Building an Inclusive Digital Economy

The Challenge

Digital transformation can drive economic growth and democratic development, but the opportunities and benefits arising from technological innovation must be broadly accessible and inclusive of the entire economies and societies, including often marginalized communities. As countries increase investments in information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, governments should work with local business communities and civil society to collectively embrace the opportunities of digital transformation while managing risks such as threats to privacy, cybersecurity, and consumer protection.

In tackling these issues, CIPE recognizes that in many emerging markets technological advancements outpace public policy and legislative action. Further, the policy frameworks governing emerging technology and the digital economy are often formulated with minimal input from local stakeholders such as small and medium-sized enterprises, women entrepreneurs, and civil society. These issues are compounded by the exportation of digital authoritarianism and a lack of consensus of global norms and standards that govern the global digital economy and interconnected digital trade.

CIPE’s Approach

In emerging economies local communities face persistent barriers to e-commerce, credit access, and overcoming technological and digital divides. CIPE supports democratic and economic reformers to better understand and navigate the complexity and scope of the digital economy ecosystem. Focusing on two mutually reinforcing tracts, CIPE:

1. Provides partners with digital skills to meaningfully participate in the digital marketplace
2. Equips partners with the advocacy knowledge to promote inclusive and democratic digital transformation.

CIPE’s Resources

The Digital Economy Enabling Environment Guide: Key Areas of Dialogue for Business and Policymakers: The Guide, available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, and Russian, aims to explain the complex legal and regulatory aspects of the digital economy for all stakeholders, regardless of their technical knowledge or policy experience. CIPE’s How to Create an Enabling Environment for the Digital Economy serves as a complementary interactive online course that covers key elements of the Guide.

Harnessing the Power of the Digital Economy: MSME Guide to Digital Transformation: This interactive online course prepares businesses and entrepreneurs with the digital literacy skills needed to transition and start a business online securely and effectively.
"The cooperation had a deep impact on us and will have a lasting effect on the Center for Indonesian Policy studies (CIPS). CIPE has allowed us to open a new and immensely important area of research and expertise."

— Rainer Heufers, Center for Indonesian Policy Studies (CIPS) Executive Director

Supporting Local Action

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

Spotlight Central Asia

The Commercial Law and Development Program at the US Department of Commerce (CLDP) invited CIPE to lead a two-day workshop about digital transformation, the digital economy, and business advocacy agendas for 30 women entrepreneurs from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Additional Locations: Armenia, Kenya, Nigeria, Tunisia, Bangladesh, and Cambodia.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE DIALOGUE

Spotlight Kenya

CIPE and the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI) led a public-private dialogue (PPD) forum on Kenya’s digital transformation. The forum provided an opportunity for Kenyans to define constraints and solutions to expand participation in the digital economy and discuss Kenya’s approach to digital governance. KNCCI and CIPE produced a white paper focused on recommendations from the event regarding the two data protection bills then under debate in the legislature. Ultimately, Kenya’s Data Protection Act reflected much of the feedback of business and civil society from the event. What is more, the government released its Digital Economy Blueprint outlining its official national strategy for digital transformation, which references CIPE’s Guide and promotes the business advocacy checklist.

Additional Locations: Tunisia, Ethiopia, and Bangladesh.

POLICY ADVOCACY

Spotlight Indonesia

Leveraging the Digital Economy Enabling Environment Guide, CIPE partnered with the Center for Indonesian Policy Studies (CIPS) to assess Indonesia’s digital economy regulatory environment. The project’s recommendations, which call for collaboration between government and private sector actors to develop more adaptable and inclusive digital economy frameworks, are captured in the policy paper “Co-regulation in Indonesia’s Digital Economy.” CIPS also developed a case study on how they used CIPE’s Digital Economy Guide to implement their policy advocacy project.

Additional Locations: Bangladesh.