



CONCEPT NOTE

"DIGITAL4DEVELOPMENT"

2ND MULTISTAKEHOLDER EVENT

Brussels, 20 March 2019

Summary

EU Member States adopted on 20 November 2017 Council Conclusions on Digital for Development (D4D), inviting the Commission to launch a series of actions during 2017-2020 to implement D4D, with special focus on developing digital infrastructure, promoting e-governance and digital skills, strengthening the digital economy and fostering start-up ecosystems. In addition, Council urged the Commission to set up a multi-stakeholder group for sharing best practices and lessons learnt from digital transformation and for strengthening cooperation with all relevant actors in the context of D4D, as well as to make use of other existing coordination mechanisms.

In response to these requests, the EU Commission organised successfully in April 2018 the first D4D multi-stakeholder event, dedicated to the private sector and focusing in Africa. This event brought together private sector companies, financing institutions, development agencies and MS representatives, to create synergies between the EU, MS and private sector interventions and investments in developing countries. Moreover, the participants had the opportunity to exchange best practices and lessons learnt in the context of deployment of digital for development projects in Africa.

This second multi-stakeholder event gives the opportunity to the institutions and relevant stakeholders active on the D4D field to update on the progress made since, share good practices and lessons learnt from digital transformation and strengthen their cooperation and partnership schemes for D4D related actions. Since the previous event was dedicated to the African continent and was oriented towards the private sector, the present one is scoping to a more global perspective. Nevertheless particular focus is to be given again in the African context, since the digital divide there is the greatest.

Context

The exponential spread of digital technologies and services has deep global implications, as such, it creates opportunities for sustainable development and inclusive growth, but at the same time, it brings new threats and challenges. Taking on the opportunities of the digital revolution, and addressing the challenges is of key importance for the EU. This is now well reflected in both its internal market as well as in its external policies.

From 2017 onwards digitalisation has achieved more and more importance, being reflected in the strategic policy documents of the European Commission, including the New European Consensus on Development and the Commission Staff Working Document on "Digital 4 Development: mainstreaming digital technologies and services into EU development policy".

In line with the logic expressed in the new European Consensus on Development, on the 2 May 2017 the European Commission published the **Staff Working Document (SWD) "Digital4Development: Mainstreaming digital technologies and services into EU development policy"**¹. It is a comprehensive strategic framework on Digital4Development, setting out four priority areas for intervention: i) connectivity; ii) digital literacy and skills; iii) digital entrepreneurship and job creation; iv) use of digital as enabler for sustainable development (e.g. e-agriculture, e-health, e-governance, etc.).

Moreover, President Juncker has announced at the State of Union Speech (12 September 2018) the **"Communication on a new Africa –Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs: Taking our partnership for investments and jobs to the next level"**. This initiative sets out the ambitions for a comprehensive and innovative partnership between Africa and the EU. This includes a renewed determination to boost investment for job creation and to strengthen the role of the private sector, highlighting the need to exploit the full potential of the digital transformation of the economy, in particular e-commerce and data economy, and tackling the areas requiring reform in order to improve the business-enabling environment.

Impetus to D4D is also given by the **European External Investment Plan**, a comprehensive plan to incentivise and de-risk private investment aiming at supporting inclusive and sustainable development and job creation in Africa and in the EU Neighbourhood. The EIP has a dedicated **digital window**, under the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD), the guarantee scheme of the EIP, and under this digital window, four digital proposals have already been endorsed.

Finally, as one of the tools to achieve the ambitions set out under the Africa- Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investments and Jobs, the **EU-AU Digital Economy Task Force (DETF)** was

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/swd-digital4development_part1_v3.pdf

launched in December 2018. This Task Force brings together interested stakeholders from both continents, and will formalise and emphasize the joint political support to this new strategic and political alliance. The Task Force will provide recommendations on policies and measures that can support pan-African digital integration as well as it will identify ways to boost both public and private investment. In addition, the Task force will provide suggestions on how to mainstream digital services across different sectors of the economy and will examine how Europe and Africa can build a partnership and draw mutual benefits from the digital transformation of economy and society.

This 2nd Multi-stakeholder event will take place in the context of the Digital4Development Coalition, an informal network of European stakeholders including the private sector, civil society and national development agencies. The objective of this network is to engage in a structured dialogue with the European Commission to support the implementation of the EU's D4D agenda, with the aim to provide a concerted, holistic cross-sectoral approach to identify concrete projects, and formulate policy recommendations for a favourable digital business and investment environment in Africa. Three workshops were organised by the Coalition and position papers have been elaborated.

-- The Event

In the context of digital dialogue with the private sector, academia, and civil society, and as follow-up action on the 1st Multi-stakeholder event on Digital4Development, the European Commission is organising this 2nd Multi-stakeholder event.

The Objectives of the event are:

- To create synergies between the EU, private sector, academia, and civil society in developing countries and to promote EU interest and values;
- To update stakeholders on the work and progress of the EU-Africa Digital Economy Task Force;
- To update stakeholders on the state of play of the implementation of the Commission's Digital4Development approach;
- To exchange best practices and lessons learnt during the D4D Coalition workshops on Connectivity, Smart Cities and Digital Entrepreneurship;
- To present the findings of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) study on unlocking the potential for digitalisation in African agriculture;
- To present best practices and lessons learnt on D4D from IFIs, MS, Development Cooperation agencies, private sector representatives, and Commission services.

OPENING

Following the opening of the event by the Commission, the DETF will report on the work progress made so far, presenting their initial findings and proposals. An update of the state of play of D4D from the European Commission's perspective will follow.

MAIN PROGRAMME

Three sessions will follow: a first, providing an update on the D4D Coalition workshops, a second presenting the key recommendations of the CTA/ Dalberg study on agriculture and digitalisation, and a third on the experiences on the ground regarding digitalisation projects in development cooperation. Discussion and exchange of views on a number of questions will follow.

SESSION 1: D4D COALITION

Update on Digital4Development Coalition workshops

This opening session will offer an update on the three workshops organized by the **D4D Coalition** (the first on: “**Digital Solutions for Smart Cities & Communities in Africa**” , the second on: “**Leave no one behind: Open, affordable and secure broadband connectivity**’ and the third on: “**The future of employment in Africa – Opportunities and Challenges of Digital Technologies and Entrepreneurship**”. A presentation on the outcomes of the three workshops and the way forward will be provided during the event.

SESSION 2: UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL FOR DIGITALISATION IN AFRICAN AGRICULTURE – *Key findings study learnt*

This second session will present a number of key findings, summarizing the **study on digitalisation in African agriculture** carried out by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and Dalberg. The intention of the study is to define roles for donors, governments and private sector to advance development objectives that are specific to smallholder farmers, putting a focus on digital solutions that target these farmers. This objective is tied to the CTA agenda for women, youth, and emerging tech.

SESSION 3: DIGITAL4DEVELOPMENT – *Experiences on the ground*

Almost two years has passed since the adoption of the Commission Staff Working Document on Digital4Development. Commission Services, IFI's, MS and the private sector have all contributed to the launch of projects and a number of policy initiatives that integrate the use of

digital technologies in development. This last session is left to various stakeholders to **provide the opportunity to present to the participants their experiences on the ground, as well as their best practices & lessons learnt**. Discussions will follow.

CLOSING

The event will conclude, summarising the most pressing issues identified by the stakeholders on how to move forward with the implementation of the D4D approach.