



Digital Transformation Centers for sustainable development

Creating digital networks – bringing people and ideas together

BACKGROUND

Digitalisation thrives best when it falls on fertile ground. In many development cooperation partner countries, however, the digital ecosystem¹ is poorly developed or very unevenly distributed. The level of access to information and communications technology among different sections of the population varies widely: between women and men, urban and rural areas and between different social classes. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) therefore supports its partner countries in promoting and spreading digitalisation in order to offset or mitigate both current and impending competitive disadvantages in an increasingly digitalised global world.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Digital Transformation Centers are physical and virtual hubs in German development cooperation partner countries. The goal is for these Digital Transformation Centers to bring people and ideas together that advance the digital transformation in the region and sustainably strengthen the local digital ecosystem.

To this end, the Digital Transformation Centers pool technical expertise, IT skills, research and entrepreneurial spirit under one roof. This approach makes it possible to build on existing structures, identify vulnerabilities and rectify them in a targeted manner. The Digital Transformation

Centers operate locally and regionally while at the same time sharing their experience in a global network. This enables them to react quickly and appropriately to the ongoing changes and challenges of the digital transformation.

Thanks to the modular structure, each Digital Transformation Center can be adapted to local needs and preferences. According to the vision of the Digital Transformation Centers, all modules follow the principle “Digital Inclusion by Default” to pursue the goal of addressing social issues of digital transformation, facilitating access to and use of digital technologies for marginalized groups, and reducing digital divides. Digital Transformation Centers can consist of the following modules:

- **Digital Government:** Supporting partner countries in providing digital services to their citizens.
- **Disruptive Technologies:** Supporting local ecosystems on how to best leverage the potential of disruptive technologies like Blockchain, AI, IoT, and others.
- **Innovation Promotion:** Promoting the development of local digital innovations and start-ups to enable demand-driven digital transformation.

¹ Digital ecosystem: self-reinforcing networks of companies and people who drive digitalisation in a region or sector

- **Cybersecurity:** Working together with partner countries to reduce the risk of cyber attacks and protect against unauthorized information disclosure.
- **Digital Skills:** The Digital Transformation Centers provide learning offerings that strengthen digital skills in the population (e.g., technologically supported by the political initiative atinigi).
- **Green Digital Transformation:** Leveraging digital solutions to reduce carbon emissions towards a green and digital “twin transition”.
- **Digital Economy:** Supporting partner countries in the digital transformation of their economy and adapting to new regulatory challenges.
- **Women in Tech:** Working with international and local partners to close digital gender gaps and empower women in the use and development of digital tools.
- **Digital Health:** Working together with partner countries to improve healthcare through digital transformation.

CURRENT STATUS

There are currently Digital Transformation Centers in Ghana, Iraq, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tunisia, Benin, Indonesia, Cameroon, Kosovo, Morocco, Mexico, Niger and Vietnam. Planning for Digital Transformation Centers in additional countries is currently under way.

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