



The digital Manifesto

How developing countries can get
ahead in the digital age

The digital age is here

The digital age has changed the way people live, work and connect. But digital technologies have the potential to do so much more, especially for the world's poorest people.

Photo credits:

P 6. A young girl plays with her father's phone in the ger district, Mongolia. Photograph: Sarah O'Connell, Pathways for Prosperity Commission 2019

P 7. Salamina 'Katileho' Mofube makes modifications to her Raspberry Pi circuit board, Johannesburg, South Africa. Photograph: Dewald Brand, Pathways for Prosperity Commission 2019

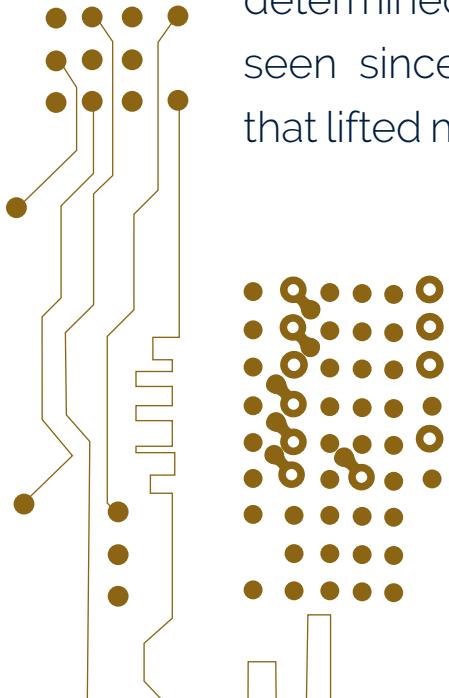
P 8. Angela "Ela" Nawaningsi Mustano tries to get phone reception in Tanini Village, Nusa Tenggara Tengah, Eastern Indonesia. Photograph: Santirta Martendano A, Pathways for Prosperity Commission, 2018

P 17. Salamina 'Katileho' Mofube teaches students how to use a Raspberry Pi in Johannesburg, South Africa. Photograph: Dewald Brand, Pathways for Prosperity Commission 2019

P 20. Angela 'Ela' Nawaningsi Mustano uses her phone as she talks with her mother, in Tanini Village, Nusa Tenggara Tengah, Eastern Indonesia. Photograph: Santirta Martendano A. Pathways Commission 2018.



Digital technologies open up new possibilities for countries to steer a self-determined path, to grow in ways not seen since the manufacturing boom that lifted millions out of poverty in Asia.



This is a
critical moment
in history

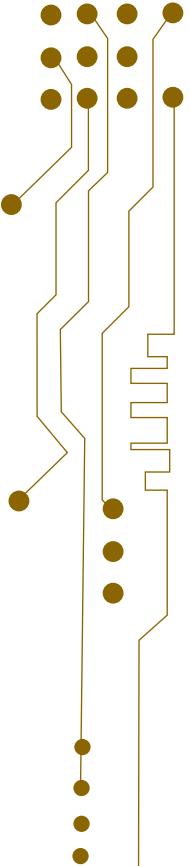
The stakes
could not
be higher

Failure to switch on economies for the digital age will widen the gap between rich and poor countries, and will fuel inequalities within societies.

The benefits of technology flow disproportionately to early adopters. This means that countries must plan now, or millions of marginalised people will be left even further behind.



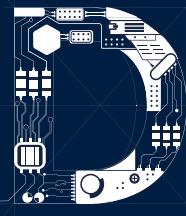
Getting digitally ready will take vision



To ensure everyone benefits in the digital age, Governments need to collaborate and plan with civil society, business and the international community.

Countries will not see economic transformation through piecemeal adjustments.

The

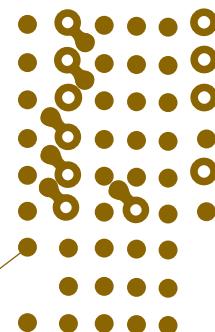
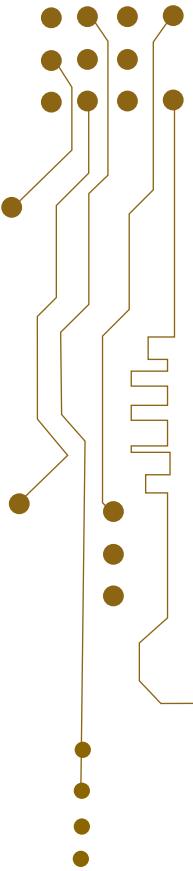


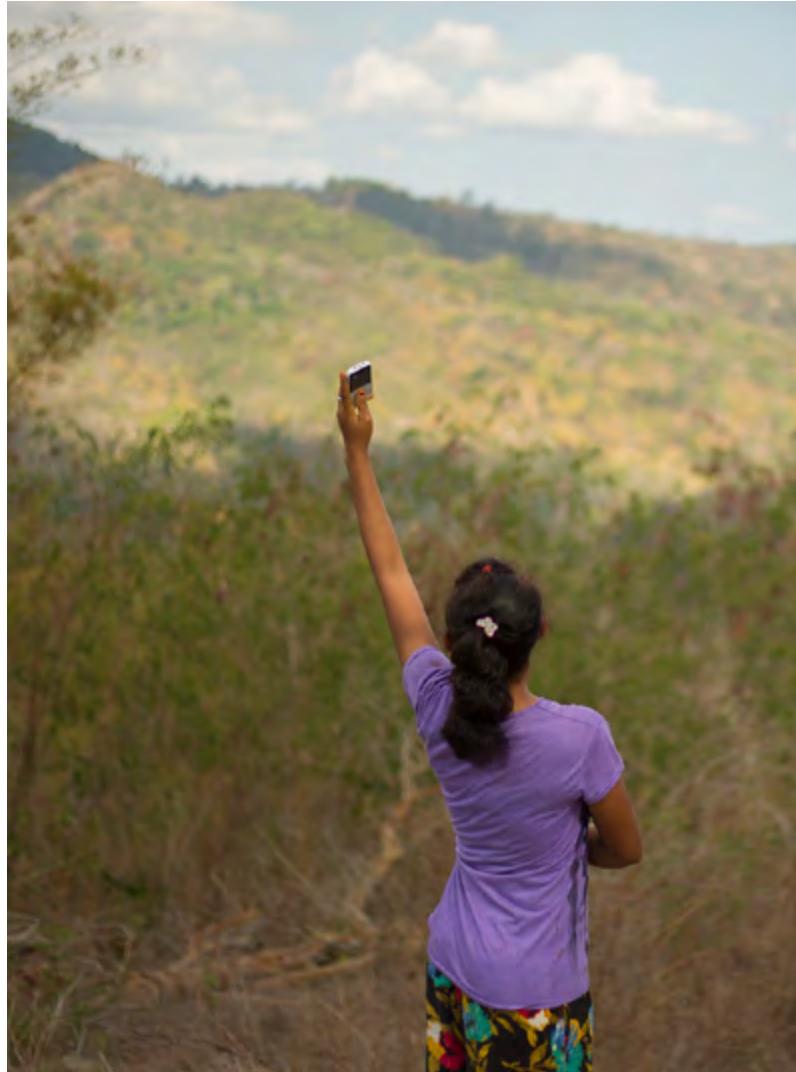
digital Manifesto

The Digital Manifesto offers developing countries a roadmap to put them firmly in the driving seat of their economic development.

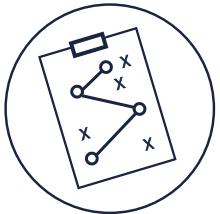
It offers an evidence-based guide to navigate the digital age to foster fairness and shared prosperity for all.

It is based on the Pathways for Prosperity Commission's final report, *The Digital Roadmap: how developing countries can get ahead*.



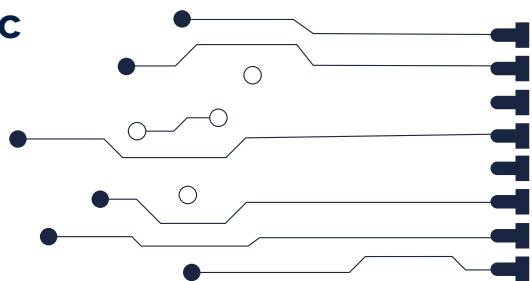
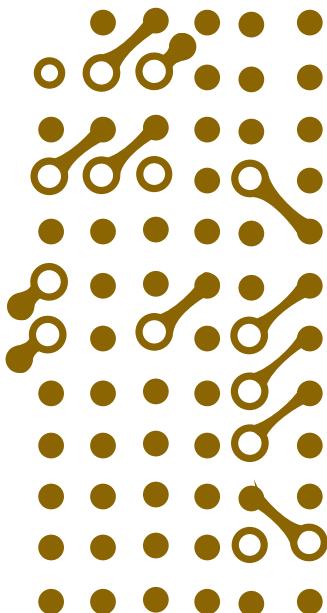


Ten steps to get ahead in the digital age

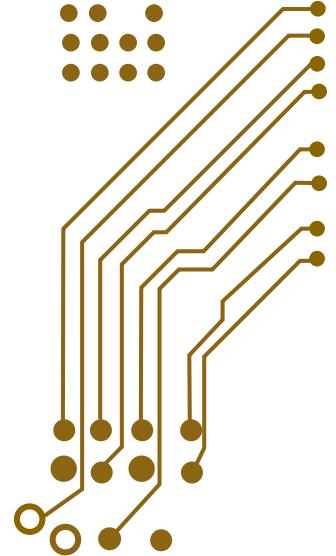
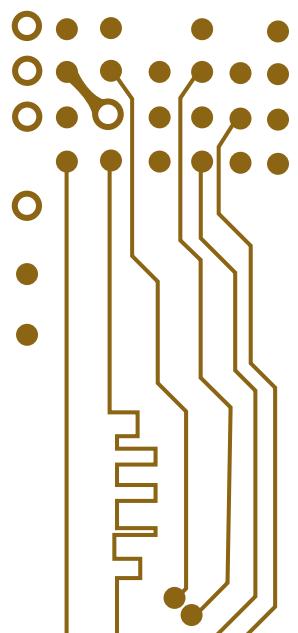
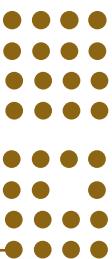


Craft a digital compact for inclusive development

1 Design a country-wide holistic digital strategy



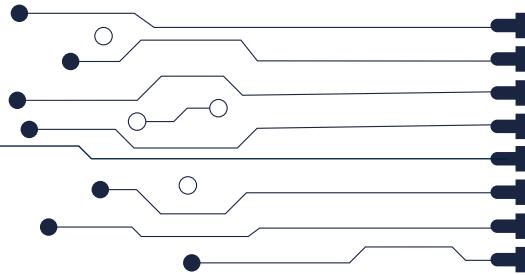
Agree a national digital compact to manage technology for inclusive development, with buy-in and concrete pledges from government, the private sector and civil society. Donors should support the implementation of such a compact.





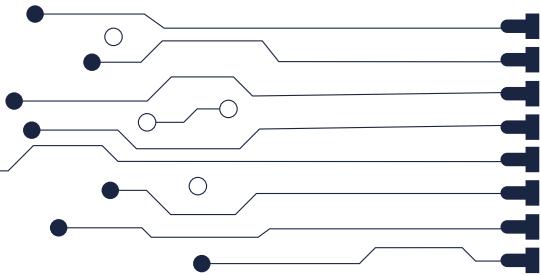
Put people at the centre
of the digital future

2 Empower citizens for the digital age



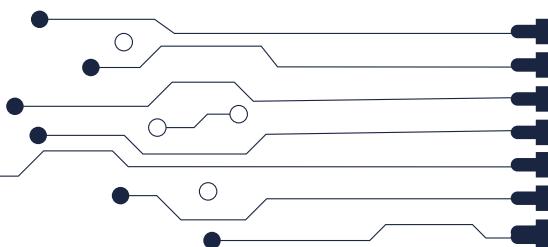
Ensure women, men, youth and children receive regular training to enable them to meet the demands of a continually evolving digital economy. Use digital platforms to ensure governments are accountable.

3 Secure citizens' data



Build trust through accountable digital systems, where personal information is secure, and data-use is transparent.

4 Provide a social safety net



Protect those who will be left behind in the digital revolution, with at least initial support from donors and multilateral organisations.



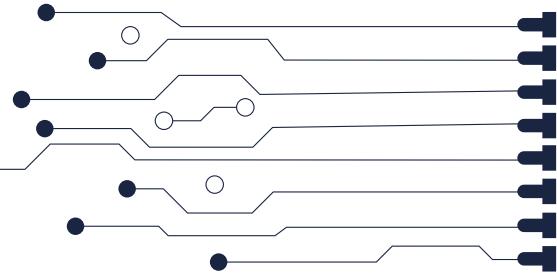
Ten steps to get ahead in the digital age

The Digital Manifesto



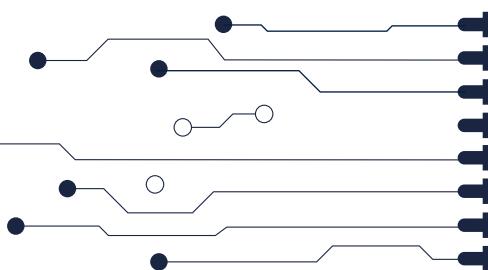
Build the digital essentials

5 Build foundational digital systems



Develop digital finance and digital ID that work seamlessly together, so that citizens can easily access services, and businesses can establish themselves and attract investment.

6 Nurture an enabling investment environment

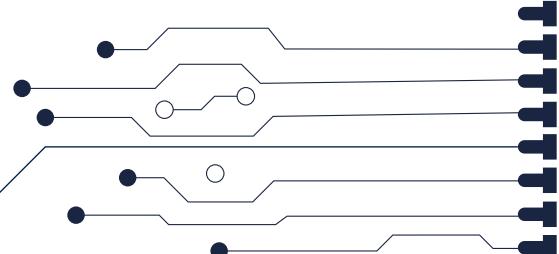


Close the funding gap for digital start-ups by creating investment funds and financing arrangements that draw in more global capital for local digital projects.



Reach everyone with digital technologies

7 End digital exclusion



Ensure basic access to internet, mobile data and electricity is available to all. The private sector and international community should support new business models and the creation of data-light and tech-light services and products to reach poorer customers.

End women's digital exclusion

Women's inclusion is crucial to a country's success – in both a digital and a non-digital world. However social norms and business-as-usual often means women are excluded from the life changing gains that digital can bring.

Leaving women out of digital progress risks further excluding them from economic progress.

Leaders need to work collaboratively to proactively design digital strategies that include women. These strategies need to overcome the societal barriers which restrict women's access and use of technology and keep them disconnected from the digital world.

But for systemic change, there needs to be a shift in expectations for what women should and could do. This requires greater investments in women and girls' digital education.

This will allow countries to benefit from women's vast, untapped potential. It will also give women more confidence and greater capacity to participate in economic and public life.



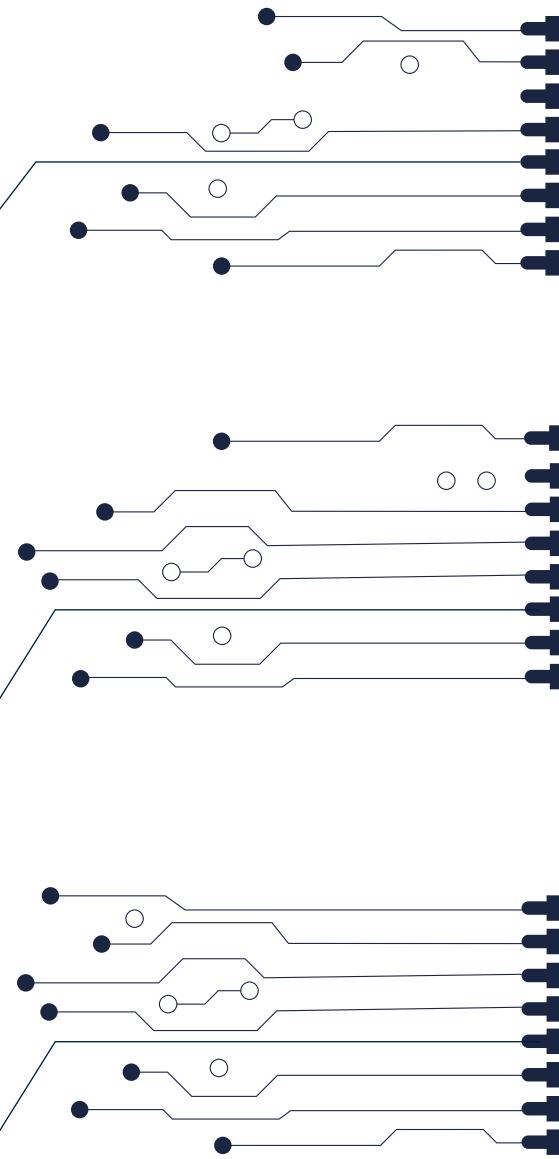


Govern technology for the future

8 Transform the health and education of your population

9 Create adaptive localised tech regulations

10 Coordinate internationally



Use digital technologies to improve the quality, cost-efficiency and reach of public services for a healthier and better-educated population.

Laws and regulations need to be flexible to keep up with the rapid speed of technological change. Do not import global tech policies wholesale, but use your data and context to customize country-specific laws that work for your country.

No country is a digital island. Countries need to ensure that cross-border regulations benefit everyone. Countries should coordinate with each other on tech governance. Richer nations must make space for developing countries in global rule-making.



The Digital Manifesto is based on the Pathways for Prosperity Commission's final report *The Digital Roadmap: how developing countries can get ahead*. This report is the culmination of two years of research and analysis undertaken by the Commission. It is underpinned by learning from extensive engagement with civil society, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and academics around the world.

The Digital Roadmap lays out detailed and pragmatic recommendations for all actors – governments, the private sector, civil society, and the international community – to seize the opportunities that the digital age presents.

Find more information on *The Digital Roadmap* [here](#).

About the Pathways Commission

The Pathways for Prosperity Commission on Technology and Inclusive Development is proud to work with a diverse group of commissioners who are global leaders from government, the private sector, and academia.

The Commission is based at the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. The Commission aims to catalyse new conversations and to encourage the co-design of country-level solutions aimed at making frontier technologies work for the benefit of the world's poorest and most marginalised men and women.

Over nearly two years our work has entailed extensive analysis and engagement as well as practical work to support the development of country-driven digital strategies in Ethiopia, Mongolia and South Africa.



pathwayscommission@bsg.ox.ac.uk



@p4pcommission



Pathways for Prosperity Commission on
Technology and Inclusive Development



<https://pathwayscommission.bsg.ox.ac.uk>

