

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation is undertaking its first Voluntary National Review of progress towards achieving the SDGs in 2020. With a focus this year on development accelerators and transformative action, it is a key moment to consider activities and tools which can unlock progress, for all, across the board.

Access to information – understood as the physical possibility and right for all to seek and find information, and the skills to use it – can make just such a contribution. This access can help at all levels. It supports individuals to take better decisions about how to farm, where to look for work or how to look after their own and their families' health. It gives governments the possibility to define better policies. It allows researchers to understand the world around us, establish new insights and innovate. Libraries are a key part of the infrastructure for ensuring that this is the case.

But where does the Russian Federation stand today as concerns its libraries and access to information? This data sheet provides background based on data from the Development and Access to Information report produced by IFLA in partnership with the Technology and Social Change Group at the University of Washington, as well as IFLA's own Library Map of the World.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

- *Russia has a strong public library field, with greater numbers of public libraries and library workers per head than regional or global averages, as well as high levels of use. This offers an excellent basis for delivering on culture, education and other social policies. The academic field is slightly less strong, on available data, and could be built up in order to support learning and research in the country.*
- *Russian libraries are well-focused on supporting development, with the government making a priority of modernising equipment, and allowing them to play a strong role in their communities, and so help deliver the Sustainable Development Goals.*
- *Looking across the indicators in the DA2I framework, the Russian Federation scores well on indicators of equality and skills, compared both to global and developed country averages. Connectivity rates are slightly lower, and on some aspects of rights, there is progress to be made. Through its programme to invest in libraries, the Russian*

Federation can make useful progress already in boosting connectivity, but better protection of rights will ensure that people can make fuller use of the internet once they are there.

LIBRARIES IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Russian Federation has a total of 89 680 libraries in total highlighted on the IFLA Library Map of the World, including 1321 academic libraries, 37 138 public libraries and 46 234 school libraries. This represents a strong coverage of public libraries, with 25.7 per 100 000 people, compared to 20.6 in Eastern Europe as a whole, and 6.8 in the world as a whole.

With over 122 000 public library workers, there are 86.4 public library workers per 100 000 people, compared to 52.6 in the region, and 11.8 globally. Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of public libraries offer internet access, compared to $\frac{2}{3}$ globally. The large size of the country means that each public library, nonetheless, serves 460km² on average, compared to a global figure of 254km². Over a third of Russians are registered public library users, and the average Russian visits a public library 2.9 times a year. Digital loans only represent around 2% of total loans from public libraries.

Meanwhile, the number of academic libraries means that Russia has 0.9 per 100 000 people, compared to a regional average of 1.5, and a global one of 1.3. Figures are not available for staffing, but all of Russia's academic libraries do offer internet access.

The figures overall give the impression of a strong public library field, both in terms of reach and staffing, although with some scope to develop digital services. There may be scope to develop the academic library field further, given the support this can offer to research and learning.

Russia has a well-developed policy for libraries, and is looking to ensure users have access to modern and well-adapted services, including for marginalised populations, as underlined in its [country profile](#) on the Library Map of the World. Its libraries are also active in contributing to achieving the SDGs, for example promoting [stronger communities](#), or providing valuable additional support to [children with learning difficulties](#).

DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Development and Access to Information report draws on a range of indicators highlighting where countries stand on four key pillars of access to information: connectivity, equality, skills and rights. For meaningful access to information to be a reality for all, performance needs to be strong across all of these categories.

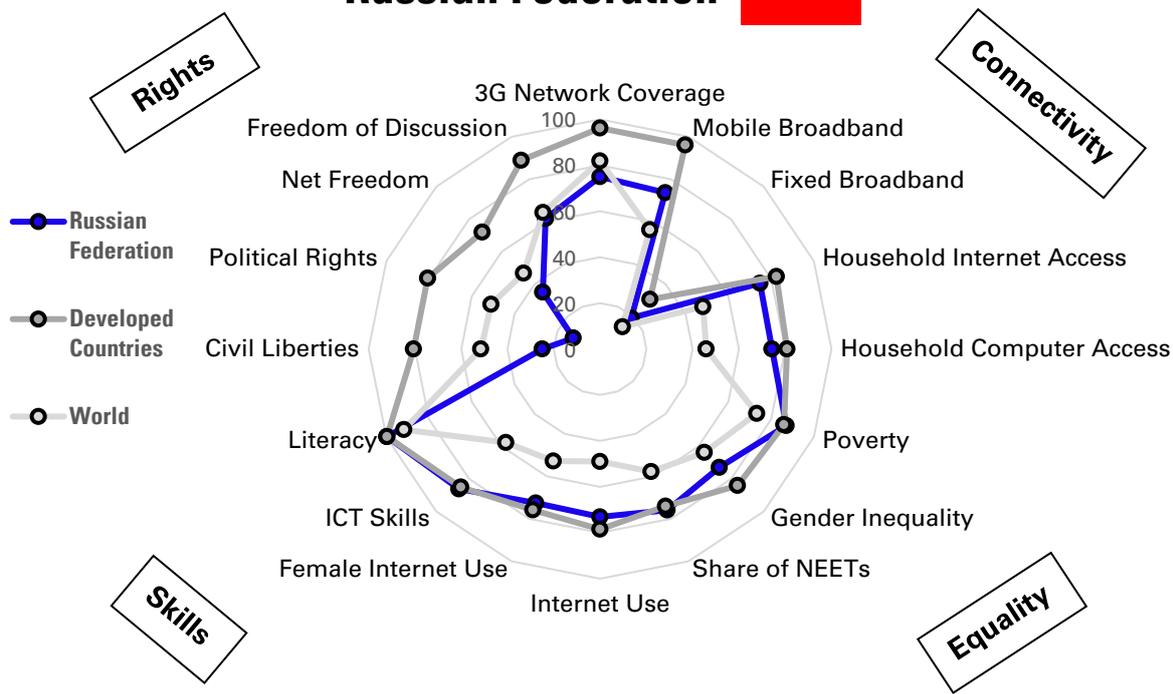
On **connectivity**, Russia has a lower coverage of 3G networks than the world as a whole, and somewhat lower than developed countries, although much of this may be explained by the country's size. Figures for numbers of mobile broadband subscriptions are more favourable (although below the mean for developed countries), while those for household internet and computer access are comparable with those for the richest countries in the world. Overall internet use is only slightly lower than the average for wealthy countries.

Concerning **equality**, Russia performs well on poverty, with relatively low numbers of people falling below the national poverty line, and its share of young adults not in employment, education and training – on both, it outperforms both global and developed country averages. However, there is a small internet gender gap in favour of men, and gender inequality is below the average for developed countries.

On **skills**, Russia is a strong performer, with a high literacy rate, and performance on the skills pillar of the ICT development index that exceeds the global and regional average. There may be more room for improvement on rights, where scores on civil liberties, political rights and net freedom are some way short of global and regional averages, although on freedom of discussion, Russia does at least come up to the global mean.

Looking across the data, Russia's good performance on skills and equality mean that key areas of focus will be on connectivity and rights. On connectivity, libraries can help both in providing access to internet connections and computers – taking advantage of how numerous they are – but also potentially bring the internet into communities through WiFi or other solutions. More progress on rights would mean that when people get online, they can make full use of it to create, share, and access information.

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How to read the graph: this graph displays a range of indicators used within the DA2I framework, adjusted to fit on a scale of 0-100, where 100 is the most positive outcome in terms of access to information.

TABLE OF DATA

See below for explanations. * = or latest available year. To note, averages are calculated on the basis of available data.

PILLAR	INDICATOR	RUSSIAN FEDERATION	Year	DEVELOPED COUNTRIES	Year	WORLD	Year
CONNECTIVITY	3G Network Coverage	75.00%	2016	96.23%	2016	81.92%	2016
	Mobile Broadband (Subscriptions per 100 People)	73.70	2016	96.15	2016	56.22	2016
	Fixed Broadband (Subscriptions per 100 People)	19.12	2016	30.55	2016	13.71	2016
	Household Internet Access	74.82%	2016	82.49%	2016	48.16%	2016
	Household Computer Access	74.31%	2016	80.82%	2016	45.88%	2016
EQUALITY	Poverty (Share of pop'n below national poverty line)	12.9%	2012	13.99%	2015*	26.69%	2015*
	Gender Inequality (0 = More equal, 1 = Less equal)	0.27	2015	0.16	2015	0.36*	2015*
	Share of NEETs	12.03%	2015	12.95%	2015*	21.12%	2015*
	Internet Use	73.09%	2016	78.50%	2016*	49%	2016*
	Female Internet Use	72.60%	2016	75.85%	2016*	52.79%	2016*
SKILLS	ICT Skills	8.62	2017	8.51	2017	5.76	2017
	Literacy	99.70%	2015	99.67%	2015	91.75	2015
RIGHTS	Civil Liberties (0 = least free, 60 = most free)	15.00	2018	48.33	2018	30.9	2018
	Political Rights (0 = least free, 40 = most free)	5.00	2018	32.24	2018	20.37	2018
	Net Freedom (0 = most free, 100 = least free)	65.00	2016	28.02	2016	53.29	2016
	Freedom of Discussion	0.62	2016	0.89	2016	0.64	2016

EXPLANATION OF INDICATORS

3G Network Coverage: this provides a measure of whether one part of the basic infrastructure for connectivity exists, although in itself is not enough to guarantee access (users need a device and a relevant subscription to be able to get online). Source: ITU

Mobile Broadband (Mobile Broadband Subscriptions per 100 people): this provides an idea of how many people can use mobile internet, opening up many – if not all – of the possibilities that internet access brings. One person may have more than one subscription. Source: ITU

Fixed Broadband (Fixed Broadband Subscriptions per 100 people): this provides an idea of how widespread home or business internet access is. Fixed access is often associated with the possibility to connect computers to make more advanced uses of the internet. Source: ITU

Household Internet Access (Share of Households with Internet Access): access to the internet at home allows for access to information at any time without having to go outside, but may be controlled by some members of the family. Source: ITU

Household Computer Access (Share of Households with a Computer): this focuses on access to computers. This is crucial for people to be able to carry out more advanced activities on the internet that might be impossible on a phone, such as writing resumes or analysing data. Source: ITU

Poverty: this indicator measures the number of people living below the national poverty line, which varies from country to country. It is a measure of economic inequality in a country. The indicator is inversed in the chart (i.e. the share of people not under the poverty line). Source: World Bank

Gender Inequality: this is calculated using the Gender Inequality Index. This index uses a basket of indicators in different areas of social development including: reproductive health, proportion of women in parliament, relative shares of men and women with at least some secondary education, and labour market participation in order to provide a broad idea of the extent of gender inequality in a country. The indicator runs from 0 (most equal) to 1 (least equal) and is inversed and adapted in the chart above. Source: UNDP

Share of NEETS (People aged 15-24 Not in Education, Employment or Training): this measures the share of young people cut off from education or the job market. Being 'NEET' can bring long-term scarring effects, and so reducing numbers is a key priority. The indicator is inversed and adapted in the chart (i.e. the share of young people who are not NEET). Source: ILO.

Internet Use (Share of People Using the Internet): looking beyond household access data (which will be affected by the structure of households in general), this gives a figure for the number of people using the internet. Source: ITU

Female Internet Use: this measure, in conjunction with the share of the overall population using the internet, allows us to understand to what extent there is a gender digital divide. Source: ITU

ICT Skills: there are relatively few global metrics of ICT skills, with those that exist only focusing on certain regions. The Skills Sub-Index of the ICT Development Index created by the ITU aims to work in this direction using levels of secondary and tertiary education enrolment, plus mean years of schooling, as proxies. Source: ITU

Literacy: this measures literacy among 15-24 year olds – i.e. people who have finished formal education. While there are online resources available for people with low literacy, being able to read, type, and understand information remains a fundamental skill. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Civil Liberties: this provides an indication of the degree to which citizens of a country enjoy fundamental civic rights, including freedom of expression and association, as well as the strength of the rule of law, based on expert judgements. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 60 (most free) and have been adapted to fit the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

Political Rights: this provides a measure of the rights people have to participate in the political process, including fair and free elections, political pluralism, and the functioning of government in general. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 40 (most free) and have been adapted to fit the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

Net Freedom: this metric assesses the level of restrictions on rights online by both public and private actors. It draws on assessments of obstacles to access (legal, economic and practical), limits on content, and violations of rights. Scores run from 100 (least free) to 0 (most free) and so are inverted in the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

Freedom of Discussion: this indicator looks at whether people are able to hold private discussions without fear of repercussions either from the authorities or society in general due to cultural restrictions or norms. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 1 (most free), and so are adapted to fit into the graphic above. Source: V-Dem dataset codebook.