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# The UK's approach to Digital Development

## \_\_Inclusive last-mile connectivity & shared spectrum\_\_

*Alessandra Lustrati*  
*Head of Digital Development*  
*UK Government FCDO*

*Keynote presentation*  
*DSA Global Summit*

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## FCDO's definition of 'Digital Development':

“To support the *inclusive, responsible,*  
and *sustainable* digital transformation  
of partner countries”



## INTERCONNECTED INTERDEPENDENT WORLD

Over the past decade the world has become increasingly interconnected and interdependent through digital technologies. AI is further accelerating this trend.

## ENABLING DEVELOPMENT

Digital transformation is a key enabler of social and economic development, facilitating education, jobs, services, social and civic participation. Digital technologies directly benefit 70% of the SDG targets, i.e. 119 of 169 (UN, 2023).

## PERSISTENT DIGITAL DIVIDES

33% of the global population do not have access to the Internet (2.6bn people), including 65% of households in LDCs. Women are 19% less likely than men to access mobile internet in LMICs.

The global gender gap in Internet use could cost LMICs \$500bn in the next 5 years.

## COMPLEX RISKS

Participating in the digital world entails risks and challenges: e.g. issues with online safety, cybersecurity threats, dis/misinformation, data protection, AI bias and misuse, etc.

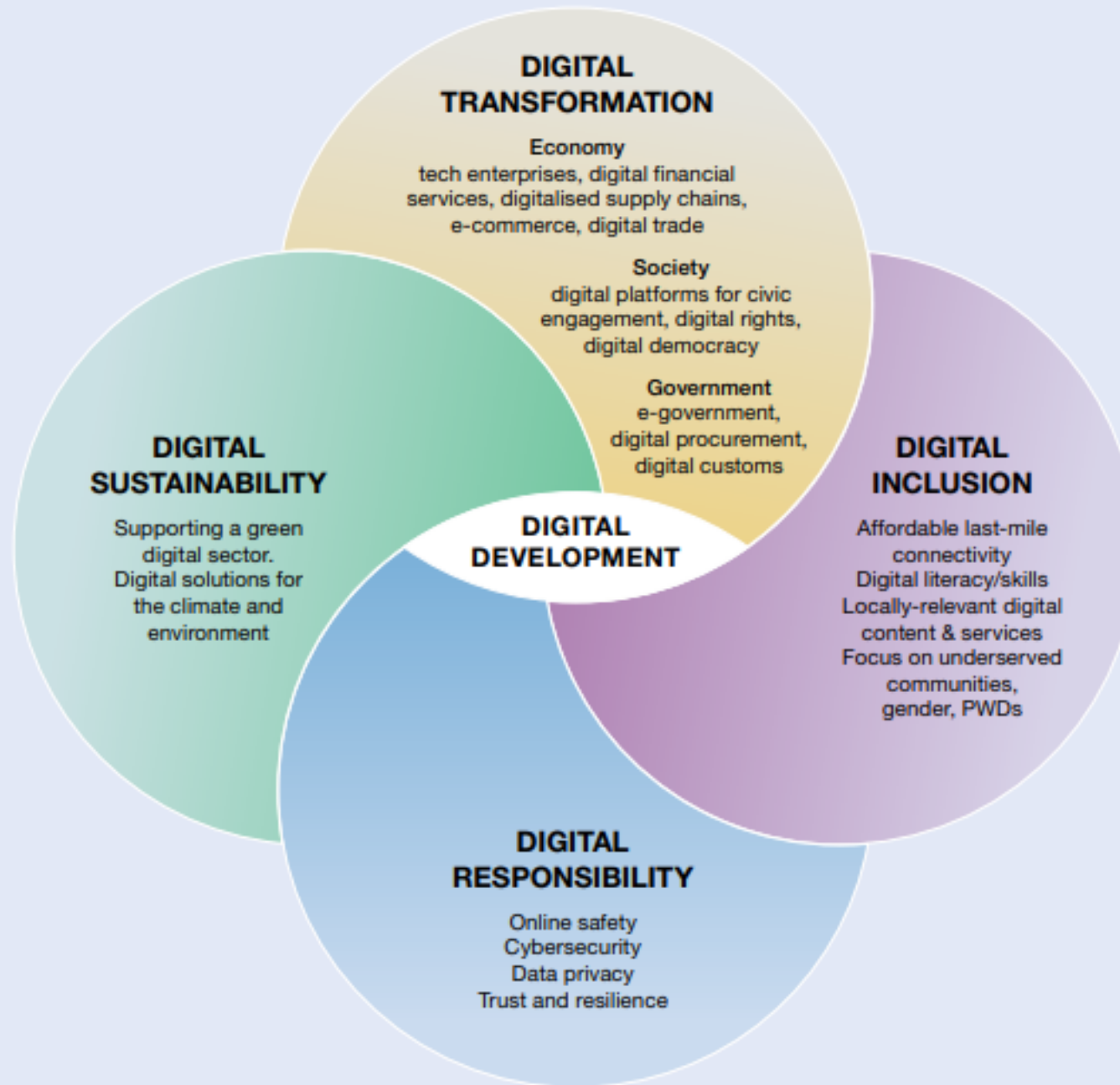
Digitalisation has also a significant environmental cost, amplified by AI adoption.

# WHY DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT?



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# Digital Development policy & strategy



# Digital Development Strategy 2024-2030





# Digital development strategy 2024 to 2030

Published 18 March 2024



Four interconnected objectives:

1. **Digital Transformation** - Catalysing the economy, government and society through digital technologies.
2. **Digital Inclusion** - Ensuring that no-one is left behind in a digital world.
3. **Digital Responsibility** - Enabling a safe, secure and resilient digital environment.
4. **Digital Sustainability** - Harnessing digital technologies to address climate change and environmental challenges.



# DDS priorities and deliverables

TOP PRIORITIES	KEY DELIVERABLES
<b>Last-mile Connectivity</b>	By 2030 we will have supported at least 20 partner countries to reduce their digital divides by an average of 50% (halving their connectivity gap) using inclusive, sustainable models.
<b>Digital Public Infrastructure</b>	By 2030 we will have supported at least 20 partner countries to transform the delivery of digital services at a national level through improved and sharable Digital Public Infrastructure.
<b>Artificial Intelligence</b>	By 2030 we will have supported at least 8 partner countries across Africa to scale up research labs and establish regulatory frameworks for responsible AI.
<b>Women &amp; Girls</b>	By 2030 we will have supported at least 50 million women and girls to participate safely and meaningfully in the digital world, including through better digital skills and tech entrepreneurship.





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# Digital Development programmes






## FCDO Digital Development programming portfolio

**Digital Access Programme (DAP)** – Promoting sustainable models for inclusive connectivity, digital skills, digital services, online safety, cybersecurity, tech entrepreneurship and digital employability – in Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Brazil, Indonesia, and respective regions.

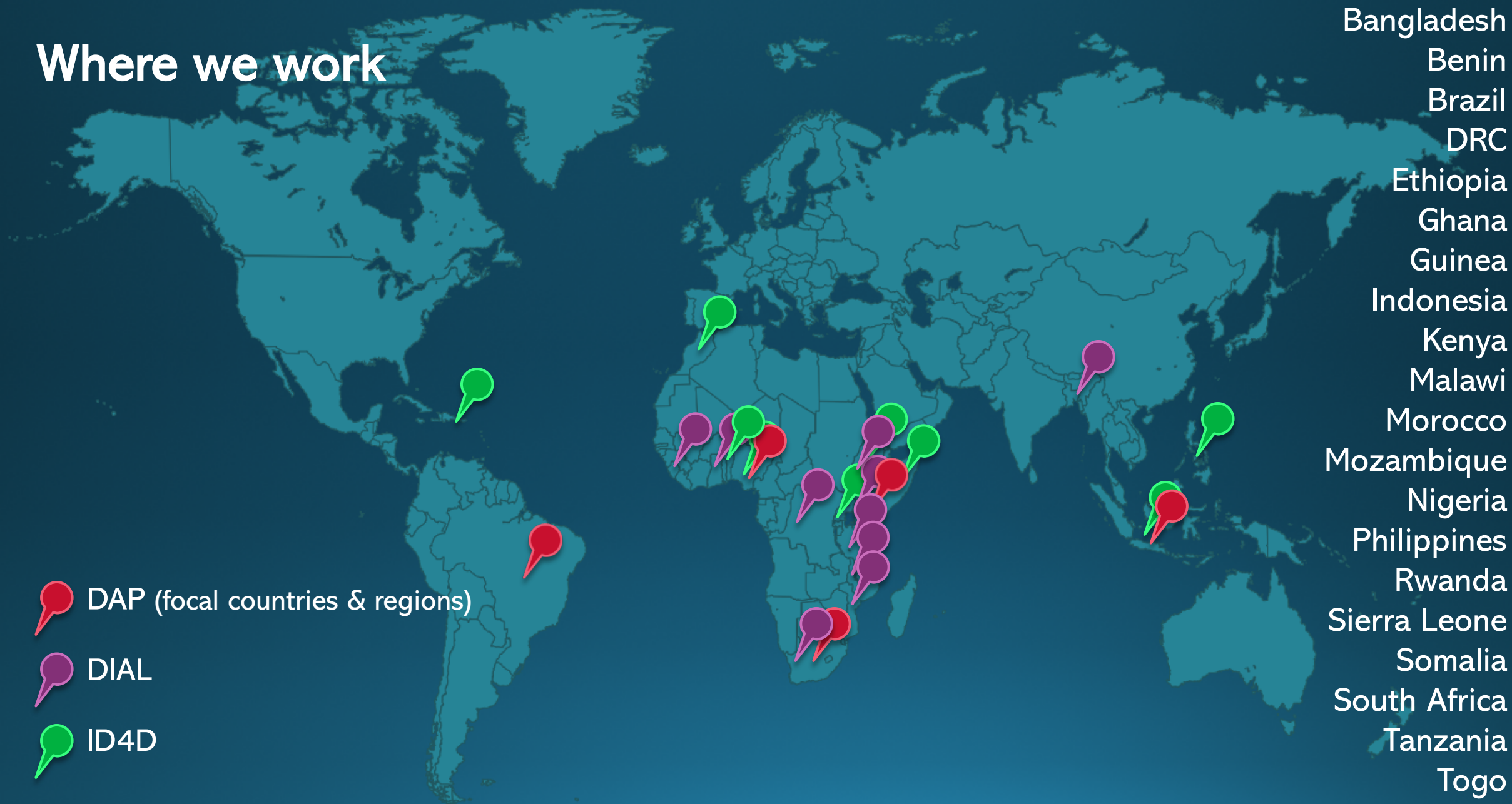
**Digital Impact Programme** – working globally with [Digital Impact Alliance \(DIAL\)](#) to support open digital solutions and best practices in digital transformation. Promoting the '[Principles of Digital Development](#)'.

**Digital Identity for Development (ID4D)** – working with the World Bank to promote access to inclusive and trustworthy digital identification that facilitates access to services at scale. Now expanding to a wider range of digital public infrastructure (DPI).

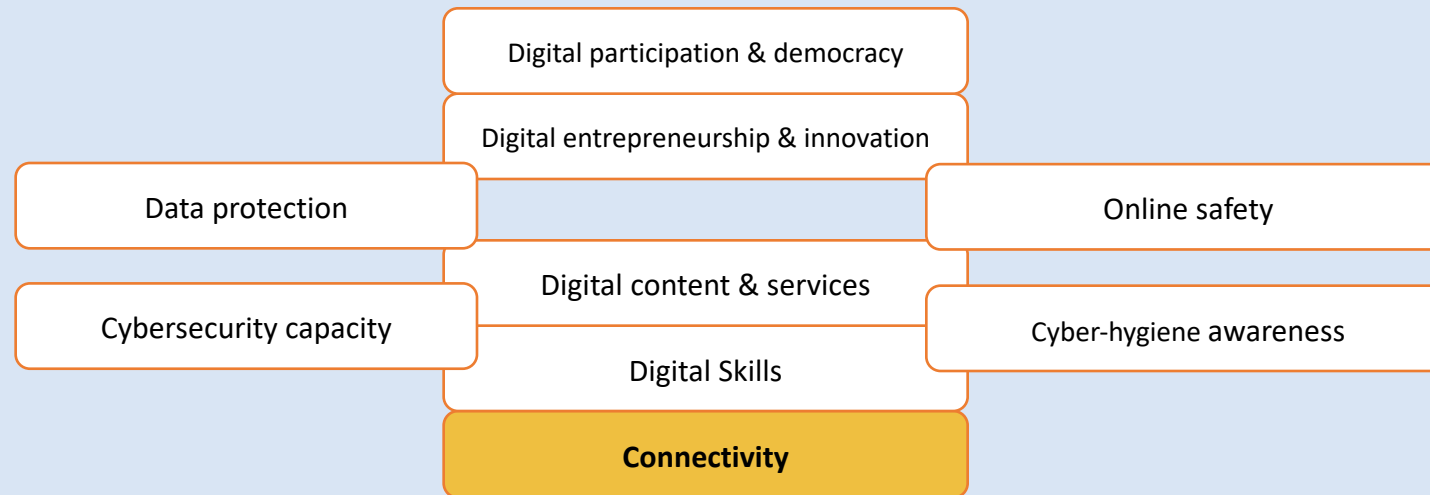
# Where we work

-  DAP (focal countries & regions)
-  DIAL
-  ID4D

Bangladesh  
Benin  
Brazil  
DRC  
Ethiopia  
Ghana  
Guinea  
Indonesia  
Kenya  
Malawi  
Morocco  
Mozambique  
Nigeria  
Philippines  
Rwanda  
Sierra Leone  
Somalia  
South Africa  
Tanzania  
Togo

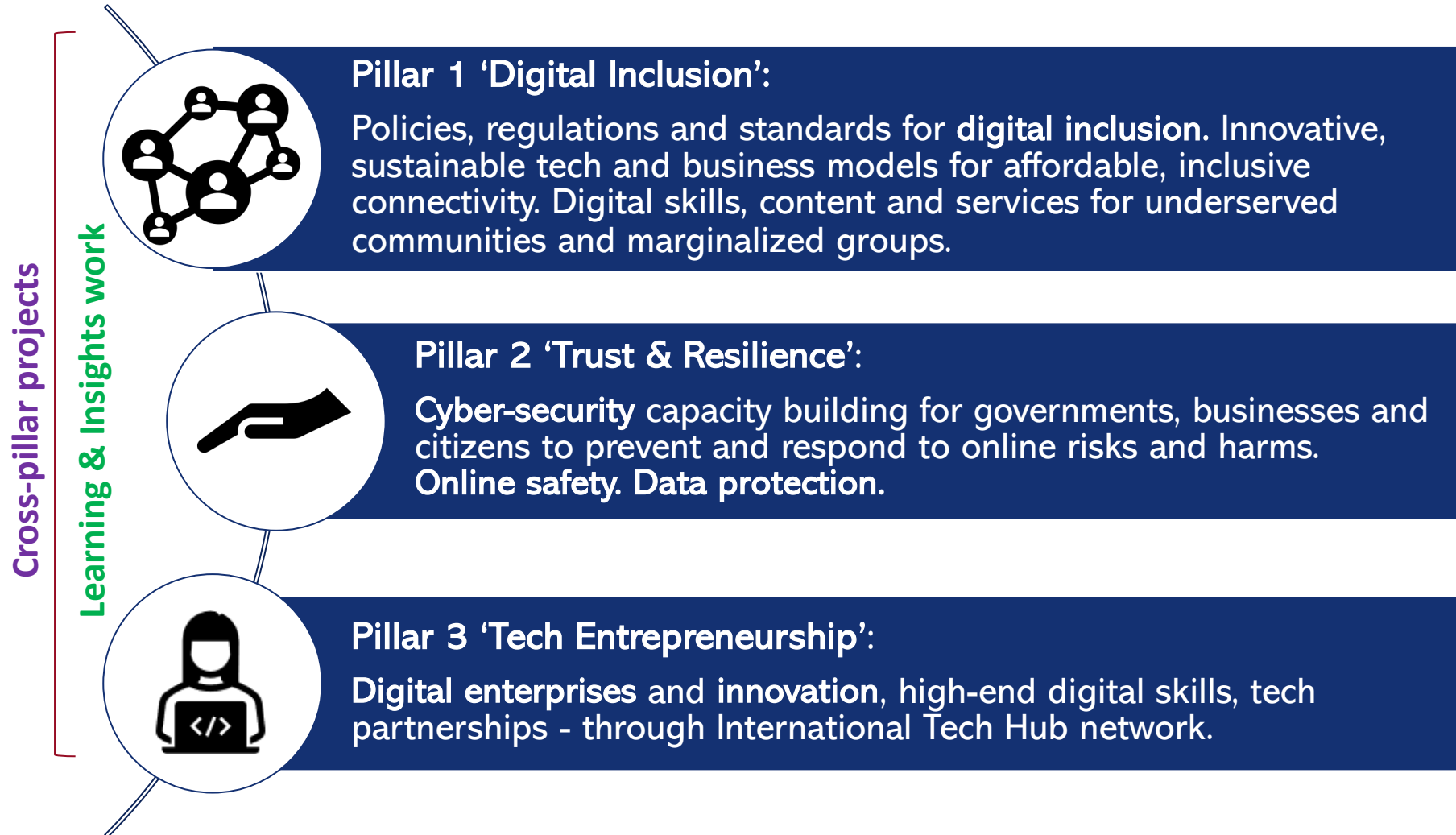


## The DAP 'stack'



# FCDO/DSIT Digital Access Programme (DAP)

(in Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa + regions)



## DAP examples: ecosystem level



- National Broadband Plans, National Digital Economy Strategies
- Capacity building of telecoms regulators
- Upgrade of Universal Service Funds' design and roll-out
- Licencing framework for community networks
- Enabling regulation for TV White Space technology
- Dynamic spectrum management approaches
- Investments in innovative telecom network models
- Improved accessibility of government digital services
- Governments' cybersecurity institutions strengthening
- Enabling policies for digital entrepreneurship



# DAP examples: market/community level



Community networks and school connectivity

Digital skills development

Locally-relevant digital content

Accessibility of digital services

Ed-tech, Health-tech / telemedicine

Fin-tech for digital financial inclusion

Digital entrepreneurship

Cyber-hygiene awareness, online safety

Digital platforms for civic engagement



## DAP delivery model:

In-depth multi-stakeholder  
country diagnostics and plans

Adaptive, agile, flexible

Hybrid – in-house & external  
expertise

Local partners & FCDO advisory  
teams  
in HQ and 5 focal countries

Global partners:

- **DSA**
- ITU
- APC
- BSI
- British Council

## DAP KEY OUTCOMES (JUNE 2025)

### DIRECTLY IMPACTED OVER 18.6M PEOPLE

(at least 65% women and girls) helping close the digital divides in 8,000+ communities, reducing the connectivity gap by over 35% in average, across 5 countries and respective regions

### DEMONSTRATED OVER 100 DIGITAL INCLUSION MODELS

that are scalable or replicable, for affordable last-mile connectivity, digital skills, accessibility of digital services, online safety, tech entrepreneurship

### SUPPORTED OVER 50 POLICY & REGULATORY REFORMS

creating a more enabling ecosystem for inclusive, responsible and sustainable digital transformation, and specifically for last-mile connectivity



## **Spectrum sharing, inclusive connectivity, and partnership with DSA**

- DAP takes a **technology-agnostic** approach to last-mile connectivity **market/community-level** and **systems-level** action
- Spectrum management is a key driver for last-mile connectivity.
- **Equitable access to spectrum resources** can drive connectivity and bridge the digital divide.
- Spectrum can be leveraged as a tool for social and economic empowerment in the digital age.
- Action is needed at the **critical intersection of digital inclusion and spectrum management.**



## Spectrum sharing, inclusive connectivity, and partnership with DSA [cont'd]

**Partnership project with DSA** since March 2021 through a dedicated project on spectrum management for inclusive connectivity, **as part of the wider DAP.**

Strategies for ensuring that underserved last-mile communities benefit from spectrum management policies:

- analysis of economic case for shared spectrum
- innovations in shared spectrum management
- enhanced regulatory frameworks for spectrum
- technical assistance to telecoms regulators / spectrum agencies
- improved business environment for providers, e.g. small-scale ISPs/WISPs
- promotion of community networks through capacity building and access to finance



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## Q&A / Discussion



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## For more information: **FCDO Digital Development Cluster**

Email: [DigitalDevelopment@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:DigitalDevelopment@fcdo.gov.uk)

X: [@FCDODigital](https://twitter.com/FCDODigital)

# Thank you!

