

State of the art digital health projects build on existing evidence, and normative guidelines, frameworks, and tools in various areas, ranging from software development to financing and equitable programming. In the context of the GIZ Digital Innovation in Pandemic Control (DIPC) Initiative, the Robert Koch Institute, Germany, has conducted a comprehensive analysis on key digital public health definitions and concepts, and on 75 normative resources for digital health programming across 11 digital health topics, published between 2012 and early 2024 [\[link\]](#). Findings from the report have been summarized in form of 20 easy to use Factsheets.

The current factsheet (07/20) summarizes the findings on the topic of **Digital Public Goods and Global Goods** and highlights their importance in advancing equitable and sustainable digital health systems.

Factsheet 07

Digital Public Goods and Global Goods



Digital Public Goods

Digital Public Goods (DPGs) play a crucial role in the digitization of health systems. The UN defined DPGs as “open source software, open data, open AI models, open standards and open content that adhere to privacy and other applicable laws and best practices, do no harm” (Secretary General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation: United Nations 2020). They support Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and must meet nine indicators: relevance to SDGs, use of approved open licenses, clear ownership, platform independence, documentation, data extraction mechanisms, adherence to privacy laws, standards and best practices, and a design that does no harm. DPGs provide accessible digital resources for education, healthcare, economic development, and research, especially benefiting low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Global Goods

Recognizing that DPGs do not evaluate scale, funding, or maturity, the concept of ‘Global Goods’ was introduced. Global Goods are non-rivalrous, non-excludable, and widely available. They are assessed using a maturity model developed by Digital Square, which includes criteria such as being free and open-source, supported by a strong community, having clear governance, diverse funding, extensive implementation, proven effectiveness, interoperability, and standard recognition. Global Goods are promoted by UN agencies, donors, and governments, with resources like Digital Square’s Global Goods Guidebook providing detailed information on effective digital health applications. A recent paper by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (Udayasankaran et al., 2021) highlights the increasing demand for Global Public Goods for Health (GPGHs) and the challenges in meeting this demand due to a “participation trilemma.”

This trilemma involves conflicting interests among traditional donor countries, non-traditional donor countries, and recipient countries regarding funding and decision-making control. To address this, the paper advocates for the Global Public Investment (GPI) framework, which promotes a cooperative financing system involving diverse nations. GPI emphasizes collective responsibility, equity, inclusivity, democratic governance, transparency, and sustainability. This approach aims to enhance resource mobilization for GPGHs, crucial for the digitization of health systems, achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC), and meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Effective digitization of health systems also requires clear guidance for stakeholders, including governments, donors, and implementers, to manage the process based on evidence and feasibility.

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This is based on [“Navigating the Digital Health Ecosystem: A Review of Key Guidelines, Frameworks, and Tools”](#)

Read the full report [here](#) or scan the QR code

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