023.
   o Once questionnaires are submitted, the GCI team will verify the provided responses and supporting evidence to ensure accuracy.
   o Periodic reminders will be sent to focal points related to the GCIv5 Questionnaire deadline.

f) Responses submitted through the questionnaire platform after the submission deadline will be considered for the next GCI edition.

6 Primary data collection for non-responding countries

Role of Country Focal Point

☐ Validate collected data: approve or provide supporting evidence where applicable.

a) The GCI Team will be gathering data on behalf of countries that have not replied to the BDT Director's official invitation to designate a focal point and have not been reached through the ITU Regional Offices or other means.

o The desk research will be conducted using publicly available information through government websites and ITU's available databases.

b) The ITU-completed questionnaire will be sent to the country's representative to the ITU to approve or amend the collected data.

o Note that the ITU-completed questionnaire may lack data, and country representatives are urged to carefully validate the data to ensure accuracy.

7   Verification/validation and post-verification of country responses

Role of Country Focal Point

☐ Validate verified responses: approve or amend answers.
☐ Consider meeting with GCI team for post verification questions/clarifications.
☐ Focal point provides final validation.

a) Once the deadline for the GCI Questionnaire has passed, the GCI team will verify questionnaire responses. The verified questionnaire responses will be returned to the focal points for clarification, validation, and approval.

b) Focal points can clarify or revise their answers during the validation process. Focal points may approve or disagree with the GCI team's validations by providing new relevant supporting evidence.

c) Focal points must approve the verified responses within two weeks of notification.
o Should feedback not be received by the GCI Team from the designated focal point after two weeks, the GCI team will use verified data sent to the focal point for analysis purposes and the calculation of scores.

d) During the post-verification period, a country may meet with the GCI Team to clarify responses.

8   Scoring and Tiers allocation

Role of Countries

☐ Understand the process of scoring and tiering.

a) Once a country focal point has validated verified questionnaires or has not notified the GCI within two weeks of notification of any amendments to answers, the questionnaire responses will be scored, and data used for grouping countries into tiers. During the process of scoring, no further data from the focal points will be accepted.

9   Report Development, Publication, and beyond

Role of Countries

☐ Understand the process of report development.

a) The GCI team will produce a report summarizing key trends and measures. Countries' assessments will be included, with consideration of recommendations on tiers and presentations made by the GCI Expert Group.

b) The GCI report is submitted to the BDT Editorial Services to ensure it meets ITU publication guidelines standards.

c) The report will be publicly released during an event organized by the GCI Team.

d) The report is submitted for translation.

Feedback on the GCIv5 process will be collected and used for the development and execution for GCIv6.

Annex A: timeframe

* Note: dates are subject to change. For most accurate dates, please refer to the GCI website www.itu.int/gci

Processes	Overall GCI Activities	Country Actions	Start Date*	End Date*
Official invitation to countries and other ITU-D members			April 2023	Pending report launch
	1. Official invitation to countries to designate/confirm country focal point.		April 2023	Pending report launch
	• Focal point assistance. • Focal point registration.	☐ Designate/confirm GCI focal point. ☐ Coordinate with other relevant agencies to gather data.		
	2. Official invitation to countries and other ITU-D members to nominate GCI Expert Group.	☐ Nominate expert to join the GCI Expert Group.	Completed	Completed
	3. Official invitation to countries and other ITU-D members to participate in the report launch event.	☐ Participate in the report launch event.	Letter will be sent during event preparation process	Letter will be sent during event preparation process
Survey and data collection			April 2023	July 2023
Online survey platform	• Review translated questionnaire versions. • Publish questionnaire in the 6 UN languages on GCI web page.	☐ Review guidelines and timeframe. ☐ Provide responses to the questionnaire.		

	• GCI team will be available for questions. • Reminders will be sent to MS related to questionnaire.	☐ Provide accurate supporting documents/URLs. ☐ May request GCI team support during survey period.		
Primary data collection			June 2023	August 2023
	• ITU GCI team will collect data on behalf of countries that will not respond to take part in the survey. • Data will be collected through publicly available information and the ITU repository. • The draft questionnaire sent to focal points for review. • Focal points improve the accuracy and return the draft questionnaire. • The corrected draft questionnaire is again sent to each focal point for final approval. • The final validated and approved. questionnaire is used for analysis, scoring, and tiers distribution.	☐ Validated collected data: approve or provide evidence where applicable		
Verification and Validation			April 2023	October 2023
	• Closure of the questionnaire. • Data will be verified by data validators and sent back to Country focal point for amendments or approval (may start as soon as focal points submit responses.)	☐ Validate verified responses: approve or amend answers by providing accurate		

	• Identifying any missing responses, supporting documents, links, etc. • The corrected draft questionnaire is sent to each focal point for final approval. • The final validated and approved questionnaire is used for analysis, scoring and tier distribution.	response where necessary. ☐ Consider a meeting with GCI team for post verification questions/clarifications.		
	Post verification and approval • GCI Team to re-verify additional data provided by country.	☐ Focal point provides final validation	July 2023	October 2023
Report launch			To be announced	To be announced