

INTERNET USERS PER 100 POPULATION		
Economic development	Information and communication technologies	Core indicator

1. INDICATOR

(a) **Name:** Internet users per 100 population.

(b) **Brief Definition:** Internet users are those who use the Internet from any location. The Internet is defined as a world-wide public computer network that provides access to a number of communication services including the World Wide Web and carries email, news, entertainment and data files. Internet access may be via a computer, Internet-enabled mobile phone, digital TV, games machine etc. Location of use can refer to any location, including work. The indicator is derived by dividing the number of Internet users by total population and multiplying by 100.

(c) **Unit of Measurement:** Number of users per 100 population.

(d) **Placement in the CSD Indicator Set:** Economic development/ Information and communication technologies

2. POLICY RELEVANCE

(a) **Purpose:** The number of Internet users is a measure of Internet access and use.

(b) **Relevance to Sustainable/Unsustainable Development (theme/sub-theme):** As an information distribution system, the Internet and its usage provide opportunities for bringing education and information within the reach of all. It can significantly shorten time lags as well as opening up a new range of information resources. It also opens up significant, new economic opportunities as well as possibilities for more environment-friendly options for the marketplace. The Internet can allow businesses from developing nations to leapfrog into the development mainstream and offers considerable promise in facilitating the delivery of basic services, such as health and education, which are unevenly distributed at present.

(c) **International Conventions and Agreements:** WSIS documents and targets and ITU Strategic plan highlighting the need to bridge the national and international digital divide in ICTs

(d) **International Targets/Recommended Standards:** World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) target 10 (2015): "To ensure that more than half the world's inhabitants have access to ICTs within their reach."
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target 18 "In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

(e) **Linkages to Other Indicators:** There are also other variables (e.g., hosts and subscribers) which provide a measure of how many people are accessing the Internet. This indicator is also related to other telecommunication indicators (e.g. main telephone lines, mobile cellular subscribers), as well as income and education indicators.

3. METHODOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

(a) **Underlying Definitions and Concepts.** The Internet is a linked world-wide network of computers in which users at any one computer can, if they have permission, get information from other computers in the network. For most developed and larger developing nations, Internet users data are based on methodologically sound user surveys conducted by national statistical agencies or industry associations. These data are either directly provided to the ITU by the country concerned or the ITU does the necessary research to obtain the data. For countries where Internet user surveys are not available, the ITU calculates estimates based on average multipliers for the number of users per subscriber. The ITU is currently, through the *Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development*, trying to get more countries to collect more, better, and harmonized Internet users data⁴⁰. The number Internet users are part of the core list of ICT indicators, which has been adopted by this Partnership. This means that more countries will start to collect this data through official surveys (such as a stand-alone household ICT survey or as a modules to existing household surveys) and that the quality of data should improve over time.

(b) **Measurement Methods:** Internet users data are collected through Internet user surveys. For countries where Internet user surveys are not available, data can be estimated based on average multipliers for the number of users per Internet subscriber.

(c) **Limitations of the Indicator:** Data for the indicator is not universally available in most developing countries although improvements in this area are currently being made.

(d) **Status of the methodology:** In the past, the number of Internet users was often based on multipliers (e.g., a certain number per Internet subscriber). As the commercialisation of the Internet has grown, so has the use of Internet use surveys by both market research companies as well as statistical offices to count the number of Internet users.

(e) **Alternative Definitions:**

4. ASSESSMENT OF DATA

(a) **Data Needed to Compile the Indicator:** Total population, number of Internet users.

⁴⁰ The Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development was launched in June 2004, and currently includes the following members: Eurostat, ITU, OECD, UNCTAD, four UN Regional Commissions (ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA), UIS, the UN ICT Task Force and the World Bank. For further information on the objectives and activities of the Partnership, see <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/partnership/>.

(b) **National and International Data Availability and Sources:** A number of government agencies, typically communication regulators and national statistical agencies are compiling country-level Internet user data. At the international level, the International Telecommunication Union collects data across countries.

(c) **Data References:** *World Telecommunication Indicators Database*, International Telecommunication Union; *World Telecommunication Development Report*, ITU; *Yearbook of Statistics*, ITU.

5. AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDICATOR

(a) **Lead Agency:** The lead agency is the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The contact point is the Head, Market, Economic and Finance Unit, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), ITU; fax no. (41-22) 730-6449.

(b) **Other Contributing Organizations:** None.

6. REFERENCES

(a) **Readings:**

World Telecommunication Report, various years, ITU
Telecommunication Indicator Handbook

(b) **Internet site:** <http://www.itu.int/ict>