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In a world where basic life services such as education, banking or healthcare have rapidly moved online, being able to access and thrive in the digital realm has become an absolute necessity. While significant strides have been made in recent years (we connected 800 million new internet users around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic), 2.6 billion people remain offline. This digital divide cannot be allowed to persist. Everybody, no matter where they were born or where they live, should have access to the 21st century’s infrastructure.

To meet this challenge, we formed the EDISON Alliance in January 2021, bringing together leaders from the private sector, governments and civil society to finally bridge the digital divide. Recognizing that no one can tackle these challenges alone, the EDISON Alliance cultivates collaboration to turn vision into action through partnerships that drive local impacts towards global scale.

The alliance set an ambitious goal to improve the lives of 1 billion people through affordable and accessible digital services by 2025. For its part, Verizon has committed to providing digital skills training to 10 million young people and to bringing resources to 1 million small businesses working for success in the digital economy. Combined with the efforts of our partners, we have made great progress in two years and have identified affordability, accessibility and usability as barriers we must address to connect everybody.

With this second edition of the EDISON Alliance Impact Report, we are proud to present examples of initiatives and partnerships catalysed through the alliance that are improving the lives and livelihoods of underserved individuals and communities around the world.

We must avoid complacency. As we approach the midpoint of the world’s Sustainable Development Agenda, the world is behind on many counts and risks sliding backwards on others. In that regard, we hope the success stories presented in this report will encourage leaders to step up their individual and collective commitments towards achieving universal digital inclusion as a critical enabler of the Sustainable Development Goals.

On behalf of the EDISON Alliance Board, which includes Apollo Hospitals, Mastercard, Vista Equity Partners, the Government of Rwanda, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Verizon, we invite you to join us on this critical mission to ensure every person is able to reach their full potential through digital.
Executive summary

EDISON Alliance accelerates efforts to advance digital inclusion through a unique global and multistakeholder platform.

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EDISON Alliance was launched to offer a rapid, holistic and ecosystem-led response to the digitalization of basic life services.

The alliance ignited a transformative movement, uniting a diverse community around a common and ambitious goal: the 1 Billion Lives Challenge. The goal of the challenge is to enhance the lives of 1 billion people by 2025 through affordable and accessible digital solutions in three areas: education, financial services, and healthcare.

Many organizations were inspired to join the 1 Billion Lives Challenge with a commitment they would not have otherwise made and/or to demonstrate that universal digital inclusion is achievable through collaboration.

As of January 2023, EDISON Alliance partners had positively impacted the lives of 454 million people around the world. Exactly one year later, 784 million people have been reached through 320 initiatives across 127 countries.

With this many initiatives under way, EDISON partners are demonstrating a strong commitment to tangible action. Over the past 18 months, the alliance has focused its efforts on pioneering pathways, frameworks, tools and processes and offering a unique platform for partners to form new and innovative cross-sectoral partnerships and accelerate digital inclusion efforts. This report presents examples of such partnerships enabled by the alliance and their impact on marginalized populations and communities.

Finally, whether it is through the Lighthouse Countries Network or the Digital Inclusion Navigator, this report outlines how EDISON Alliance enablers play a key role in amplifying partner efforts and facilitating best practice sharing and peer learning, leveraging the World Economic Forum’s digital platforms and convening power.
Partner testimonials

Read about how EDISON partners are leveraging the alliance for greater digital inclusion impact.

EDISON has added value to Rwanda’s initiatives by enabling and facilitating conversations that have resulted in partnerships between Rwanda and other members of the alliance. In November last year, we were pleased to host the first EDISON Alliance Spotlight Day, which brought together the Government of Rwanda and other EDISON champions, culminating in concrete commitments to expand digital access in Rwanda, and we are seeing impressive results within just 12 months. Through the EDISON network, Rwanda has also benefited from peer-to-peer exchanges with other countries in the EDISON Lighthouse Countries Network. These exchanges have given us understanding of best practices and are use cases for how digital inclusion is being achieved elsewhere.

Ministry of Information Communication Technology and Innovation of Rwanda

The EDISON Alliance’s 1 Billion Lives Challenge inspired AstraZeneca to commit to 5 million screened patients through a partnership with Qure.ai. Although this partnership was already established, the EDISON Alliance helped us formalize an ambitious commitment and held us accountable for delivering on it. Moreover, it has helped us accelerate our efforts to expand into multiple disease areas and geographies, especially as we explore collaborations to progress digital inclusion in Africa.

AstraZeneca

The EDISON Alliance’s progress in achieving 78% of its 1 Billion Lives Challenge with more than one year remaining until 2025, is a testament to the impact of consolidated and concerted efforts by diverse partners. The EDISON Alliance has harnessed the collective power of governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and international organizations with commitments from over 320 initiatives across 127 countries. By being an EDISON Alliance partner, Giga contributes and has access to collaborate with a dynamic community of champions across sectors to ensure digital inclusion.

Giga

From Global66’s perspective, joining the EDISON Alliance has been a strategic decision of great value in our mission to close financial gaps and foster digital inclusion for global citizens. This alliance stands out for its ongoing commitment, proactive approach and ability to make a meaningful difference in people’s lives. The partnership provides a robust, results-oriented framework that
A global alliance committed to closing the digital divide

Addressing key barriers to universal digital inclusion through community, partnerships and best practices.

Significant progress has been made to achieve universal connectivity, however, approximately a third of the global population do not have access to the internet, limiting opportunities for economic development. Launched in January 2021, the EDISON Alliance is a global multi-sectoral movement aiming to ensure that every person can affordably access basic life services through digital tools.

To that end, the EDISON Alliance addresses three main barriers to universal digital inclusion: access, usability and affordability.

In addition to addressing these barriers, the alliance identified three essential services that digitized at the onset of the pandemic (education, finance and healthcare) and is exploring how to bring these services to underserved people through digital solutions.

Although ~95% of people in the world live in areas with internet coverage...\(^1\) the stark reality remains: 2.6 billion people are still unconnected.\(^2\)

Additionally, while 63% of the world’s population is connected...

... least-developed countries still only count 27% of their populations as Internet users.\(^3\)

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<th>Access</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Financial services</th>
<th>Healthcare</th>
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<td>Increasing access to connectivity and digital services</td>
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<td>Usability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing digital literacy and digital skills, and providing access to content in local languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
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<td>Reducing the cost of fixed and mobile broadband, internet enabled devices and online service</td>
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The enablers to deliver on this mission are:

**Community**

The EDISON Alliance consists of three dynamic and diverse communities of stakeholders from across sectors, geographies and genders: the board, champions community and executive network.

**Board:** Provides strategic direction and guidance on setting the alliance’s objectives and scope to accelerate collective progress.

**Champions:** High-level leaders committed to driving impact by advocating alliance goals and pledging commitments.

**Executive network:** Sector-level experts with extensive experience and decision-making ability to advance specific digital inclusion initiatives and objectives.

**Partnerships**

**The Initiative Marketplace** is a digital tool on the EDISON website for partners to provide calls to action on the type of support needed to scale their initiatives.

**EDISON Topic Area Sprints** are agile community-sourced and community-led task forces addressing specific challenges linked to digital inclusion.

**EDISON Spotlights** are co-created tailored public-private stakeholder convenings that connect global stakeholders to unlock knowledge and foster collaboration.

**Best practices**

**The Lighthouse Countries Network** was created to offer a platform for countries to leverage the collective capabilities of the EDISON Alliance to drive local impact and serve as a peer network for ministers of ICT to exchange on replicable digital inclusion solutions.

**The Digital Inclusion Navigator** is a one-stop-shop and repository of digital inclusion resources that was launched to make digital inclusion best practices and case studies easily accessible to policy-makers and business leaders.
EDISON Alliance’s cross-sector mobilization has contributed to demonstrating that universal digital inclusion is achievable.

Since its launch in January 2021, the EDISON Alliance has mobilized partners from across sectors and industries around a shared goal. The 1 Billion Lives Challenge has served as a powerful mechanism to raise the ambition and impact of digital inclusion efforts.

In the past three years, a total of 784 million lives have been improved through ambitious initiatives led by EDISON Alliance partners across the globe. This substantial achievement not only indicates the effectiveness of coordinated action in tackling complex challenges, but also the potential achievement of the 1 billion goal well ahead of 2025.

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<th>Supported by</th>
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<td>320 initiatives</td>
<td>127 countries</td>
<td>15 industries</td>
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784,347,410 lives improved between January 2021 and November 2023

78% of 2025 target
3.1 By focus area

Figure 3
Breakdown of lives impacted by focus area

Key takeaways

1. Education is a key driver of development, yet 16% of children and youth globally do not attend school, revealing a trend of education progress stagnation. EDISON Alliance partners have significantly increased their efforts in tackling this issue in the last year. In total, EDISON Alliance partners have impacted the lives of 94 million people through digital and online education, a notable four-fold increase of lives impacted in only one year.

2. Digital financial services play a pivotal role in integrating the unbanked and underbanked into the financial system. More than half of the total lives impacted by EDISON Alliance partners, 463 million, have benefited from expanded access to digital financial and banking services. This represents a 65% increase, or 183 million additional lives impacted since last year.

3. Adoption of digital and remote healthcare services has accelerated since the COVID-19 pandemic. EDISON Alliance partners have provided 141 million people in total with access to healthtech solutions and remote care, a 57% increase from last year.

Note: Circles are representative of their respective percentages

Insight

The significant surge in lives impacted through digital education can be attributed to a combination of new partner initiatives brought to the alliance and the continued expansion of initiatives over time, reaching more advanced stages of development and impact. While this development is notable, and a large portion of the initiatives submitted to the alliance target digital education, the vast majority of lives reached remain through digital financial services.
Key takeaways

1. Most people impacted by EDISON partners, 486 million, benefitted from increased access to connectivity and digital services, an 80% increase, representing 216 million additional people that have been reached in one year.

2. 102 million lives were impacted through digital literacy and skills training, representing a 96% increase in lives reached and a significant increase in initiatives reported to the alliance in the last year, a plausible correlation with the increased efforts in education (see page Figure 3 key takeaways).

3. 196 million benefitted from increased affordability of devices and/or digital services, including broadband, aligning with the alliance’s prioritization of affordability as a key enabler to connecting individuals to the digital world. The number of people reached increased by 68 million, a 53% increase in lives impacted compared to last year.

Note: Circles are representative of their respective percentages.
Ranking by country with most lives impacted by EDISON partners:

- South Asia: 78%
- Africa: 14%
- Americas: 5%
- Others: 3%

*Based on data submitted by partners able to report back at the country level.

The following section is interactive. Please select the tabs to move between information.

FIGURE 5
By geography

The EDISON Alliance Impact Report January 2024
Key takeaways

1. The South Asian region and the African continent remain the leading regions in terms of lives impacted through EDISON Alliance initiatives. While South Asia maintains similar impact levels to last year, efforts have increased on the African continent, with 14% of lives impacted in total, compared to 10% in the previous year, representing 64 million additional people reached in one year.

2. The combined number of the top three countries with the most lives improved (India, Bangladesh and Vietnam) represents more than a third of the total number of lives improved across initiatives.

3. Vietnam now ranks among the top three countries with the most lives impacted, compared to 20th place last year.

4. The top 10 countries represent 84% of all lives impacted. Of which, nine are developing nations, where only roughly a third of the population on average have online access compared to 80% on average in developed nations.¹
Learn about some of the partnerships enabled by EDISON that have yielded on-the-ground impact.

Through the 1 Billion Lives Challenge, EDISON partners strive to positively impact people across the globe by addressing the main barriers to digital inclusion focusing on unserved and underserved populations. Although the challenge is supported by 320 initiatives that have made a positive difference in the lives of hundreds of millions, success is not solely defined by numbers. The true testament to the alliance’s achievements is seen in the scalable solutions and synergistic partnerships that have been formed or scaled as a result of this alliance.

In 2023, based on learnings from previous years, the alliance shifted its focus to facilitating the creation of new partnerships and scaling replicable practices. You will find below such examples across the challenges of access, usability and affordability and across the focus areas of education, financial services and healthcare.
Digital health tools are advancing health equity by expanding access, enabling personalized treatment and eliminating geographic barriers while unlocking new opportunities to reach patients through telemedicine, remote monitoring and paving the way for bridging care gaps.

EDISON Alliance’s commitment to accelerate adoption of digital initiatives is contributing to the SDG goals by prioritizing a collaborative ecosystem powered by multistakeholder partnerships and public-private partnerships (PPPs) as we reach midway towards achieving these goals to “leave no one behind”.

These initiatives have successfully demonstrated outcomes of “patient-centric” healthcare delivery models that are accessible and have reduced out-of-pocket spending.

The Digital Dispensaries initiative in the state of Madhya Pradesh in India, led by the Apollo Hospitals Group and a US telecom infrastructure provider is yielding real-time evidence in providing quality and affordable healthcare, along with generating stronger patient engagement and addressing gender health disparities. This is a scalable model that optimizes patient convenience, improves health outcomes and moves from patient-centric to patient-led pro-health model.

As an empowering catalyst in extending the reach of digital healthcare services to the most vulnerable individuals worldwide, the EDISON Alliance continues to unlock impactful partnerships that have the potential to scale and expand faster across the world. I expect the alliance to contribute to greater investments in healthcare technology, more accessible healthcare and more partnerships to bridge the gaps aligned with SDGs, that will create the next generation of digital health solutions.

Shobana Kamineni
Executive Vice-Chairperson, Apollo Hospitals
Participating in the digital economy is critical to giving people more of an equal opportunity. People must see and feel that they have a place. But despite positive progress across several areas, we remain in a world of digital haves and digital have nots.

The biggest hurdle to bridging the divide is access, and more fundamentally is digital identity. Even today there are 850 million people that don’t have a digital identity.

From there, it is imperative that the public and private sectors work together to deliver technology and tools that enable greater digital inclusion. The technology has to be relevant. It has to be inclusive. It also has to work wherever and however people need it.

Alongside this, trust is essential. This requires consistent governance, robust cybersecurity, and strong consumer protections. It comes by making a promise and delivering on it again and again.

The EDISON Alliance provides a platform to bring together the public and private sectors to tackle these foundational elements – access, technology and trust – through collective action.

Together, we can build a better model for inclusive digital transformation. If we do, we will empower more people and ensure equitable and sustainable economic growth across the globe.

Ling Hai
President, Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East & Africa, Mastercard
Stories behind the numbers

Transforming healthcare in remote Madhya Pradesh

Improving child and mother health in Indian slums

Digital financial services

Beneficiary perspectives

Champion perspectives

Transforming healthcare in remote Madhya Pradesh with digital dispensaries

Problem: In the remote villages of Madhya Pradesh, India, accessing essential basic healthcare services has long been a challenge. Limited connectivity, insufficient healthcare infrastructure and a shortage of healthcare professionals have all contributed to the inaccessibility of these services for millions of people.

How EDISON played a role: To address this, EDISON partner, Apollo Telemedicine Networking Foundation, partnered with a US telecom infrastructure provider to launch five digital dispensaries in rural Madhya Pradesh. The Digital Dispensaries aim to use technology that allows patients to consult with doctors remotely, receive diagnoses and obtain medications, making it possible for people to get the care they need without having to travel long distances or spend exorbitant amounts of money. The EDISON Alliance played a pivotal role in catalysing this partnership, which is one of the first to emerge from the EDISON Alliance 1 Billion Lives Challenge.

Result: In the past 20 months, the Digital Dispensaries have enabled 22,000 general teleconsultations, 2,694 specialist consultations and provided diagnostics to over 8,466 individuals. The initiative has also created a proactive healthcare mindset, especially among women, leading to active healthcare engagement and a substantial reduction in average healthcare costs between $7-8, with the potential for further reductions as the scale increases.

What is needed to scale impact: More private sector investments are needed, including corporate social responsibility initiatives that can play a pivotal role in enhancing healthcare access in remote, rural and underserved areas. By focusing on local healthcare needs, promoting innovation, engaging communities, investing in infrastructure, capacity building and impact measurement, the private sector can make a significant contribution to improving healthcare access.
Nations will only achieve their full potential by equipping their citizens with the infrastructure, capital and knowledge to build resilient and innovative communities. Digital technologies increase efficiency and improve outcomes across many aspects of our lives, including business, the economy, healthcare and education. Those who have reliable access to affordable broadband and have been trained to use technology and software will be best positioned to benefit from digitization. That is why it’s critical that we focus on empowering underserved, minority communities as we work to digitally engage one billion people by 2025.

Minority communities are often denied the necessary resources to build thriving neighbourhoods and businesses in the United States and around the world. For example, 50% of Black Americans live near 70 Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Yet, 82% of these institutions reside in broadband deserts, limiting the economic, entrepreneurial and social growth of these regions and graduates. Only 2% of private businesses are Black owned, which contributes to a $220 billion annual wage disparity. Unlocking access to additional resources will accelerate growth in these communities and drive economic prosperity for all.

To drive lasting change, we must ensure that these communities and educational institutions have greater access to wealth and knowledge-building tools, particularly digital connectivity. If we get this right, we can ensure that the next generation can achieve their limitless potential.

Robert F. Smith  
Founder, Chairman and  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Vista Equity Partners

Objective

To increase digital skills, digital literacy trainings and access to content in local languages.

Progress

101,965,163*  
lives improved

*Pie chart represents a total of 1 billion lives
Advancing digital inclusion for women and youth in the future green economy

Problem: As climate change worsens and the digital green economy grows, the deficit in digital skills is especially pronounced. This skills deficit risks marginalizing many young individuals in the global south, especially women, from participating in this economic shift.

How EDISON played a role: Responding to the calls to action from youth within their network, across Africa and the Middle East, Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) sought multistakeholder insights to create global solutions to address this climate induced challenge. With the support of the EDISON Alliance, DOT launched a Sprint Group with Dell, Dubai Cares, NetHope, The Digital School, Goodwall, and UNICEF to devise a targeted framework. This framework is aimed at increasing the participation of women and girls in the green economy, with an acute focus on the role of climate change, digital technology, skills and gender equity.

Result: The EDISON Sprint Group played a crucial role by developing a set of principles for skillling and integrating youth and women in the digital green economy. These unique principles, which were launched at COP28 and push for ecosystem players to take a strategic approach to the green economy, will bolster community resilience against climate-induced local adversities, thereby ensuring a more inclusive green job market.

What is needed to scale impact: Awareness and amplification of the principles through the EDISON Alliance platforms and the network is critical. In addition, high-level endorsement, private sector leadership and clear guidelines for actioning the principles can accelerate uptake and impact.
4.3 Affordability and financing

Objective

Reduce the cost of fixed/mobile broadband, internet-enabled devices and online services.

Progress

196,086,852* lives improved

*Pie chart represents a total of 1 billion lives

Ninety-five percent of the world’s population has access to connectivity, yet a third of those people remain offline. At the EDISON Alliance, we have identified affordability as our biggest challenge to connecting people within reach of existing networks. People cannot afford the handsets and devices to use the connectivity.

As the economic pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic receded, a cost-of-living crisis emerged in economies worldwide. Growing demand for labour and resources, combined with strained supply chains, caused an inflation spike that central banks are navigating methodically. People in poorer regions have proven the most vulnerable and these are the economies where we see the digital divide at its widest. Nearly 2.4 billion of the people still offline live in low- and middle-income countries. They need help to participate in the digital economy.

The ethos of the EDISON Alliance is to help form, advise and manage public-private partnerships to determine the solutions to address affordability, establish plans to make devices available and ensure everyone is accounted for in the ecosystem. We have to come together to solve for the affordability of trusted digital devices and online services so that everyone can participate successfully in the world that we’re creating.

Closing the digital divide is a vital part of achieving each of the 17 United Nations SDGs. Beyond that, it gives every person the opportunity to benefit from digital technologies. We have to work together to create solutions and devices that will allow the last people to be connected.

Rima Qureshi
Chief Strategy Officer, Verizon; Vice-Chair, EDISON Alliance
Addressing the affordability of internet-enabled devices

**Problem:** Despite widespread mobile broadband coverage, approximately 2.6 billion people remain offline. Device affordability can be a major hindrance, particularly for the poorest segments of the population. For individuals with limited savings or access to credit and financing, this issue is particularly acute and demands urgent attention.

**How EDISON played a role:** The EDISON Alliance worked closely with the GSM Association (GSMA) to identify what the alliance’s contribution to the global narrative could look like. The result was the formation of a coalition to unite various sectors in addressing the challenge of device affordability. By playing a role in facilitating the creation of this coalition, EDISON is helping steer conversations away from theory towards replicable and actionable solutions.

**Result:** Since its inception, the coalition has grown to include over 25 ecosystem players, such as chipset players, financial institutions, mobile network operators and equipment manufacturers, to devise cross-sector solutions to enhance device affordability.

The GSMA has developed analyses and insights to better understand the bill of materials of smartphones and impact of different price points on affordability. Examples of solutions being explored include handset cost reduction, improving device circularity and developing innovative financing models.

**What is needed to scale impact:** Amplifying the impact and reach of these efforts require coordinated efforts between industry leaders, governments and financial institutions to scale device financing solutions to increase uptake.
Impact enablers

The alliance is pioneering pathways, frameworks, tools and processes to support partners in advancing digital inclusion.

To enable the shared mission of bridging the digital divide and balancing the scales of who has access to the digital world, three essential building blocks have enabled broad-scale impact in only three years. These enablers have provided mechanisms for a broad and diverse set of stakeholders to convene and form new partnerships and supported them with powerful resources and best-practices to make informed decisions.
Rwanda is privileged to be one of the founding lighthouse countries of the EDISON Alliance. Our participation in the Lighthouse Countries Network has been a great support for our ambitions to become a cashless economy with full financial inclusion and universal access to digital skills and digital technologies.

Through the Lighthouse Countries Network we have been able to crowd-in resources, and expertise from the EDISON Alliance to support our digital ambitions. In November last year, we were pleased to host the first ever Lighthouse Country Spotlight, which saw participation from MTN, Airtel, Mastercard, GSMA and other EDISON champions and closed with concrete commitments to expand digital access in Rwanda.

Within the space of just 12 months, we have been able to see significant impact from many of these commitments. The Lighthouse Countries Network has also given us the opportunity to benefit from several peer-to-peer exchanges with other member governments such as Bahrain and Bangladesh on best practices and case studies for achieving digital inclusion around the world, and sharing our ideas and experience on how we can work together to accelerate universal digital inclusion.

Paula Ingabire
Minister of Information Communication Technology and Innovation of Rwanda

Read more about the lighthouse network on page 28
Multiple overlapping crises from the COVID-19 pandemic to violent conflicts to an accelerating climate emergency have combined to create a perfect storm with just 15% of the SDG targets currently on track. That includes the fact that one-third of the world’s population remains offline and unable to access the new opportunities that it brings. Yet, when harnessed correctly, digital technologies could benefit 70% of the 169 SDG targets including key areas such as climate action, education, hunger and poverty.

To this end, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is accompanying over 120 countries around the world on their digital transformation journeys. We are seeing how many countries lack access to practical resources that facilitate knowledge-sharing to advance digital inclusion. To help close this gap, the EDISON Alliance’s Digital Inclusion Navigator is home to an open library of over 1,000 real-world case studies and best practice to help countries drive their vital digital inclusion efforts.

With the Summit of the Future and the Global Digital Compact on the near horizon, initiatives such as the Digital Inclusion Navigator are a tangible commitment by our global community to share forefront insights and support global learning at scale – a conduit to help ensure that everyone, everywhere can reap the benefits of our burgeoning digital world.

Achim Steiner
Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Read more about the Navigator on page 29
5.1 Our community

The backbone of the EDISON Alliance is its community of changemakers, comprised of leaders from government, private sector, international organizations, academia and civil society, joining forces to improve the lives of one billion people through the 1 Billion Lives Challenge and through forging new partnerships to achieve digital inclusion goals. Together, EDISON partners have demonstrated that universal digital inclusion is achievable. Stakeholders aligned with this mission are warmly invited to join forces, amplifying the collective impact and shaping a brighter, inclusive digital future.

Board organizations:
- Apollo Hospitals
- Mastercard
- Ministry of Information Communication Technology and Innovation of Rwanda
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Verizon
- Vista Equity Partners
- BBVA Microfinance Foundation (BBVAMF)
- Bharti Enterprises
- Crescent Enterprises
- Dell Technologies
- e&
- Hewlett Packard Enterprise
- Huawei
- Mamotest

Private sector
- Apollo Hospitals
- AstraZeneca
- Astrapis Space Technologie
- Axiata
- BBVA Microfinance Foundation (BBVAMF)
- Bharti Enterprises
- Crescent Enterprises
- Dell Technologies
- e&
- Hewlett Packard Enterprise
- Huawei
- Mamotest

Public sector, civil society and academia
- Mastercard
- NEC
- Osana
- Qualcomm
- Southern Communities Initiative (SCI)
- Telefonaktiebolaget LM Ericsson
- Telefonica
- Verizon
- ViaSat
- Virtual Remittance Gateway (VRG)
- Wipro

Examples of partners that have made a commitment to the 1 Billion Lives Challenge
I am pleased to say that we are on track to deliver our EDISON Commitment to improve the lives of nearly 30 million mariners and those in the disaster landscape by 2025. Digital access is a lifeline to those at sea and access is profoundly linked to mental health, family welfare, as well as the ability to access essential telemedicine, education and financial services. In the disaster landscape, ensuring that those suffering are able to access basic services allows communities to recover quickly. EDISON has motivated us further in our efforts to improve the lives of our users through digital inclusivity.

Guru Gowrappan
President, ViaSat

As a member of the EDISON Alliance, e& is at the forefront of global efforts to achieve digital inclusion. From a strategic point of view, this alliance, supported by the World Economic Forum, aligns us with the United Nations’ general objectives for sustainable development. Beyond digital inclusion, this affiliation underlines our commitment to holistic global development. The distinct collaborative model of the EDISON Alliance allows e& to engage with a tier of stakeholders, uniquely positioning us compared to other digital inclusion initiatives, and enabling us to drive transformative change on a global scale.

Hatem Dowidar
Group Chief Executive Officer, e&

Explore the EDISON Alliance Champions community and partner commitments here:

**Champions**

A broad-based group of leaders from the public and private sectors mobilizing their peers, networks and existing initiatives.

**Commitments from EDISON Alliance Partners**

The 1 Billion Lives Challenge is powered by the commitments from over 50 partners from across sectors.
The EDISON Alliance’s over 170 partners each contribute to the collective goal of advancing digital inclusion through a multitude of initiatives that are making a tangible difference in people’s lives.

Through the annual impact reporting, the alliance has surfaced and gained visibility into over 300 initiatives across the network and in March 2023, the initiative marketplace was launched to foster greater transparency within the community and beyond. This digital platform serves as a central hub to showcase the diverse array of partner initiatives, enabling members to draw inspiration and identify expertise and collaborators. This tool aims to support partnership facilitation and amplify partner activities to drive positive change at scale.

Explore the Initiative marketplace here
5.2 Partnerships

Initiative Marketplace

These tools create an environment for effective collaboration by offering EDISON members designated spaces for discussion, decision-making and problem-solving.

EDISON Spotlights

A Spotlight is a discovery session and is used by members to raise the profile of and awareness about their initiative’s goals, challenges and opportunities. Each Spotlight is unique as it not only focuses on one EDISON member’s initiatives, but is co-designed and driven by said member. These sessions provide a platform for exploratory conversations about collaboration opportunities that can consequently blossom into fully fledged partnerships.

Spotlights and Topic Area Sprints

Examples of recent Spotlights

- **Virtual Remittance Gateway Spotlight Meeting**
  7 November 2023
  Spotlighting and exploring solutions to bridge the financial inclusion gap in Pakistan

- **Bangladesh Spotlight Meeting**
  12 October 2023
  Gathering insights from EDISON members on how to bridge the education gap by improving blended learning techniques in schools

EDISON Topic Area Sprints

Topic Area Sprints were created for forging new digital inclusion products (such as new initiatives or thought leadership) that require longer term planning and development. Sprints provide a space to develop, test or iterate a product in a time-boxed environment. Beginning with a high-level concept, EDISON members meet over a fixed period of time to refine the vision and objectives, and then work collaboratively to develop a product that meets these co-designed specifications. Groups are cross-functional, with each organization offering a different perspective or expertise. This collaborative approach has helped EDISON members, such as Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) deliver high-quality products in partnership with stakeholders they might not have otherwise engaged with.
5.3 Best practices

Lighthouse Countries Network

National ICT policies are critical to expanding digital inclusion and require a whole of ecosystem approach to ensure their successful implementation.

Identifying the right multistakeholder partnerships can be a complex endeavour exacerbated by the lack of precise information about the activities, locations and scalability intentions in a particular market.

Recognizing this, the EDISON Alliance launched the Lighthouse Countries Network – a unique platform specially created to provide a simplified way for governments to access the alliance’s rich network of private and third sector resources to reduce the digital divide at the national level. By joining the Lighthouse Countries Network, countries are provided with a space to:

- Connect with peers and learn more about evidence-based insights, solutions and best practices that expand digital inclusion
- Amplify and raise awareness about their digital inclusion goals
- Partner with EDISON members to drive impact nationally.

To ensure that outcomes are aligned with the actual needs on the ground, the network takes a locally-led approach where countries identify the challenges and opportunities to highlight, determine the structure and content of the engagement and drive all conversations pertaining to their national ICT goals.

Explore the Lighthouse Countries Network here

Navigator
As a network dedicated to bridging the digital divide on a global scale, the EDISON Alliance plays a crucial role in disseminating best practices and knowledge.

On its website, the EDISON Alliance maintains a comprehensive repository of more than 1,000 case studies, publications and data-driven tools on digital inclusion. These carefully curated resources provide insights and guidance for partners, policy-makers and interested readers seeking to learn, replicate or advance ongoing efforts.

Over 1,000 pieces of content
Over 20,000 page views
Appendix

Methodology

The EDISON Alliance has gathered numerous commitments. However, tangible impact has always been the main priority for EDISON Alliance partners. The EDISON Alliance implemented a yearly commitment reporting exercise to measure impact on the ground and report progress against a collective 2025 target.

What were partners asked to report back on?

Partners were asked to report back on:

- The total number of lives improved, based on each partner’s latest reported numbers.
- If the information was available, a breakdown by KPI: lives impacted by geography, focus area, problem being solved (i.e. usability, affordability, access).

How is progress tracked?

All data comprised in this report was submitted by EDISON Alliance partners. Every organization and initiative have their own mechanisms for tracking and measuring the progress of their programmes; partners were relied on to track and share their progress. The EDISON Alliance wants to hold itself accountable to the aggregate impact of 1 billion lives. Therefore, each partner’s reporting process has been mapped to understand what they are tracking, and how and when they are reporting progress.

To avoid force fitting a unique reporting calendar on partners, flexibility was built in for partners to report back numbers based on their own reporting cycles and availability of data provided. While collective progress will be communicated once a year at the Annual Meeting in Davos, partners follow tailored and individual reporting cadences, which remain the same year on year.

Key considerations:

- Lives impacted before the launch of the EDISON Alliance in January 2021 are not included in reporting numbers.
- Since commitments are usually an aggregation of several digital inclusion initiatives, partners were asked, after consultations, to report back at the initiative level.
- No individual partner data is shared externally, only aggregated and collective progress.

How have you managed potential double counting of lives?

In collaboration with partners, possible double counting was eliminated or reduced if:

- Lives were counted more than once within the same initiative; unique beneficiaries are counted and not the use and the number of clicks or calls.
- Lives were counted across more than one initiative within the same focus area; for example, if a student used two separate online learning platforms (education focus area) included in the same commitment.
- Lives were counted by more than one partner. In the case where two partners have made separate commitments but a subset of their commitment includes a partnership, efforts have been made to avoid counting numbers twice.

Ultimately, the goal is for people to use multiple digital services. This means there is meaningful collaboration and resources from more than one organization going into building a sustainable ecosystem and delivering a rich set of meaningful services for individuals.
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Broom, Douglas “These are the places in the world where internet access is still an issue – and why”, World Economic Forum, 5 September 2023, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/09/broadband-no-luxury-basic-necessity/#~text=It%20develops%20communities%2C%20both%20nations%20still%20don%E2%80%99t%20have.
