

Almost a decade ago, the GSMA and the mobile industry did what no other sector had done before: commit to the Sustainable Development Goals and outline concrete steps for the whole industry to work together towards their implementation.

This commitment is as strong now as it was then. Now, almost ten years on, we can also see the positive material impact of the industry's sustained efforts: 1.6 billion more registered mobile money accounts, 2.3 billion more mobile users accessing educational services on their phones, and 95 per cent of the world's population living within the footprint of a mobile network.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe some of the actions that the GSMA, with our members and partners, has taken at the global and local level as we work to implement the SDGs. I am pleased to present them and to reaffirm the GSMA's support of the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles.

Sincerely,

Mats Granryd
Director General GSMA

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS

The GSMA has successfully implemented actions to promote and positively impact sustainability goals and principles as promoted by the UN Global Compact and the broader UN System. The GSMA has undertaken activities in awareness raising, capacity building, public-private dialogues, mobilising the private sector to action on the SDGs, fostering partnerships and closely collaborating with various United Nations agencies to generate impact at the local and global level. This report outlines details of some of the key impacts and activities implemented by the GSMA since the previous COE submission. The GSMA remains committed to our engagement with the UN Global Compact and leading the charge on positive change for our industry. The GSMA tracks much of our impact here: <https://www.gsma.com/betterfuture/>

I. RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In line with the GSMA's commitment to Principles 1-6 of the UN Global Compact, the Association supports its members by sharing best practices to inspire sustainable and responsible business models across the mobile industry and to promote internationally recognised human rights, including labour rights. In addition to the examples given below, more information can be found here: <https://www.gsma.com/betterfuture/we-care>

PROMOTING BEST PRACTICE

- [AI Ethics Playbook](#) (2022). The GSMA's AI for Impact (AI4I) initiative published the AI Ethics Playbook, which offers examples of best practice and frameworks for companies to draw on to ensure that firms use AI in a way that protects peoples' fundamental human rights. For example, it highlights the need to adhere to the principles of non-discrimination and equality and give care to ensuring that AI systems do not reinforce human prejudices and inequalities. This document complements the 2020 [Human Rights Guidance for the Mobile Industry](#), which detailed best practices for firms seeking to formalise their management of human rights in a number of areas, from labour rights to online child safety.

INITIATIVES

- [The Mobile Gender Gap Report](#) (2023). The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2023 explores the latest data on the mobile gender gap, the key barriers preventing women's equal access to and use of mobile, and what is needed to close the mobile internet gender gap. It also highlights the socio-economic benefits of addressing these barriers for the mobile industry, the economy and society more broadly, and women themselves.

- [EQUALS Her Digital Skills](#) (2021). Her Digital Skills, co-founded by EY, GSMA, ITU and W4, aims to design and provide access to free, gender transformative, foundational digital skills training, e-skills badges, and e-mentoring for one million women and girls by 2026, thereby helping to bridge the digital gender divide.
- [GSMA's Connected Women Commitment Initiative](#) (2023). First launched in 2016, the Connected Women Commitment Initiative was renewed in 2023, allowing mobile operators to make a formal commitment to reduce the gender gaps in their mobile internet and/or mobile money services customer base. Since the initiative was launched in 2016 mobile operators have reached more than 65 million additional women.

II. CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY

In line with the GSMA's commitment to Principles 7-9 of the UN Global Compact, the Association has developed a number of initiatives and partnerships to promote greater environmental responsibility and encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies. In addition to the examples given below, more information can be found here: <https://www.gsma.com/aboutus/about-us/sustainability/>

PROMOTING BEST PRACTICE

- [ESG Metrics for Mobile](#) (2023). The ESC Metrics for Mobile is a first-of-its-kind mobile sector ESG reporting framework which includes 10 core industry-specific and actionable KPIs to align the mobile industry behind meaningful environmental, social, and corporate governance. These metrics will enable operators to take a more proactive position in providing relevant material disclosures, and provide the tools and setting for both data preparers and data users to have a more enhanced and constructive dialogue on ESG performance. By using them, mobile operators will generate insights that can support internal decision-making, fact-based stakeholder dialogue, communicate progress towards ESG goals and help build trust with customers.
- [Climate Action Toolkit for Operators](#) (2023). The GSMA created the Climate Action Toolkit to help mobile network operators and other industry stakeholders achieve the mobile industry's ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest. The toolkit explains how climate action is relevant for the industry, how to measure and report emissions, how to set targets aligned with the 2050 ambition, how to achieve those targets, and how to advocate for government support.

INITIATIVES

- [ClimateTech](#) (2022-2023). First launched at the GSMA in 2019, ClimateTech is an initiative which aims to unlock the power of digital technology in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), to enable their transition towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient future. In 2022 and 2023, ClimateTech launched its flagship report exploring the role of mobile in accessing and delivering climate finance in LMICs and continued to deepen the evidence base on digital solutions which can empower indigenous peoples and local communities.
- [GSMA Innovation Fund for Climate Resilience and Adaptation 2.0](#) (2022). Supported by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the fund will test innovative use cases, partnerships and business models to improve the sustainability and scalability of digitally-enabled solutions. Focused on use-cases demonstrating a positive impact on low-income populations (particularly women) and populations vulnerable to current or future climate risks, the fund will also support solutions that contribute to climate resilience via the strengthening of biodiversity.

MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES

The GSMA measures impact, and monitors industry progress and contributions through its annual [Mobile Industry Impact Report](#). The eighth edition of this report, published in 2023, highlighted the mobile industry's continued commitment to the UN SDGs, and identifies areas where the industry needs to improve or accelerate its actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Key examples of where the industry has made a measurable impact include:

SDG1 – No poverty. Mobile money plays an integral role in reducing the financial exclusion gap in LMICs. There were 1.6 billion registered mobile money accounts by the end of 2022, which was almost four times the number of registered accounts (430 million) in 2015.

SDG4 – Quality Education. SDG 4 is the most improved SDG since 2015 in terms of industry impact. 2.3 billion mobile users (42% of mobile subscribers) access educational services on their mobile phones, representing an increase of more than 1.6 billion since 2015.

SDG5 – Gender Equality. In 2022, 1.9 billion women in LMICs (equivalent to 81% of the female adult population across LMICs) owned a mobile phone, an increase of more than 340 million since 2017. The majority of female mobile owners in LMICs agree that owning a mobile device makes them feel safer, helps them in their day-to-day work and provides access to information they would not have otherwise.

SDG8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth. As a general-purpose technology, mobile improves the utilisation of labour and capital and increases productivity. Studies by the ITU

have shown that a 10% increase in mobile broadband penetration causes a 1.5–2.5% increase in GDP. In 2022, mobile technologies and services generated 5% of global GDP, a contribution that amounted to \$5.2 trillion of economic value added. In particular, 5G will add almost \$1 trillion to the global economy in 2030, with benefits spread across all industries.

SDG9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. At the end of 2022, 95 per cent of the global population lived within the footprint of a mobile internet network and 4.5 billion people (57% of the global population) were using mobile internet, an increase of 1.9 billion since 2015. In addition to mobile internet, the mobile industry supports progress on SDG 9 by building resilient infrastructure and improving industrial processes.