



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

DIGITAL STRATEGY Annual Report 2022

IPI Bureau for Inclusive Growth,
Partnerships, and Innovation

Innovation, Technology, and Research
Hub-Technology Division

March 2024

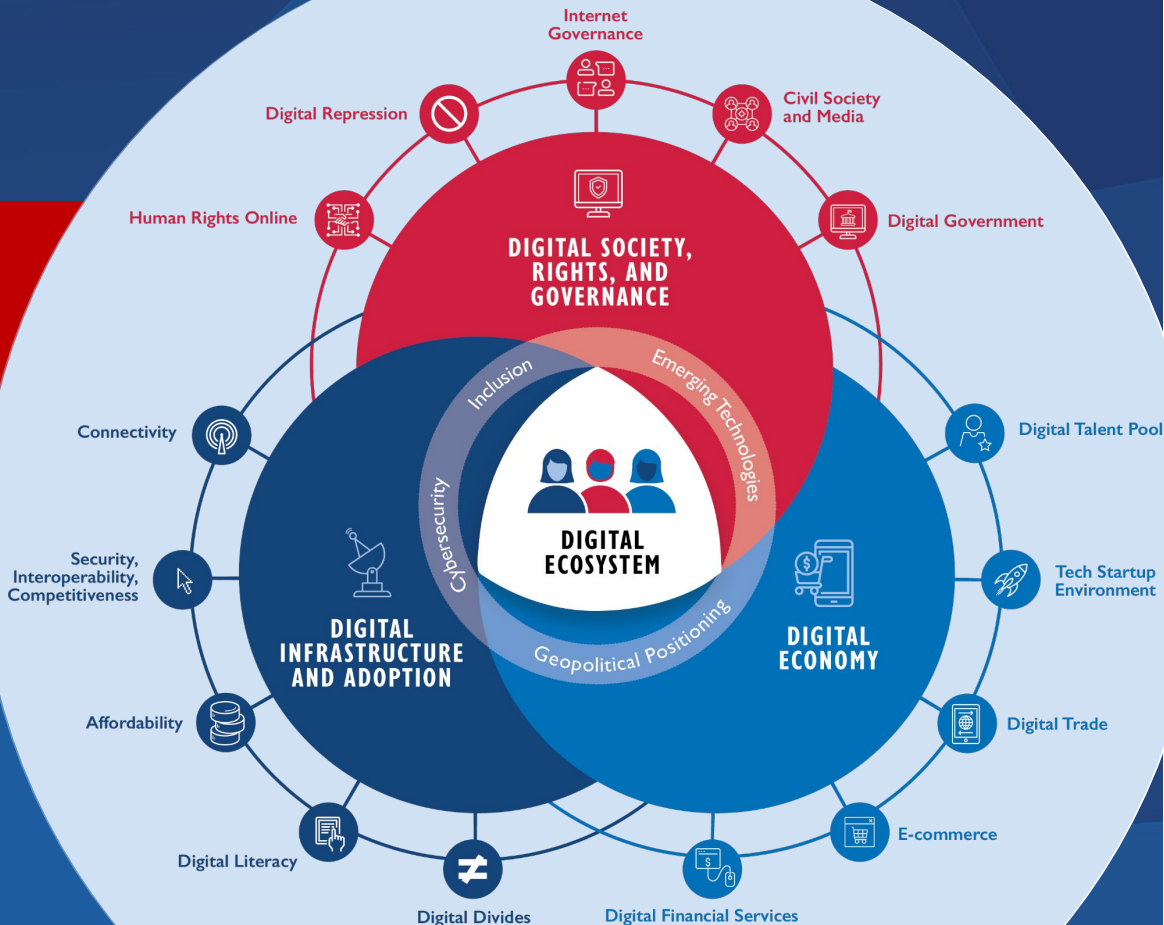


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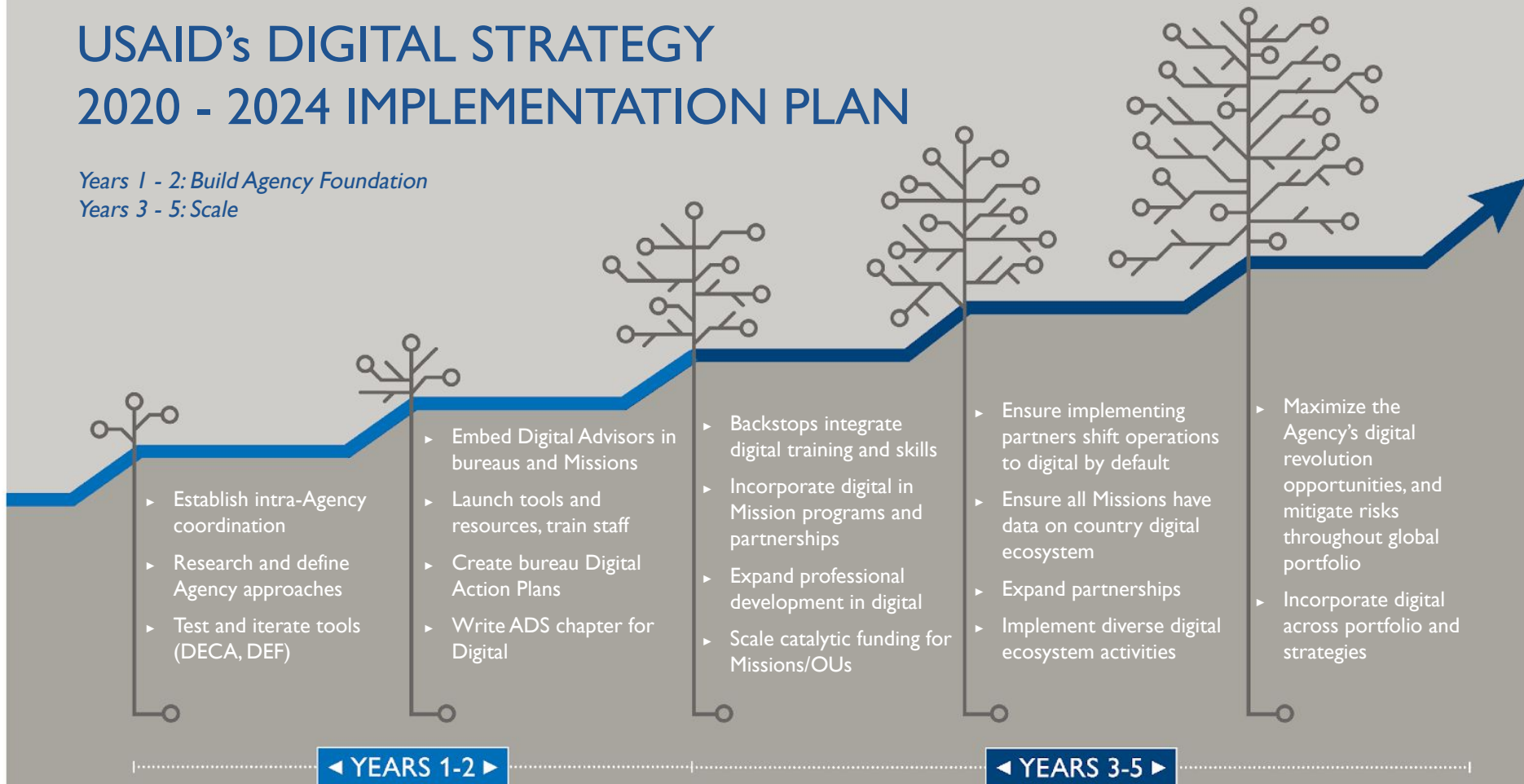


IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

USAID's DIGITAL STRATEGY 2020 - 2024 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Years 1 - 2: Build Agency Foundation

Years 3 - 5: Scale





IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

YEAR 3 - STARTING TO SCALE

During year three of the Digital Strategy implementation, USAID focused on scaling knowledge products, digital development training opportunities, and nurturing existing relationships as well as establishing new ones. The Digital Strategy team established both inter-Agency and intra-Agency digital development training models and as a result of built capacities across Missions and USAID staff.

- **Backstops equipped to integrate digital training and skills:** The Digital Strategy team developed practical tools and trainings for USAID staff and partners, including the [Digital Literacy Primer](#), which creates common definitions and approaches to the Agency's digital development investments; the [Cybersecurity Primer](#), an introductory resource for USAID staff to understand the impact of cyber threats on their work and consider how cybersecurity should be incorporated in the program cycle; and [Gender Digital Divide training videos](#), which build awareness of the gender digital divide and address technology-facilitated gender based violence.
- **Expanded professional development in digital:** USAID selected the second Foreign Service Officer (FSO) to join the Digital Development Executive Fellowship (DDEF), where FSOs spend three years rotating through the Agency's Technology Division and completing an externship with a private sector company to incorporate newly acquired knowledge and skills to advance the Agency's work in addressing digital development challenges. The Technology Division deployed nine Digital Development Advisors (DDAs) in FY20 and deployed or supported Missions to hire five new DDAs in FY21, which brings the total number of DDAs in the Agency to fourteen.



2022 BY THE NUMBERS



TECHNOLOGY DIVISION ACHIEVEMENTS 2022

IR 1: Open Inclusive, equitable, secure digital ecosystem

IR 2: all people shape and benefit

13

market and/or enabling environment level changes in digital ecosystems

29

instances of programming implemented/strategy adopted to strengthen digital ecosystems

770,000 +

women with increased access to economic resources (internet/finance/ ICT employment)

IR 3: Responsible digital dev., advanced data analysis, and geographic info across USAID

275

instances of expert digital advisory services for USAID

620

USAID staff trained in digital development, geospatial analysis, cyber, and emerging tech

22

Missions, bureaus, State/CDP buying in to TechDiv programs

IR 4: USAID global leadership in digitally-driven and geographically relevant dev.

27

multi-stakeholder partnerships and alliances to advance S&T

10 DPGs supported or used by TechDiv

\$245 m

in private capital mobilized for connectivity and digital finance

3,800 +

people reached through multi-stakeholder events hosted/co-hosted by ITR/T

Select success stories include:

- **Kenya: DECA** — Data Protection Act, USAID/Kenya & the Communications Authority 5G network strategy, which includes the ability to utilize Open Radio Access Networks; **Digital Ecosystem Fund (DEF)** — 20 fold scale-up of ICT employment programming
- **Southeast Asia:** Completed ProICT projects in the Philippines (open access, spectrum, and e-commerce) & Timor-Leste (ICT regulations); Vietnam/ASEAN (5G) underway
- **Bosnia:** 42 BiH municipalities have adopted IT-based treasury systems, increasing the ability to monitor and ensure transparency to minimize corruption.
- **Global:** Establishment of a Humanitarian Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAC) in partnership with Okta and NetHope
- **DPG:** USAID was a charter member of the Digital Public Goods Alliance, pushing our role in global, open source software to the forefront



INCREASED COLLABORATION WITHIN USAID AND GLOBALLY AS REPORTED AGENCY-WIDE



817

USAID connections with External Partners

27

multi-stakeholder partnerships and alliances to advance S&T

\$4.01M

investment in

14 DECAs

since 2020; 2 completed in 2020; 2 in 2021; and 10 in 2022.

330,486

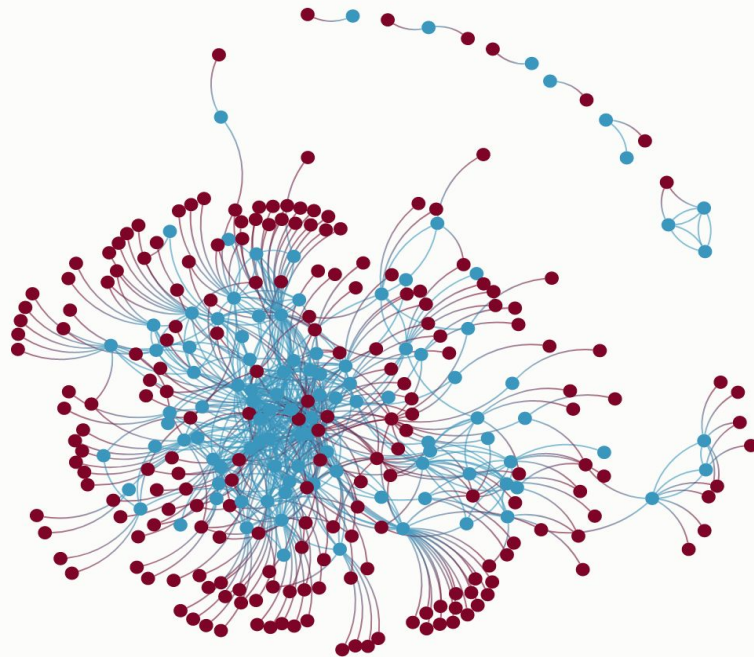
partners and program participants trained

1,628

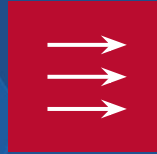


functional connections between USAID staff involved in digital development

USAID Staff Connections to External Organizations



316	817	0.02	1	∞	5.17	∞
ELEMENTS	CONNECTIONS	DENSITY	RECIPROcity	DIAMETER	AVG DEGREE	AVG PATH LENGTH



INITIATIVE UPDATES BY TRACK



1



ADOPT AN
ECOSYSTEM
APPROACH

DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM COUNTRY ASSESSMENTS (DECAs)

DECAs help Missions to better understand, work with, and support their country's digital ecosystem through a secure and inclusive lens. The assessment provides research and recommendations on digital infrastructure and adoption; digital society, rights, and governance; and the digital economy to navigate current evidence in a rapidly evolving field and context. Fifteen DECAs have been completed at the end of FY22, with at least twenty-five more in progress or planned by the end of FY24.

Eight DECAs and the DECA Toolkit completed in FY22

- A DECA in Asia*
- A DECA in Eastern Europe*
- Nepal
- Peru
- Eastern & Southern Caribbean (ESC)
- Georgia
- Zambia
- Uzbekistan

DECA Funding Distribution

- ITR-funded: \$975,000
- Mission-funded: \$3,901,809
- State/DCCP: \$1,500,000

Recommendations by Pillar:

- 135 Pillar 1 Recommendations
- 172 Pillar 2 Recommendations
- 185 Pillar 3 Recommendations
- 46 Cross-cutting Recommendations

**These DECAs remained internal to USAID due to country context.*



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DECA IMPACTS

- **USAID/Colombia:** Enhanced existing Microsoft Airband programming with Anditel, supporting II connectivity centers across rural regions and developing a digital land registry system across the country.
- **USAID/Nepal:** Signed letters of cooperation with four new financial institutions and commercial banks focusing on how to accelerate last-mile digital finance.
- **USAID/Uzbekistan:** In partnership with the Government of Estonia, USAID funded a \$125,000 eGovernance activity focused on cybersecurity access and training. The project funded a donor coordination event called Big ICT week in Samarkand for donors and e-government experts.



1



ADOPT AN
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APPROACH

DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM FUND (DEF)

The DEF finances activities that can respond to short-notice opportunities or risks related to the digital ecosystem and long-term strategic opportunities to strengthen the inclusiveness of the ecosystem. No additional funding was allocated for the DEF in FY22. To date, 16 USAID Missions received funding through the DEF. The nine Missions from round two of the program obligated funds by the end of FY21 and are expected to report learnings in 2024.

Round 1 Learning Outcomes:

- **USAID/Bangladesh** - created the “[Rumor Map](#)”, a digital tool that maps out quantities and variations of misinformation across districts, specifically in reference to COVID-19
- **USAID/Kenya** - partnered with Generation Kenya to increase youth employment in the ICT sector
- **Sahel Regional Office** - established a digital working group supporting USAID digital activities in the region
- **USAID/Ethiopia** - developed an eHealth Roadmap and Digital Health Blueprint, both tools that helped expand the existing open-source health information management system in Ethiopia
- **USAID/Washington** - published the [Digital Ecosystem Factsheet](#) and [learning outcomes](#) from the 2020/2021 rounds of implementation.



I



ADOPT AN
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BUREAU/DIGITAL STRATEGY ACTION PLAN (DSAP)

DSAPs articulate how a bureau or operating unit (OU) should integrate digital technology into programming in that region or sector while recognizing key trends and priorities for digital development.

- Completed [Digital Strategy Action Plans](#) (DSAPs) with:
 - [the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security](#),
 - [the Latin America and Caribbean Bureau](#), and
 - [the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance](#).
- Other technical OU DSAPs are expected to be completed by the end of 2023.
- Collected lessons learned from previous DSAPs, leveraging new ways forward for future DSAP development.
 - **Lack of leadership buy-in and excitement:** Engagement and excitement about the DSAP continues to be low across the interviewed bureaus. Need leadership buy-in to drive this process.
 - **DSAP objective is unclear:** DSAP might be a complementary document but should be well sequenced with other strategic policy planning processes.



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DIGITAL RESEARCH & LEARNING AGENDA

This initiative grows USAID's evidence base on programmatic investments in digital tools, systems, and platforms. This engenders a robust assessment of the impact of the Digital Strategy, and of digital development writ large.

- Completed a [cybersecurity meta-analysis](#) on 50 different USAID cybersecurity assessments with the goal of understanding how to improve these assessments in the future.
- Drafting the Digital Ecosystem Evidence Map (DEEM) to be published on USAID's website as a tool to further scale resources and skills in digital development work.
- Conducting landscaping research on quantum computing and its intersection with key development sectors.



2



HELP PARTNERS
NAVIGATE RISK
AND REWARD

CLOSING THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE

Through the Digital Strategy, USAID augments the Agency's commitment to close the gender digital divide (GDD) and address the disproportionate harm women and girls face online.

- Continued management of the WomenConnect Challenge (WCC) and Microsoft Airband Digital Inclusion Partnership.
- Launched round two of the [WCC](#) in India, supported by the Reliance Foundation and SARDI in the fall of 2022, expanding Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) and gendered disinformation workstreams.
- Developing training to integrate effective practices and risk mitigation strategies to TFGBV.
- Developed the [Women in the Digital Economy Fund](#) (Wi-DEF), a \$60 million USAID and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation initiative to close the GDD with evidence-based and women-led solutions.



2



HELP PARTNERS
NAVIGATE RISK
AND REWARD

PROTECTING CHILDREN & YOUTH FROM DIGITAL HARM (PCYDHD)

The PCYDHD initiative strengthens, implements, and enforces laws and policies that prevent, respond to, and protect children from all forms of online violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect.

- Drafted the PCYDHD primer and a five-year roadmap to provide definitions, strategies, and guidance for how to protect children and youth from digital harm.
- Recruited 12 international youth leaders to create the [USAID Digital Youth Council \(DYC\)](#). DYC monthly sessions focused on digital harm and learning about the challenges youth face in the digital ecosystem.
- Hosted the [2022 PCYDHD Symposium](#) to raise awareness of the risks that children and youth face in the digital space and advance the goals of the PCYDHD initiative.
 - More than 500 attendees from 100 countries participated, offering perspectives on online sexual violence, hate speech, and cyberbullying.
 - Each DYC member presented at the symposium and amplified voices of youth worldwide.



2



HELP PARTNERS
NAVIGATE RISK
AND REWARD

IMPROVING DIGITAL LITERACY

A barrier to the adoption and use of digital technology in developing countries is gaps in the functional ability to use these digital tools fully among certain populations and social groups. The Digital Strategy team develops tools and offers technical assistance to help Agency staff understand all facets of digital literacy and digital skills gaps within a country's digital ecosystem and how to include these priorities in the design of strategies and activities.

- Published the [Digital Literacy Primer](#) and digital literacy sectoral briefs for USAID Missions to incorporate digital literacy across strategic and regional planning, MEL implementation, and sector programming.
- Collaborated with the PCYDH team, participating in a digital youth council in April 2022 around digital literacy. Also provided mentorship to NYC members.
- Prioritized connecting with external partners to expand impact and knowledge sharing across the digital literacy spectrum.



2



HELP PARTNERS
NAVIGATE RISK
AND REWARD

MITIGATING CYBER HARM

Cybersecurity has become a prerequisite to maintain the sustainability and value of USAID's development investments that leverage digital technologies and protect a project or beneficiary's credibility, safety, and ability to deliver effective results. To mitigate cyber harm, USAID:

- Partnered with Okta and NetHope to create an Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAC) for the humanitarian sector.
- Supported NetHope to upskill 48 IT staff from humanitarian organizations.
- Completed [three training videos](#) to improve USAID staff ability to incorporate cybersecurity into development programming.
- Drafted 11 cybersecurity sectoral briefs.
- Finalized an Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA) with the State Department Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy to launch an IAA-funded cybersecurity support to Missions in 2023.
- Published a [cybersecurity blog](#) on Medium and organized panels and lightning talks at the Global Digital Development Forum (GDDF) and PeaceCon.



2



HELP PARTNERS NAVIGATE RISK AND REWARD

DATA GOVERNANCE

This initiative supports practices that harness the power of data for digital development, including by providing safeguards for data subjects, and making considerations for the treatment of data standard practice in all activities that include digital technology.

- Worked with the Digital Strategy's implementing partner to lay the groundwork for a data governance primer and maturity model.
- In partnership with Mozilla Foundation, launched the Strengthening Data Ecosystems (SDE) activity under the Responsible and Ethical Digital and Data Ecosystems (REDDE) award to inform data governance approaches in the education sector. The activity is anticipated to result in better education services and outcomes by equipping students and their advocates with better tools to understand, manage, and utilize data to support data transparency, and to model strategic and procedural frameworks that enhance protocols for responsible data stewardship and data-driven decision-making.
- Co-funded USAID/Columbia's third DataJam promoting transparency and combating corruption by using public data to strengthen social accountability. Held virtually across three days with one in-person session, teams competed in timed sessions to solve assigned data challenges with six winners receiving grants totalling COL\$191,000,000 (USD 50,000).
- Co-funded USAID's Equitable AI Challenge, and provided technical support to two winners: W&M University's AidData and the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana).



2



HELP PARTNERS
NAVIGATE RISK
AND REWARD

DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

Digital technology has transformed the way governments around the world manage daily operations, deliver services, and engage with stakeholders. USAID and development partners can support countries in the responsible adoption of technology to create public value, which is broadly referred to as digital government.

- Launched the [Digital Government Model](#) to establish a shared language and understanding of the core components of digital government.
- Held a lightning talk at GDDF 2022 on good practices in digital government.
- Developed digital government sectoral briefers highlighting the impact of digital government across five sectors:
 - Climate; Agriculture; Democracy, Rights, and Governance; Economic Growth and Trade; and Health.
- Began work on a series of five short training videos which are anticipated to be completed in 2023.



2



HELP PARTNERS
NAVIGATE RISK
AND REWARD

CLIMATE & DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

USAID's Technology Division assists staff and partner countries to use digital technology responsibly to accelerate climate adaptation and mitigation goals, create resilient societies, and mitigate risks associated with using digital technology in climate action.

- Formally launched the Climate and Digital Technology initiative during the summer of 2022, incorporating approved milestones and activities.
- Developed initial research questions and talking points on the impacts of digital technologies on climate change mitigation and adaptation.



2



HELP PARTNERS
NAVIGATE RISK
AND REWARD

PRINCIPLES FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

A set of guidelines and best practices to help development practitioners succeed in applying digital technology to development and humanitarian assistance. USAID and partners will incorporate the Digital Principles throughout the program cycle.

- Socialized the basic tenets of responsible digital development with 53 USAID staff and partners through online workshops on the “[Principles for Digital Development](#)”. Since 2021, 315 Agency colleagues and partners from 14 OUs have participated in 27 workshops, and the digital principles continue to be incorporated into in-person and online Digital Development trainings delivered to USAID staff.
- [Released](#) online self-paced courses on the digital principles in [agriculture](#), [health, election and political processes](#), and [economic growth](#).
- The Digital Investment Tool was revised to the lighter [Digital How-to Note: Activity Design Checklist](#) for USAID staff to use when designing activities.
- Spoke about the principles at a Save the Children event in July 2022.
- Completed a dissemination campaign for the activity checklist, which included a webinar where 433 USAID staff tuned in to learn about the [Digital How-to Note](#) and hear advice from mission-based staff who design digital interventions.
- Participated in a workshop on the future of the digital principles co-hosted by DIAL and TechChange to improve and modernize the digital principles.



4



BUILD THE
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DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORS (DDAs)

DDAs serve in USAID Missions and bureaus as experts on digital ecosystems supporting the design and implementation of digital solutions and tools in USAID programming, and provide hiring, onboarding, and technical support to Missions.

- Increased the number of DDAs to 14 by end of FY22
- Helped USAID/Vietnam digitize administrative procedures and be more transparent in governance, reducing corruption and improving their business environment.
- Supported USAID/Guatemala to identify gaps and opportunities using financial services for low-income and marginalized populations, especially women.



4



BUILD THE
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DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE FELLOWSHIP (DDEF)

DDEF provides USAID Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) a professional development opportunity. During the first year, they learn about current digital development approaches with USAID's Technology Division, and in the second year with an external private sector technology company or organization. In their third year, they return to USAID to apply those learnings in their home bureau or backstop.

- ITR/T hosted two fellows from the Bureau for Inclusive Growth, Partnerships, and Innovation (IPI) and Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) bureaus who are on details with Mastercard and Co-Develop, working on investments in financial inclusion and digital public infrastructure.



4



BUILD THE
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DIGITAL SKILLS

This initiative integrates skills in digital development across USAID's workforce so that staff are equipped to act on opportunities and identify risks posed by the digital age.

- Conducted in-person Digital Development training (DDT) for USAID/RDMA and USAID/Zambia with 25 and 34 participants respectively.
- Developed two shorter trainings to deliver Cyber and Gender Digital Divide "Block 2" courses.
- Incorporated a new MEL plan in collaboration with the Digital Frontiers team. The resulting MEL data collected for the DDT was used to help identify best practices for design of future Digital Strategy trainings and informed development of a digital workforce and capacity development plan.



5



SPECIAL PROJECTS

DIGITAL PUBLIC GOODS

USAID works with other donors, governments, and the private sector to build the infrastructure for digital public goods in order to support a resilient planet and empower people.

- The Technology Division held consultations with government donors, philanthropic foundations, and multilateral partners to establish an independent charter team. The team plans to contribute to the structure of the Charter for Digital Public Goods with an endorsement in 2023.
- The USAID endorsement required a whole-of-U.S. government clearance, coordinated by the National Security Council (NSC) with support from ITR/T. Further sign-ons from multilateral partners, NGOs, and national governments demonstrated the convening power of the USAID.



5



MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

- **F-Standard Indicators:** Drafted, promoted, and maintained Foreign Assistance Standard Indicators (F-Indicators) with State Department on digital ecosystem investments, use, and promotion of digital public goods, and the number of USAID internal processes that are digitally enabled.
- **Qualitative Narratives:** Socialized qualitative narratives on digital technology, cybersecurity, and digital technology indirect uses with Missions and other OUs leading to an increase from 32 to 42 reporting units related to advance data analytics, USAID E-commerce funding, ICT collaborations, and partner government digital ecosystem support.
- **Performance Plan and Report:** Led upload and publication of data across division based on Digital Strategy custom and standard indicators.
- **Ad Hoc Learning:** Led weekly Connect and Reflect sessions for Technology Division microlearning. Improved DECA implementation tracking methods for learning.



RESULTS



DIGITAL STRATEGY RESULTS

KEY ISSUE NARRATIVES (FY22)

FY22 Key Issue Narrative	Missions using geospatial and /or advanced data analysis	Countries where USAID funds Digital Economy	Countries where USAID supports ICT Infrastructure and Adoption	Countries where USAID supports Digital Government	Countries where USAID supports Emerging Tech
Digital Technology	29	24	18	34	26
Cybersecurity	NA	16	7	4	7
TOTAL	29	40 (30 unique OUs)	25 (21 unique OUs)	38 (35 unique OUs)	33 (30 unique OUs)



DEMONSTRATING THE SPREAD OF DIGITAL STRATEGY QUALITATIVE NARRATIVES

Focal Areas Mentioned in Qualitative Narratives, FY 21-FY 22				
Theme	2022 Count	2022 Percent of QNs Reporting	2021 Count*	2021 Percent of QNs reporting
Analytics for Strategic Planning	22	52%	17	38%
Geospatial Analysis	19	45%	14	31%
Digital Economy and Commerce	31	74%	23	51%
Digital Government	34	81%	27	60%
Emerging Tech: 5G, AI, ML	12	29%	12	27%
ICT Connectivity and Digital Infrastructure	18	43%	11	24%
Cybersecurity	13	31%	11	24%
Collaboration in Digital	33	79%	30	67%

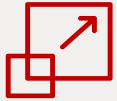


LOOKING AHEAD



LOOKING AHEAD

In years four and five of the Digital Strategy implementation, the team will continue to address gaps in digital access and adoption, and advance the use of technology and geospatial analysis. This will enable implementing partners to shift operations to digital by default. The Digital Strategy team will also expand partnerships with technology and cybersecurity firms to strengthen the digital ecosystems of partner nations.



YEAR 4 - SCALE The Digital Strategy team will increase targeted technical assistance to OUs and partners, provide practical tools, and launch new training resources and action plans to integrate digital development across portfolios and sectors.



YEAR 5 - SUSTAIN Ownership of the Digital Strategy will transition to the broader Agency, and staff will be equipped to lead USAID through the complexities of digital ecosystems to reap the benefits of digital while minimizing pitfalls.



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