

**COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT
(CSTD)**

**Twenty-fifth session
Geneva, 28 March to 1 April 2022**

**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international
organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2021 to
implement the outcomes of the WSIS**

Submission by

World Bank Group

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 25th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Response to UNCTAD-CSTD request for WSIS Reporting, October 2021

Prepared by the World Bank Group¹

The following report is submitted to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) by the World Bank Group (WBG) as part of its commitment to report annually on the implementation of the Action Plan of World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS – Geneva 2003; Tunis 2005). This is in line with ECOSOC Resolution 2006/46. The report follows the template proposed by the CSTD, in its letter of July 15, 2021.

Part One: Executive Summary

The WBG continues to be fully committed to upholding the principles set out in the WSIS Declaration of Principles and implementing the WSIS Action Plan. It does this, in concert with other development partners, through its lending program (mobilizing multiple [financing instruments](#), including for the [poorest countries](#)), through its technical assistance and analytical work program, through the private sector-oriented activities of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and through the risk guarantees offered by the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA). New and ongoing initiatives in 2021 focused on developing a digital response to the COVID-19 pandemic, further support to the Digital Economy for Africa (DE4A) initiative, as well as launching new regional initiatives in South Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. All WSIS stakeholders are invited to join the Digital Development Partnership (DDP), a multi-partner Trust Fund established with the aim to strengthen the digital economy, supporting many of the areas targeted by the WSIS Action Plan.

Part Two: Trends and Experiences in WSIS Implementation

Interest amongst the membership of the WBG in the development of the Information Society, and in particular of the Digital Economy, continues to grow. To this end, in 2018, the World Bank established the “Digital Development” Global Practice (GP) and during the 2019-2021 period the practice has grown in terms of its operations and staffing. In addition, the practice established dedicated units for each of the regions in which the WBG operates.

Highlights in 2021 include:

- **The publication of the [World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives \(WDR21\)](#)**, which explores the tremendous potential of the changing data landscape to improve the lives of poor people, while also acknowledging its potential to open back doors that can potentially harm individuals, businesses, and societies. To address this tension between the helpful and harmful potential of data, this Report calls for a new social contract that enables the use and reuse of data to create economic and social value, ensures equitable access to that value, and fosters trust that data will not be misused in harmful ways. A series of background papers have also been published as part of the WDR21 launch ([full list available here](#)), with a focus on data governance, data privacy, mobile internet adoption, and data inequality. The findings of the WDR 2021 will inform our technical assistance and lending operations, contributing to **WSIS action lines C1, C3, C5, C6**.
- **Completion of over 34 country-specific digital economy diagnostics under the [Digital Economy for Africa \(DE4A\) initiative](#)**. Each diagnostic uses a common methodology based around five pillars of digital infrastructure, public platforms, financial services, skills and businesses. The new digital economy country diagnostics completed in 2021 (fiscal year) so far included Cote d’Ivoire, Zimbabwe, Benin, Egypt, Malawi, Botswana, Eswatini, Mauritius, The Gambia. Further studies are under way for Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Sudan and South Sudan. In addition, the common methodology used to develop the reports is currently being upgraded to incorporate lessons from the WDR21 (mentioned above). Another cohort of studies is currently under preparation while others have been requested for 2022. These will form the analytical basis

¹ For follow-up, please contact Tim Kelly (tkelly@worldbank.org) and Oualid Bachiri (obachiri@worldbank.org).

for future lending programs, contributing to **WSIS action lines C1, C2, C3, C5, C6 and C7**. A similar approach is currently being developed in other regions.

- **Completion of [analytical papers](#) that estimate the impact of internet availability using geospatial data and national household surveys in selected African countries**, as well as the completion of [a study](#) on digital skills and school and university connectivity in the region, contributing to a forthcoming flagship report on the digital transformation in Africa.
- **The publication of sector-specific reports on ICT applications in developing countries**, including reports on digital transformation in [agriculture](#), in [maritime transport](#) and [higher education in Africa](#). Those reports contribute to **WSIS action lines C3 and C7**.
- **A series of new digital lending programs have been launched:** In [Haiti](#) and [West Bank & Gaza](#), we are supporting the digitalization of public services to better support citizens in fragile contexts. In the [Caribbean](#), we are also supporting the implementation of an ambitious regional transformation program supporting small island states. In [Tanzania](#) and [Uganda](#), we are adopting a 360 -degree approach that taps into the different elements of the digital economy². In [Cabo Verde](#), [Ethiopia](#) and in the [Marshall Islands](#), we are supporting governments improve their digital regulatory environment to improve competition, consumer's welfare, and citizen-centric digital service delivery. In selected operations, we are focusing on targeted activities to deliver concrete results for people, including boosting digital government services in [Gabon](#), supporting the establishment of the first data center in [Togo](#) under a public private partnership model, building a robust digital education infrastructure in [Turkey](#), enabling climate-smart digital agriculture in [Morocco](#) and [Cameroon](#). All of our digital development projects in 2021 include provisions and targets regarding gender inclusion. For instance, in [Nigeria](#), our support in harmonizing and upscaling the national digital ID system aims to move digital ID penetration for women from 0 to 50%.
- **Support for regulatory reforms to develop digital economy enablers:** A series of policy loans helped increase the quality and integrity of the digital services by putting in place universal access policy, regulatory frameworks to increase competition and foster investment in telecom infrastructure, interoperability framework for digital platforms. In [Benin](#), we supported the strengthening of the government's policy framework to reduce the digital divide and accelerate the country's structural transformation. In [Georgia](#), we are supporting the government's efforts to strengthen the governance and strategy of the national competition agency to improve the level playing field and reduce the cost of deploying high-speed broadband infrastructure. In [Burkina Faso](#), the government is rolling out digital public platforms to improve access to subsidized inputs for smallholder farmers, to support the business continuity of the state, and to improve service delivery during the COVID crisis. In [Morocco](#), we supported the government in strengthening the policy framework on digital payment systems and subsequently on the cybersecurity with an objective to improve financial inclusion and digital entrepreneurship. In the [Philippines](#), the government developed the legal and regulatory framework for a foundational ID system that aims to improve service delivery and financial inclusion for citizens and resident aliens. In [Colombia](#), we are supporting the government sustain access to critical infrastructure services for firms and households, through a cross-infrastructure policy reforms (transport, energy, digital development, public-private partnership) that include policy and regulatory measures to close the digital divide. In [Albania](#) and [Peru](#), we are also supporting reforms enabling infrastructure sharing to promote adoption and usage of broadband access. These policy reform initiatives directly contribute to **WSIS action lines C2 and C6**.
- Technical assistance programs in the field of digital development continues in a wide-range of countries. Of particular interest is the support the WBG is providing to the establishment of **new ICT regulatory authorities** in **Somalia** (NCA, in operation since 2018), **Ethiopia** (ECA, set up in 2019) and **Djibouti** (ARMD, established in 2020). In **Ethiopia**, support for Telecom Sector Reform by WBG (both WB and IFC) has contributed to the realization of the Government of Ethiopia's vision of a competitive telecommunications sector and resulted in the opening of the sector to competition, with the licensing of a new operator, led by Safaricom (Kenya) in June 2021, with possibly others to follow. Through the Digital

² An operation is also forthcoming in Rwanda.

Ethiopia project, IDA is supporting the partial privatization of the incumbent. Ethio Telecom. In **Tajikistan**, the DDP has been providing technical assistance to the government around telecom reforms and regulations, digital skills framework, Smart City strategy, and data and digital ID. The grant has laid ground for the ambitious new ICT strategy which would stimulate significant socio-economic development and yield additional revenues for the state budget. In **Armenia**, DDP has helped the government to design a policy framework for data governance. This work contributes, in particular, to **WSIS action lines C2, C5 and C6**.

- **The World Bank Group has scaled up its support to the development of digital ID and payment systems** through [ID4D](#) and its sister Initiative [G2Px](#), which supports a cross-sectoral approach to digital government payments that accelerates financial inclusion. These initiatives contribute to contribute to **WSIS action lines C1, C3, C7, C8, and C11**.
 - The number of countries actively benefiting from ID4D technical assistance has now reached 49, most with World Bank financing. New World Bank-financed projects in 8 countries have been approved in FY21 (July 2020 – June 2021), investing \$360 million into the development and/or use of ID and civil registration systems.
 - ID4D is also supporting the African Union Commission to develop the draft African Union Digital ID Interoperability Framework.
 - In 2021, [the Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development](#) were reviewed and updated by 30 endorsing organizations following public and civil society consultations.
 - ID4D published research on Nigeria’s [Gender Gap in ID](#), a qualitative study on [Barriers to the Inclusion of Women](#) in Nigeria, a [report on ID and Civil Registration in Rwanda](#), and a [note on Unraveling Data’s Gordian Knot](#). The G2Px Initiative is advising 34 countries on how to digitize government to person payments. G2Px published a note on [Digital Cash Transfers in Times of COVID-19: Opportunities and Considerations for Women’s Inclusion and Empowerment](#).
- **Digital Development Partnership (DDP) continued to expand and build strong collaboration** with both the public and private sector. Over the past year, SIDA (Sweden) and GIZ (Germany) joined DDP bringing the total number of partners to 13. The DDP lending leverage continued to increase during the year and has reached a record US\$9 billion of lending and investment operations – up by almost US\$3.5 billion from last year. The DDP has also launched a dedicated web [knowledge platform](#). The DDP-funded activities support **all WSIS action lines but especially C1**.
- **The establishment of a new Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) on Cybersecurity:** the [MDTF](#) aims at systematically incorporate cybersecurity in the development agenda as well as in World Bank programs. Initial activities are focused on developing cybersecurity solutions for low- and middle-income countries and mainstreaming the cybersecurity agenda in Bank operations. The Fund was made possible with contributions from Estonia, Germany, Japan, and The Netherlands, the US Government (Department of State). The new Cybersecurity Multi-Donor Trust Fund is part of the broader Digital Development Partnership (DDP) umbrella program. The activities of this new fund will contribute to **WSIS action lines C3, C5, C6 and C11**.

Part Three: Ongoing and Future Initiatives

Among the different initiatives listed above, the DDP is particularly closely related to the WSIS action plan (see: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/digital-development-partnership>). The DDP windows can be matched to the WSIS Action Lines, as shown in the table below.

DDP activity / Pillar	Corresponding WSIS action line(s)
1. Data and Indicators -- Under the workstream on Data and Indicators, DDP seeks to scale up the use of data and indicators to benchmark and advance the	Partnership for Measuring the Information Society C11 – International Co-operation

readiness of low- and middle-income countries to reap digital dividends. See a list of all portfolio grants ³ under the Data and Indicators pillar.	
2. Digital Economy Enabling Environment -- Activities under this workstream 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, consumer privacy and data protection, and, more generally, the interface between digital or ICT regulations and other sector regulations. See a list of grants under the Digital Economy pillar.	C6 – enabling environment
3. Cybersecurity -- through the Cybersecurity workstream, DDP helps advance the capacity of World Bank clients in the development of cybersecurity policies and standards and supports good practices in the use of cybersecurity tools, safeguards, and risk management instruments. See a list of grants under the Cybersecurity pillar.	C4 – capacity building C5 – Global culture of cybersecurity
4. Internet for all -- Under this workstream, DDP offers 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. See a list of grants under the Internet for All pillars.	C2 – Infrastructure
5. Digital Government -- DDP supports client governments in the development of digital government infrastructure platforms and shared services. Work areas include digital government leadership, public sector IT architecture and governance, data and analytics platforms, and interoperability. See a list of grants under the Digital Government pillar.	C3-Access to information and knowledge C4 – capacity building C6- enabling environment C7, eGovernment
6. Mainstreaming digital services, applications and platforms -- including in the agriculture, transport and education sectors -- Under this workstream, DDP fosters digital capabilities in a range of areas where collaboration with other World Bank Units, associations, firms, donors, and other partners can foster growth and inclusion. This implies jointly leveraging digital enablers such as Internet of Things, cloud computing, and mobile platforms and payment systems. See a list of grants under the Digital Government pillar.	C3 – Access to information and knowledge C7 (all)

³ Year 5 in the [DDP Portfolio Grant](#) list under each pillar corresponds to the new activities launched in FY21.

Annex: World Bank Group Ecosystem Approach to Digital Transformation

