

11th Meeting of the ITU Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI)

Virtual Meeting, 14-18 September 2020

SUMMARY

1. The 11th Meeting of the ITU Expert Group on Telecommunication / ICT Indicators (EGTI) took place in fully virtual setting (as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic) on 15-16 September 2020, back-to-back with the 8th Meeting of the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH), which was held on 17-18 September 2020. Joint sessions with EGH were held on 14 and 18 September.
2. There were 378 participants attending the meeting, including experts from regulators, telecommunication operators, ministries and national statistical offices from 99 countries, as well as ITU-D Sector Members, other UN agencies and regional organizations, namely, ATDI, Etisalat, INTEL, GSMA Intelligence, the Higher School of Economics, the London school of Economics (LSE), Research ICT Africa and the OECD. Experts from the three sectors of ITU also attended the meeting, as did from ITU-D Regional Offices. ITU staff acted as the secretariat of EGTI. Mr. João Noronha, Head of Statistics and Market Research, Autoridade Nacional de Comunicações, Portugal chaired the 10th EGTI meeting.
3. The topics discussed in the 11th EGTI meeting were those identified by the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators, which took place in Geneva on 17-18 September 2019. In particular, the agenda covered the following topics: launch of the revised Handbook on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators; indicators on ICT prices; quality of service (QoS) indicators; indicators for measuring 5G; international roaming indicators; future work; and the EGTI/EGH joint session on ICT statistics in times of COVID-19.
4. The meeting also discussed the inputs received in the EGTI online forum in 2020.
5. The 2020 edition of the *ITU Handbook for the Collection of Telecommunication/ICT Indicators* from administrative sources was presented during the EGTI meeting. The *Handbook* is the latest revision of the 2011 edition and compiles all indicators agreed in previous EGTI meetings and provides updated information on methodology. Countries are encouraged to use the *Handbook* when collecting the telecom/ICT indicators, to ensure international comparability of the data. Online training materials based on the *Handbook* will be made available in the *ITU Academy* in the beginning of 2021. Experts are encouraged to use the online trainings when seeking clarification or additional information on how to compile the indicators contained in the *Handbook*.
6. At the 8th EGTI meeting held in Geneva in 2017 the revised ICT price baskets were presented and adopted with a caveat of a review after 2 years. The sub-group on **ICT prices** reinstated

at the 10th EGTI meeting in 2019 identified the key questions and made 5 recommendations that the 11th EGTI meeting adopted:

- a. Clarified that relevant data is to be collected for baskets, rather than bundles. Baskets may include stand-alone services, bundled services or a combination of the two as long as the cheapest options are selected that meets the defined thresholds;
- b. Recommended selecting the most cost-effective service (cheapest option as related to the predefined basket), rather than majority use regarding the selection of pre/post-paid modality;
- c. Increase the minimum data allowance to 2GB / month in the high-consumption and the data-only mobile broadband baskets;
- d. Retain the SMS component in the high- and low-consumption as well as voice and SMS only baskets;
- e. Continue collecting price data on the mobile cellular basket (voice and SMS).

EGTI agreed that the revised methodology will be presented to the upcoming 17th WTIS 2020, and that ITU will collect data in the 2021 ICT Price Basket Questionnaire using the new methodology. Furthermore, it was agreed that ITU would report back to EGTI after 2 years on the experiences in the application of the new methodology. The work of the sub-group was agreed to conclude after WTIS 2020. Countries were invited to submit comments by Friday, 2 October 2020 regarding the above agreements.

7. The work of the sub-group on **QoS indicators** was extended at the 10th EGTI meeting of 2019 with the objective to look at new indicators on quality of service, particularly related to broadband services. At the 11th EGTI meeting, the sub-group on QoS presented the proposal containing the following QoS indicators:

- a. Average Download/Upload Throughput for Fixed Broadband;
- b. Average Download/Upload Throughput for Mobile Broadband;
- c. Packet Latency for Fixed Broadband;
- d. Packet Latency for Mobile Broadband;
- e. Fault Resolution Period for Fixed Broadband Service

EGTI 2020 agreed to adopt the proposed indicators on QoS, subject to comments received by Friday, 2 October 2020. The sub-group was asked to define the criteria for data collection and other methodological issues (sampling, aggregation, etc.), to be presented at WTIS in December 2020. ITU will collect the data using a test questionnaire from selected countries in 2021. The outcome of the test questionnaire will be presented at the forthcoming 12th meeting of EGTI.

8. The 10th Meeting of EGTI in 2019 agreed to create a sub-group to develop a document which provides suggestions on possible **5G indicators** and corresponding definitions and methodologies that could be used to collect and then analyse comparable data at the international level. The sub-group recommended to proceed with one indicator, "*Percentage of the population covered by a 5G mobile network,*" and recommended to remain open to

consider adding additional indicators in the future. The 11th meeting of EGTI agreed to adopt the proposed indicator, subject to comments to be received within 2 weeks after the meeting, by Friday 2 October 2020. EGTI agreed to collect this indicator in the next WTI Long Questionnaire 2021. Furthermore, EGTI suggested to refine the definition of another indicator: *Mobile-cellular subscriptions with access to data communications with 5G*, and to clarify issues related to 5G subscriptions to exclude non-human subscriptions, by WTIS 2020. It was agreed to extend the mandate of the sub-group to continue the development of indicators on 5G (of the IMT-2020 standard) throughout 2021, with a focus on adoption and subscribers, to be carried out in collaboration with other international organizations (e.g., the OECD and EU). The revised document will be presented at WTIS 2020.

9. It was agreed at the 10th EGTI meeting in 2019 to create a sub-group on **international roaming indicators**, i.e., on data traffic and prices, and to study the practices in different countries. The sub-group proposed ten indicators that were presented at the 11th meeting of EGTI. EGTI members agreed in the discussions to reduce the number of indicators and identified 5 indicators of the highest priority:
 - a. Country-level roaming agreements (CLRA's);
 - b. Retail roaming data traffic;
 - c. Retail roaming data traffic on CLRA's;
 - d. Retail roaming voice traffic (actual minutes);
 - e. Retail roaming voice traffic (actual minutes) on CLRAs;

The EGTI meeting adopted the proposed indicators, subject to comments to be received by 2 October 2020. The adopted indicators will be collected starting from the ITU WTI Long Questionnaire 2021. The revised document on the indicator definitions will be presented at WTIS 2020, which would conclude the work of the sub-group on international roaming indicators.

10. EGTI participants agreed that the following topics will constitute **future work** over the next period: alongside the continuation of the sub-group on 5G indicators (focusing on adoption and subscribers), in collaboration with other international organizations (e.g., OECD and EU) [sub-group 1], two new sub-groups will be created to discuss
 - a. the measurement of mobile money services [sub-group 2]; and
 - b. the measurement of over-the-top services (OTT) effects on mobile traffic [sub-group 3].

Furthermore, discussion topics will be opened in the EGTI online forum to

- a. discuss indicators related to zero-rated/promoted Internet access [to liaise with EGH on the topic];
- b. share experience and evidence on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on telecoms, and the way ICT was used to mitigate it [to liaise with EGH];
- c. share experience and evidence on the emergence of "free roaming areas" around the globe;

- d. share experience and evidence on the proposals from ITU-D Study Groups 1 and 2.
11. EGTI and EGH organized two joint sessions. The joint session of 14 September 2020 related to the ICT Development Index 2020 is covered in a separate meeting summary. The joint session of 18 September 2020 provided an overview of the current situation that the national statistical systems are facing due to hampered field data collection and operations. The presentation from the UNSD highlighted the role of national statistical offices in providing reliable information, but many NSOs are struggling to compile basic statistics, due to the pandemic and the lack of readiness and resources needed to modernize operations and infrastructures. The presentation from Statistics Netherlands provided an overview of the application of big data (in particular, mobile phone signaling data) in different areas of statistics, and how that can be used to complement traditional data sources, with taking due considerations for ensuring privacy.
 12. Collaboration between EGTI and the ITU-D Study Groups (SG) 1 and 2 was further enhanced during the 11th meeting of EGTI. Liaison Statements from the Study Groups posted in the online forums identified areas of common interest, and representatives of Study Groups 1 and 2 participated throughout the discussions of EGTI. As for next steps, a dedicated discussion topic will be opened in the EGTI online forum to share experiences and evidence related to the proposals of the Study Groups. The SG representatives will inform the upcoming meetings of the Study Groups on the outcomes of the 11th EGTI meeting.
 13. The EGTI Chair will present the conclusions of the 11th EGTI meeting to the 17th World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS), which will take place from 1 to 3 December 2020 in a virtual format.