# Data on fiber optic cables in Democratic Republic of Congo



## Overview

The project covers about 2,100km of infrastructure, including 1,700km of fiber-optic cable along the Congo River from Muanda to Kisangani and nearly 400km of terrestrial connections.

## Key Takeaways

The DRC's fiber optic infrastructure is rapidly expanding, with 45% coverage in 2026, supported by national and regional projects that enhance connectivity and economic growth.

### Current Coverage and Internet Usage

As of 2026, fiber optic coverage in the DRC reaches 45%, significantly improving internet access in both urban and rural areas. Internet penetration has grown to 36%, driven largely by mobile adoption and government initiatives to enhance digital connectivity. The number of mobile internet users has reached 22 million, and average broadband speeds have improved to 18 Mbps, supporting data-intensive applications and digital services.

The digital economy now contributes 3. 2% of GDP, reflecting the growing influence of connectivity on commerce, education, and governance.



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## National and Regional Fiber Projects

Several major projects are underway to expand fiber optic infrastructure: Eastern DRC Backbone Project: The second phase of a national fiber optic backbone focuses on underserved eastern regions, deploying around 1,400 km of new fiber networks along railways and roads to improve mobile broadband access and accelerate digital transformation. AfDB-backed 600 km Project: Funded by the African Development Bank (€52. 47 million) and the Congolese government (€14.

50 million), this project includes a National Data Centre in Brazzaville and 600 km of fiber interconnecting the DRC with Cameroon and the Central African Republic, enhancing local data sovereignty and digital ecosystem development. Regional 10,000 km Backbone: As part of a broader Central and Southern Africa initiative, the DRC is included in a 10,000 km regional fiber-optic network connecting Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Mozambique. This project aims to provide connectivity to schools, hospitals, and government institutions, significantly improving service quality and access.

## Submarine Cable Connectivity

## The DR

C is connected to the global internet via the West African Cable System (WACS), which landed in 2012. This subsea cable has had transformational effects, improving speeds, reducing costs, and boosting productivity. Fiber-connected areas have seen an 8.

2% increase in employment and a 19% rise in GDP per capita by 2017. However, the lack of a comprehensive national fiber backbone remains a key constraint, limiting bandwidth distribution to operators and consumers.

## Challenges

Expanding fiber optic coverage in the DRC faces several obstacles: Geography and terrain: The country's vast size and challenging topography make deployment difficult. Infrastructure gaps: Limited existing networks and dispersed populations increase costs. Political and economic factors: Instability and affordability issues hinder widespread adoption.

## Economic and Social Impact

Enhanced fiber connectivity supports economic growth, innovation, and social inclusion. It enables better access to digital services, education, healthcare, and e-commerce. Local data hosting through national data centers fosters digital sovereignty and value creation within the DRC, reducing reliance on foreign servers.

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In summary, the DRC is making significant strides in fiber optic deployment through national and regional projects, submarine cable connections, and strategic investments, though challenges remain in achieving full nationwide coverage. Continued investment in infrastructure and digital literacy is essential to fully leverage the economic and social benefits of fiber connectivity.

## Article Content

DRC plans $1.5B fiber-optic project along Congo River

The project covers about 2,100km of infrastructure, including 1,700km of fiber-optic cable along the Congo River from Muanda to Kisangani and nearly 400km of terrestrial connections.

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Overview of fiber optic infrastructure and internet usage statistics in the Democratic Republic of Congo for 2026, highlighting digital growth and connectivity.

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The project covers feasibility studies, the rollout of 60,000-80,000 kilometers of fiber-optic cable nationwide, the installation of a new 192-terabit-per-second submarine cable, and the

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DRC unveils AfDB-backed 600KM Fibre Optic Cable project

The project includes constructing a state-of-the-art National Data Centre in Brazzaville and laying 600 kilometers of fibre optic cable to interconnect with Cameroon and the Central African

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