Digital Policy Framework for the Arab States

Executive Summary

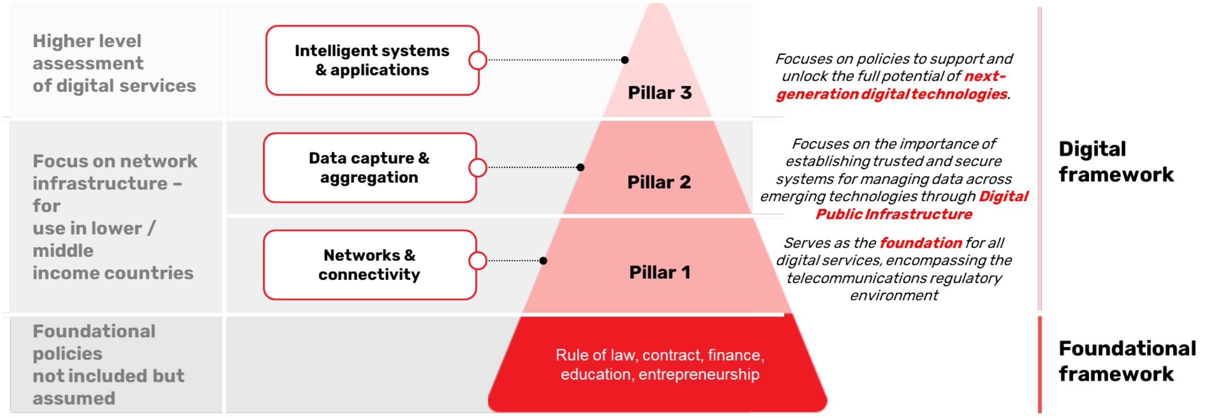
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with Ooredoo Group, has developed this Digital Policy Framework (DPF) for the Arab States to provide governments across the region with a coherent, evidence-based approach to digital policy making.[1]

There is already strong recognition across Arab States on the role that digital transformation and Artificial Intelligence can play in generating inclusive economic growth and Human development. To help countries translate this potential into coordinated action, the DPF provides a single, comprehensive framework that enables governments to identify priorities, assess their level of digital maturity, and design policies that drive digital transformation in a harmonised and sustainable way.

The report draws together the most widely recognised global frameworks, including from the ITU, OECD, World Bank and UNDP, and synthesises lessons from national case studies. It reflects a detailed review of how digital policies have been applied in both developed and developing economies, supported by cross-country evidence linking broadband expansion, digital public infrastructure and GDP growth.

The framework recognises that countries are at different stages of digital development, and therefore optimal policies cannot follow a "one size fits all" approach but should be grounded in the principle that digitalization must be human centric, safe and inclusive. The framework is aligned with the UNDP "whole of society" approach.

It highlights the need for high quality telecommunications networks and connectivity as the foundation of any digital ecosystem. At the same time, it emphasises the importance of complementary policy frameworks that promote the development and use of Digital Public Infrastructure such as digital identity, digital payments, and data-sharing systems. Together, these elements form the essential basis for the growth and broad adoption of more advanced, intelligent and value-adding digital applications, such as Artificial Intelligence, e-Education, e-Health, Smart Agriculture.



By applying the DPF, governments can expect to realise broad economic, social and developmental gains. Economically, digital transformation expands productivity, stimulates entrepreneurship and attracts investment. Applying the DPF can also directly contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In this sense, digitalization is not as an end in itself but an enabler of broader development objectives: such as access to quality education, advancing gender equality, improving health systems, promoting decent work and fostering innovation and sustainable industries.

Ultimately, the DPF for the Arab States is designed to equip governments with a tested, globally aligned but locally adaptable tool for policy formulation. Its adoption enables countries to accelerate digital transformation, build resilient and inclusive economies and deliver tangible benefits to citizens.

By following its guidance, policymakers can convert the promise of digital technology and artificial intelligence into real progress in economic diversification, social inclusion and human development.

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