

IGR Development Scorecard - ICT Trend Analysis

Target 42

Sierra Leone: communication, technology and innovation access indicator | Internet users, 2017-2025

Communication: internet users increased by 60%

Strategic objective

Increase the supply of communications, technology and innovation services, improving access and affordability so digital services are integrated into development initiatives for growth, innovation, entrepreneurship, and a digital economy.

902,462 users

2017 baseline
11.7% penetration

1.84m users

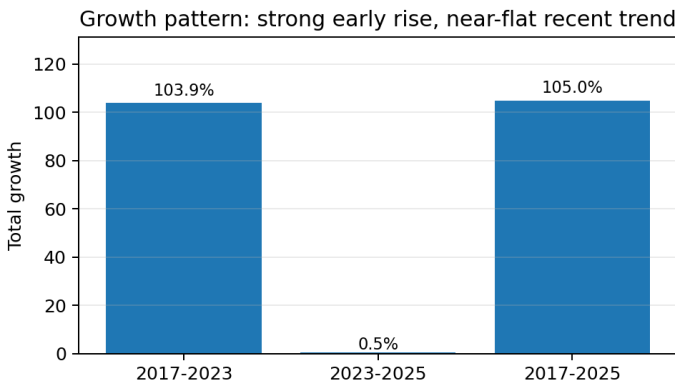
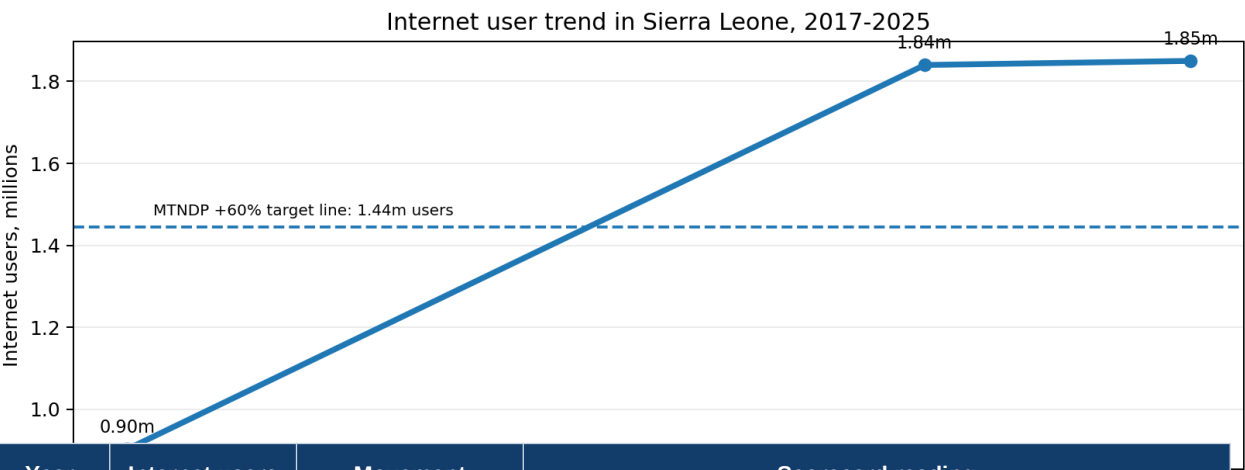
2023 baseline
Target exceeded

1.85m users

2025 latest
20.8% penetration

+105.0%

2017-2025 growth
CAGR: 9.4%



Year	Internet users	Movement	Scorecard reading
2017	902,462	Baseline	Low digital access. Internet penetration was still around 11.7% to 12%, indicating that connectivity was not yet broad-based.
2023	1.84m	+103.9% from 2017	The 60% increase target was surpassed, reaching roughly 1.27x the target level. This reflects expanded connectivity and service availability.
2025	1.85m	+0.5% from 2023	Growth has almost stalled. The issue appears less about basic availability and more about adoption barriers such as affordability, literacy, poverty and meaningful use.

IGR scorecard interpretation

Status: Target achieved, but recent delivery trend is weak.

Development message: Most growth happened before 2023. The next phase should focus on cheaper access, digital literacy, last-mile uptake, public digital services, and local innovation use cases.

What the trend shows

Internet users increased from 902,462 in 2017 to 1.84 million in 2023, then to 1.85 million by the end of 2025. This means the target of a 60% increase was exceeded, but the latest two-year movement shows a near-flat trajectory.

Why the trend matters

The data points to a shift from infrastructure expansion as the main challenge to inclusive adoption as the main challenge. Affordability, digital literacy, income levels, device access, relevant local content, and trust in digital services are likely limiting the transition from coverage to active usage.

IGR scorecard judgement

Mark as achieved on the numerical communication target, with a caution flag for sustainability and inclusiveness. A stronger scorecard should track not only number of users, but also cost of data, rural/urban access, gender gaps, public-service usage, device affordability, school connectivity, and SME digital adoption.

Recommended next indicators for the scorecard

- **Affordability**
Average price of 1GB data as share of monthly income.
- **Inclusion**
Rural access, gender gap, disability access, and youth usage.
- **Digital public services**
Number of active users of e-government platforms.
- **Innovation economy**
Startups supported, digital jobs, local content and tech hubs.
- **Connectivity quality**
4G/5G coverage, broadband speeds, downtime and reliability.

Key calculations

1.44m users

60% target level

+406k users above target

2025 versus target

12.6%

2017-2023 CAGR

0.27%

2023-2025 CAGR

9.4%

Overall CAGR