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## Central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) - Risks and Opportunities for Developing Countries

by

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The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.



## CBDCs

Risks and Opportunities for Developing Countries

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# growth in digital payments

## The Digital Era for the Monetary System





# Crypto was introduced

# 31 Oct 2008

#### Crypto and Traditional Finance

## What are the **risks**? What are the **opportunities**? stablecoins DeFi $\Xi$ traditional crypto

What do we want from a **monetary** system?

#### High Level Goals of the Monetary System





#### High Level Goals of the Monetary System

**Safety and stability Accountability** Efficiency Inclusion **User control over data** Integrity **Adaptability Openness** 

High-level goals	today_	crypto	future
	system	(to date)	system (vision)
<ol> <li>Safety and stability – money needs to perform fundamental functions: as a store of value, unit of account and medium of exchange</li> </ol>	Sovereign currencies can offer price stability, and public oversight has helped achieve safe and robust payment systems	Cryptocurrencies do not perform money's fundamental functions, and stablecoins need to import their credibility	Innovations grounded in trust in the central bank feature stable sovereign currencies and safe paymen systems
<ol> <li>Accountability – public mandates and regulation should ensure that key nodes in the system are accountable and transparent to users and society</li> </ol>	Supervision, regulation and oversight tackle risks, promote competition and protect consumers, but public mandates may need to adapt to change	Crypto and DeFi create a parallel financial system to circumvent regulation, with no accountability to the general public	Clear mandates and regulation balance risks an benefits so as to harness innovation and stimulate efficiency
<ol> <li>Efficiency – the system should provide low-cost, fast payments and throughput</li> </ol>	Domestic payments are often expensive and financial institutions collect rents	High congestion and rents lead to costly transactions and new speculative incentives	New payment systems can significantly reduce payme costs and rents, supportin economic activity
<ol> <li>Inclusion – the system should ensure universal access to basic services at affordable prices</li> </ol>	Many people lack access to transaction accounts and digital payment instruments	Crypto and DeFi have not yet served to enhance financial inclusion	New service providers and interfaces can address barriers to inclusion and better serve the unbanked
5. <b>User control over data</b> – data governance arrangements should ensure users' privacy and control over data	Users trust intermediaries to keep data safe, but they do not have sufficient control over their data	Transactions are public on the blockchain – which will not work with "real names"	New data architectures ca give users privacy and control over their data
<ol> <li>Integrity – the system should avoid illicit activity such as money laundering, financing of terrorism and fraud</li> </ol>	Payment systems are subject to extensive regulation, but illicit activity persists in cash and account fraud	Pseudo-anonymity is prone to abuse by illicit actors, and the DeFi sector is rife with fraud and theft; identification is needed	New technologies can hel to better prevent illicit activity and improve on today's systems
7. Adaptability – the system should anticipate future developments and users' needs and foster competition and innovation	Payment systems are adapting to demands, but are not yet at the technological frontier	Programmability, composability and tokenisation give scope for new functions	Programmability, composability and tokenisation can be offere in a CBDC or through tokenised deposits
8. <b>Openness</b> – the system should allow for seamless cross-border use	Despite progress, cross- border payments are still slow, opaque and expensive	DeFi is by nature borderless and allows global transactions, but without adequate oversight	Multi-CBDC arrangements and other reforms mean cheaper, faster and safer cross-border transactions

Source: BIS.

## Achieving the Goals



## Regulation

## Intermediation

## **Regulation is Imperative!**



## Regulation

## Intermediation

## Risks in changing the 2-tier system are large



## Regulation

## Intermediation

## What do we want from Technology?



## Regulation

## Intermediation

## What do we want from Technology?



**Technological Options** 

Technology

Efficiency



Flexibility

Privacy with integrity



11 projects on CBDC

## Technology

# needs governance

## The Impacts of Pix







Source: Central Bank of Brazil

#### Pix Growth



### Pix and TED (Previous credit transfer instrument)



Source: Central Bank of Brazil

#### **Pix and Other Instruments**



Source: Central Bank of Brazil

#### Number of transactions per capita



#### The Role of the Regulator



## The Role of the Regulator



#### Competition

Participation of large payment service providers

**Financial Inclusion** 

Low cost policy

Standardised **user experience** 

Efficiency and Interoperability

**Co-creation** approach to address market failures

... among others

Sources: Duarte, Angelo, et al. Central Banks, the Monetary System and Public Payment Infrastructures: Lessons from Brazil's Pix. BIS Bulletin, no 52; Brandt, C and B Lobo (2021): "Pix: the Brazilian fast payments scheme", *Journal of Payments Strategy and Systems*, vol 15, no 4, December.

CBDCs – Technology, Governance, and Regulation



