

State of Mobile Networks: Costa Rica (November 2017)

Costa Rica's mobile broadband race is no longer a one-horse contest. While Movistar dominated all of OpenSignal's 3G and 4G metrics in our last [State of Mobile Networks report](#), in our latest results, Kölbi has surpassed Movistar in two of our speed categories, while Claro is challenging Movistar in 3G. Drawing on 117 million measurements, OpenSignal has again partnered with Sutel to compare the 3G and 4G data services of Costa Rica's three major operators. ([Click here for a Spanish language version of this report.](#))

Report Facts

117,213,653
Measurements

9,581
Test Devices

Aug 1 -
Oct 31,
2017
Sample Period

Costa Rica
Report
Location

Highlights

LTE upgrades boost Kölbi's speeds

In August Kölbi added hundreds of new LTE cell sites, creating a denser 4G network in urban areas. Consequently we recorded a big boost in Kölbi's LTE download speed, which more than doubled in six months. With a measured average download of 10 Mbps Kölbi landed OpenSignal's 4G speed award.

Movistar maintains its lead in 4G availability

Though Movistar's 4G availability held steady since our last report, the Telefónica subsidiary maintained its substantial lead in the metric. Our testers were able to latch onto a Movistar LTE signal 72.3% of the time. Movistar's closest rival in this metric was Kölbi, which had a 4G availability of 60.8%.

Claro's 4G reach is still limited

While its 4G speed was second only to Kölbi's in our measurements, Claro's 4G availability score was far below those of its competitors. Our Claro users were able to access an LTE connection less than 50% of the time.

Mobile data speeds in Costa Rica remain poor

Though we definitely see signs of 4G speeds improving, Costa Rica's LTE connections still rate among the world's slowest. In a recent global analysis, OpenSignal found the average 4G download speed in Costa Rica to be 7 Mbps, less than half of the global average of 16.6 Mbps.

Awards Table

	Download Speed: 4G	Download Speed: 3G	Download Speed: Overall	Latency: 4G	Latency: 3G	Availability: 4G
Claro	WINNER	WINNER	WINNER	WINNER	WINNER	WINNER
Kölbi	WINNER	WINNER	WINNER	WINNER	WINNER	WINNER
Movistar	WINNER	WINNER	WINNER	WINNER	WINNER	WINNER

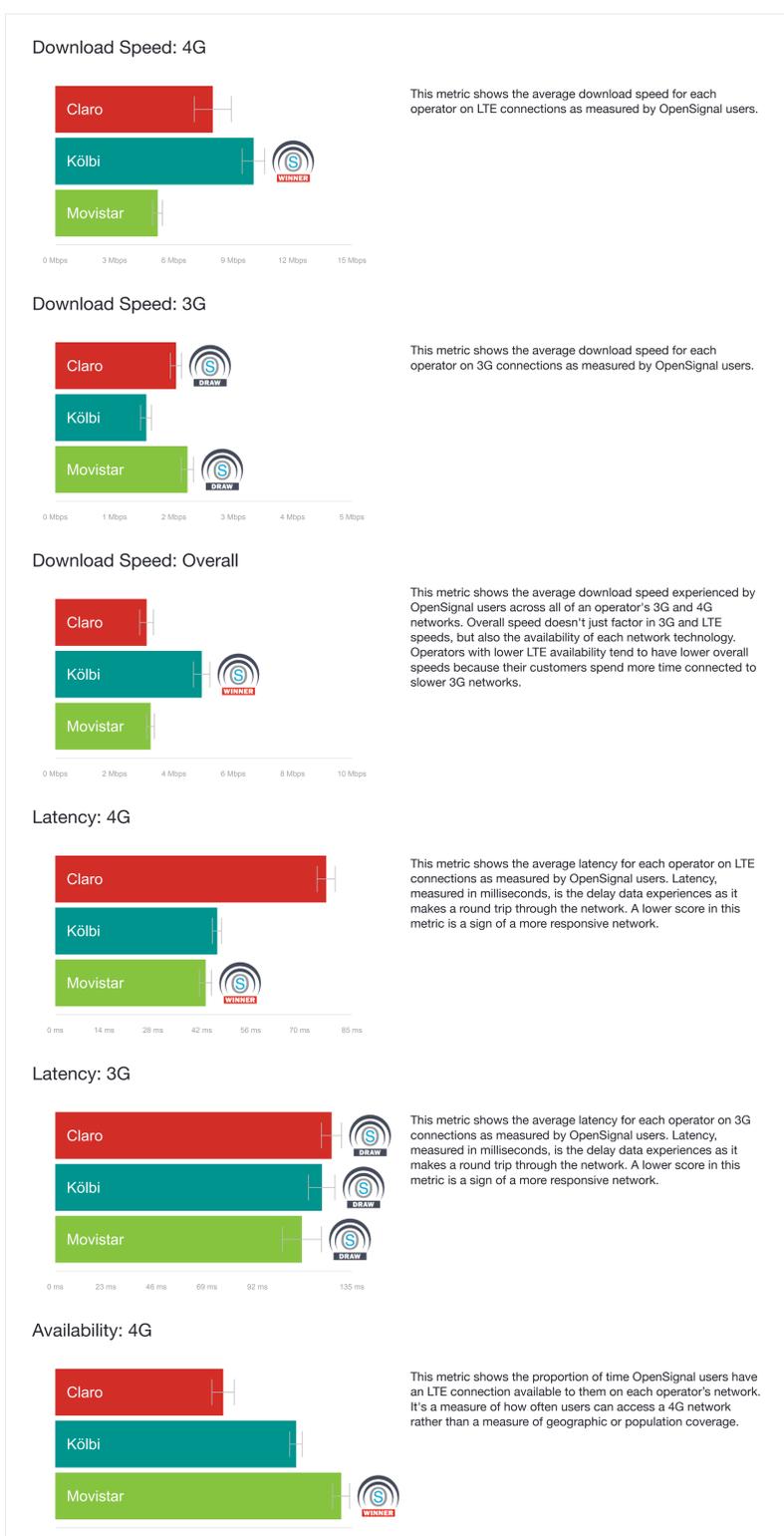
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Enjoyed our report? All our analysis is based on real measurements collected by millions of mobile network users. No simulations, no approximations: just real-world experience.

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Performance by Metric



Analysis

The 4G market in Costa Rica is changing rapidly. In our last [State of Mobile Networks: Costa Rica report](#), Movistar ran away with all six of OpenSignal's 3G and 4G awards, but six months later we see a different competitive environment. Kölbi has asserted itself with an extensive 4G expansion effort, boosting both its mobile data speeds and its LTE service reach. Movistar still held a slight edge in our awards, but Kölbi is definitely presenting a legitimate 4G challenge.

For this report, OpenSignal partnered with Costa Rican regulator Sutel to examine more than 117 million measurements collected from 9,581 consumer devices between Aug. 1 and Oct. 31 of 2017. We compared speeds, availability and latency on the 3G and 4G services of Costa Rica's three major operators: América Móvil's Claro, Grupo ICE's Kölbi and Telefónica's Movistar. Let's start first with LTE speed, a category where we have a new winner.

Kölbi took OpenSignal's 4G speed award with an average download of 10 Mbps, more than double the download speed we recorded on its networks in our June analysis. Kölbi has been busy over the last two quarters, [building 452 new cell sites](#) primarily in densely populated areas and high traffic zones like shopping centers. The results were abundantly clear in its 4G speed tests. Meanwhile, Claro debuted in our 4G metrics with an average download of 8 Mbps. The speed winner of our June report Movistar fell to last place in our rankings with a 4G speed of 5.2 Mbps.

In 3G speed, we recorded a statistical draw between Movistar and Claro, each averaging just over 2 Mbps. But Kölbi's 4G speed was able to overcome any 3G limitations, landing it our overall speed award.

Though Kölbi managed to push Costa Rica's average 4G speeds higher, Costa Rica's 4G networks are still slow when compared to those in other countries. In OpenSignal's recently published [State of LTE report](#), Costa Rica ranked 76th out of 77 countries in 4G speed, and all three operators fell well below the global 4G download average of 16.6 Mbps.

In our 4G availability metric, Movistar maintained its considerable lead over its competitors. Our users were able to connect to Movistar's LTE network 72.3% of the time. Kölbi's LTE network expansion definitely led to some improvements in 4G availability — jumping from 56.5% to 60.8% between reports — but the increase wasn't enough to close the considerable gap with Movistar in our measurements. Both operators put Claro to shame, though. Our testers on Claro's network were only able to find a 4G signal 42.4% of the time.

Our final category, latency, measures a network's responsiveness. Low latency connections are ideal for supporting real-time communications apps like video chat. Movistar won our 4G latency category, but we recorded a three-way tie in 3G latency.

Costa Rica's mobile industry still has a long way to go before it can match the high-performance and far-reaching networks we see in much of the world, but we definitely see signs of steady improvement. In six months Kölbi more than doubled its 4G speed in our tests, and Movistar has already set a high bar for 4G availability. If Costa Rica's operators can continue to push their 4G limits, they'll quickly close the network gap.

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Our Methodology

OpenSignal measures the real-world experience of consumers on mobile networks as they go about their daily lives. We collect 2 billion individual measurements every day from tens of millions of smartphones worldwide.

Our measurements are collected at all hours of the day, every day of the year, under conditions of normal usage, including inside buildings and outdoors, in cities and the countryside, and everywhere in between. By analyzing on-device measurements recorded in the places where subscribers actually live, work and travel, we report on mobile network service the way users truly experience it.

We continually adapt our methodology to best represent the changing experience of consumers on mobile networks and, therefore, comparisons of the results to past reports should be considered indicative only. For more information on how we collect and analyze our data, see our [methodology page](#).

For this particular report, 117,213,653 datapoints were collected from 9,581 users during the period: Aug 1 - Oct 31, 2017.

For every metric we've calculated statistical confidence intervals and plotted them on all of the graphs. When confidence intervals overlap for a certain metric, our measured results are too close to declare a winner in a particular category. In those cases, we show a statistical draw. For this reason, some metrics have multiple operator winners.

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