**Malaysians most connected in Asia, but also most concerned about online risks, according to Telenor Asia study**

* *Mobile use continues to gain momentum in Malaysia*: A staggering 89% spend at least half their day using their mobile, and 73% still expect their mobile use to grow in the coming years
* *Malaysian youth are increasingly unsettled about their digital safety:* 63% of all Malaysians express significant concern about privacy and security (compared to 44% average), and young people are the most likely to feel that a skills gap could expose them to online risks such as scams or security breaches (59% compared to 40% regional average)
* *Heightened awareness and concern among Malaysian respondents regarding well-being of vulnerable family members in the digital space:* nine in ten express concerns about the online safety of vulnerable and elderly family members

**Kuala Lumpur, 17 November 2023 –** Mobile use connects, informs, and empowers the day-to-day lives of people in Malaysia with many seeking ways to upskill, enhance their careers, and access new revenue streams.

These findings come from the Malaysia launch of Telenor Asia’s *Digital Lives Decoded* study, which is now in its second year. The study surveyed over 8,000 mobile internet users across Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, and set out to understand how mobile use is helping people across Asia lead better digital lives.

Five drivers enabling a better digital life emerge from this year’s study. Across the region, people are using their mobiles to improve relationships, get ahead in their work, learn skills which open new income opportunities and live more sustainably. They are also taking steps to safeguard themselves and vulnerable family members from online risks and harms.

“This year’s findings show that people are still overwhelmingly positive about the impact mobile connectivity has on their lives, and a clearer picture is emerging of the great opportunity this holds. To tap into the potential of this for society we need to continue working on digital skills and building on the digital resilience that took shape during the pandemic. Alongside this we need to work together to encourage adoption of technology, including emerging technologies such as AI, by all in a safe, responsible and sustainable manner,” said by Haakon Bruaset Kjoel, Head of Investment Management, Malaysia, Telenor Asia.

1. **Digital safety – a high priority**

Amidst growing mobile use, privacy and security are top of mind for Malaysians when using the mobile, with 63% citing concerns about privacy and security of their mobile compared to 44% regionally. Data theft (67%), identity theft (65%) and fake news (57%) are the top three concerns around mobile use. They also expressed greater concern over the online safety of vulnerable family members, such as the elderly than their regional counterparts – 90% in Malaysia vs 77% regionally.

This year’s study also revealed digital safety fears held by Malaysia’s youth, building on a finding from last year’s study. In 2022, nearly one in three young Malaysians said privacy and security concerns were a reason for switching off. This year, they signal the greatest concern about their ability to keep pace as technology advances and they fear more than most that a skills gap could expose them to risks such as scams or security breaches. They are increasingly unsettled about their digital safety, with two in five Malaysian youth saying their mental health has been adversely affected by the experience of fake news, online harassment, scams and identity theft in the past couple of years.

1. **Mobile use connects, informs, empowers**

One in five Malaysians are never without their phone. Social interaction remains a big part of mobile use with 70% of Malaysians saying they expect this to be a driver of increased use in the years ahead. After messaging apps, Facebook remains a preferred place for social interactions and as a source of news (44%). Interestingly, in an early sign of change, just over one in eight people in Malaysia today get their news from TikTok – the highest in the region.

A stand-out finding this year was that amidst a challenging economy and a high inflationary environment, mobiles are widely used as a tool to manage the rising costs of living. In Malaysia, mobile users are most likely in the region to use apps for budgeting or to track spending, with nearly half (49%) using such apps as compared to 41% overall.

1. **Closing gaps through upskilling**

More people are also using their mobile to learn new skills, with more than half the respondents saying pointing to a significant increase in this activity (51%), and of these Malaysians are most keen to acquire video skills (54%), photography skills (53%) and communication skills (52%). Six in ten Malaysians say these new skills will help them to access new income streams or switch careers (43%), as well as building personal well-being or creating a sense of accomplishment (42%).

1. **Unlocking new opportunities at work**

Mobile use continues to be an important enabler when it comes to careers. Four in five Malaysians say that mobile use at work has helped their career and skills development and 83% say it has made them more productive. People also anticipate the adoption of new technologies to accelerate in the workplace, with three in four indicating their organisation is supportive of using generative AI for work. Yet, in keeping with another trend from last year’s study, Malaysian respondents continue to be the most likely to indicate that their company is missing out on revenue opportunities due to underdeveloped use of mobile technology (67%, compared to 54% on average).

1. **Reducing impact on climate**

Nearly three in four (74%) Malaysians say that the mobile allows them to live a more sustainable life, with younger generations more passionate about this. Nearly half (47%) of those aged 18-29 are very concerned about the environmental impact of their mobile use, while four in 10 of say that climate and sustainability practices would influence their choice of telco.

Petter-Børre Furberg, EVP and Head of Telenor Asia, concludes “As mobile technology becomes increasingly central to people’s lives in Malaysia, so does the need for all stakeholders to continue to understand the people and parts of the ecosystem most at risk. To unlock the full potential of mobile, we must continue to work with stakeholders to promote investment in connectivity networks, encourage take-up of new technologies, and enhance digital skills to create a safer online environment.”

-Ends-

**Additional Resources:**

* Report Microsite: <https://www.telenorasia.com/stories/telenor-asia-digital-lives-decoded-2023/>

**About the Report:**

The second year of the “Digital Lives Decoded” study delves into the five key drivers that show how mobile devices enable people to live better digital lives. These drivers are building healthy social connections online, unlocking new opportunities at work, facilitating skills growth and education, mitigating the impact on the planet, and cultivating risk-free online experiences.

This report summarises findings from a survey undertaken in August 2023 of 8,087 mobile internet users spread across eight markets in South and Southeast Asia, including Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**About Telenor Asia:**

Telenor Asia enables progress in the region with connectivity and digital services for more than 200 million customers. For over 25 years, our telecommunications companies have accelerated mobile adoption in Asia. Our diverse teams are dedicated to broadening access to life-changing innovations and advancing national digital agendas with a firm commitment to responsible business.

As Asia changes rapidly, Telenor Asia continues to capture new growth and realise our unwavering ambition of value creation. With operations in Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan and Thailand, Telenor Asia is headquartered in Singapore and part of Telenor Group, which is listed on the Oslo Stock Exchange under the ticker TEL.