

Digital Development Partnership

The World Bank is launching a Digital Development Partnership (DDP) to help operationalize the 2016 World Development Report on Digital Dividends and to offer a platform for digital innovation and development financing. The DDP will bring public and private sector partners together to catalyze support to developing countries in the articulation and implementation of digital development strategies and plans.

Opportunity

Digital technologies can help in addressing some of the toughest development challenges: providing access to information, overcoming remoteness, exclusion, and disconnects, and offering economic opportunity. World leaders, academics, the private sector, and development specialists agree on the tremendous potential of using digital technologies for development. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set the target to “significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the internet in least developed countries by 2020” (SDG target 9.c). More generally, the ambition of many SDGs such as 5.c will require innovative, inclusive, technology-based solutions. Numerous initiatives led by civil society and the private sector call for a better use of digital technologies to achieve a breakthrough on some of the most persistent development challenges.

World Development Report 2016

The World Bank’s 2016 World Development Report on Digital Dividends (WDR 2016), published in January 2016, presents a balanced and nuanced analysis of the ‘Digital Dividends’ that developing countries can expect to reap. The report reviews the opportunities that digital technologies offer to developing countries, the risks that exist if the benefits of digital innovation accrue to those already better off, and the necessary complements (such as the country’s skills capacity, business environment, and governance) to ensure that digital development can work as a positive force for sustainable, inclusive development.

Digital Development Partnership (DDP)

To help implement the SDGs and operationalize the WDR 2016, the World Bank is launching a Digital Development Partnership (DDP). This partnership will make digital solutions available to developing countries with an emphasis on the following areas.

Priority Work Areas

- **Data and indicators:** DDP will develop a diagnostic toolkit and a set of indicators to benchmark the readiness of client countries to reap digital dividends. This toolkit will combine information on the spread of digital technologies with an assessment of the regulatory environment. The diagnostic toolkit will build on the Digital Adoption Index developed for the WDR 2016. This will inform DDP reform priorities.
- **Digital economy enabling environment:** The convergence of ICT, media, and content technologies and platforms requires a regulatory framework in support of the digital economy. DDP funded activities will seek to overhaul obsolete regulations, remove bottlenecks to the development of digital ecosystems, and foster competition. Issues of policy and regulation of the digital space to be addressed include: cloud services, local content creation, open data, development of a trust environment based on cybersecurity and consumer privacy and data protection, regulations for online payment systems and, more generally, the interface between digital or ICT regulations and other sector regulations.
- **Internet access for all:** WDR 2016 argues that a new digital divide is emerging and constitutes one of the main hurdles to capturing digital dividends. DDP will offer technical assistance to support client countries in enhancing their connectivity, covering matters of national policy and strategy, regulation and markets, technological standards, infrastructure sharing and development, spectrum management, taxation, gender aspects of connectivity, and regional ICT markets.
- **Digital government:** The WDR highlights the tremendous opportunities in using e-Government models to improve service delivery, foster transparency and efficiency

in public administration, and empower all citizens and entrepreneurs. DDP will support client governments in the development of digital government infrastructure platforms and shared services. Work areas will include digital government leadership, public sector IT architecture and governance, data and analytics platforms, as well as interoperability.

- **Mainstreaming digital innovation:** Digital innovation affects all fields of socio-economic activity. Digital transport systems make logistics more efficient; digital energy applications allow for smart grids; e-health can support domestic health systems, and e-commerce platforms offer new economic opportunities for small entrepreneurs – to mention just a few. DDP will assist the mainstreaming of digital applications by leveraging digital enablers such as Big Data analytics, cloud computing, mobile platforms and payment systems, and location services for smarter development solutions.

DDP Operating Principles

As digital progress is fast and primarily private sector driven, DDP draws on best practices from client countries and the private sector. To this end, DDP is bringing together traditional partners from the development community and leading global IT firms. Much of this digital development agenda will also be encouraged through loans and grants from the World Bank and other development partners. An evidence-based results and impact framework will underpin all DDP interventions.

The World Bank is keen to seek inputs from potential clients, partners, and donors on strategic orientation and priority topics to be covered in the DDP work program. Potential donors are encouraged to consider a contribution to the Multidonor Trust Fund (MDTF). Launch donors will be able to shape the DDP and be involved in its implementation through a donor committee to be established.