

# Digital Economy Policy

## in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



وزارة الاتصالات  
وتكنولوجيا المعلومات  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS  
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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## Introduction

Already the largest economy in the Middle East and among the 20 largest economies in the world, the Kingdom's objective with Vision 2030 is to become a more prosperous economy, whereby Saudi Arabia is ranked among the top 15 economies worldwide by 2030. To achieve this goal, the Kingdom aims to create an attractive investment environment and diversify its economy to raise the share of non-oil exports from 16% to 50%.

Modern technologies have had a fundamentally transformative impact on life across the globe. The ongoing shift from traditional economic interactions towards greater data-and-platforms-enabled activity emphasizes the centrality of the digital economy. For the Kingdom, a robust digital economy can serve as a catalyst for promoting non-oil sectors that will contribute to the economic growth and diversity necessary to achieve Vision 2030. In executing this Digital Economy Policy, the Kingdom aims to raise the contribution of the digital economy as a share of total GDP to be on par with other leading global economies.

## Policy Objective

The objective of this policy is to drive growth of the digital economy by informing the public sector, private enterprises, and the international community of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's stated position on matters related to the digital economy.

The policy sets out guiding principles for government agencies to leverage the digital economy through their respective mandates to drive diversification and sustainability across the economy, and create a more competitive advantage for the Kingdom.

## Digital Economy Policy Principles

### A. Access (Digital Infrastructure, Data and Platforms)

#### Digital Infrastructure

1. Digital infrastructure is the backbone of the digital economy. The Kingdom aims to make high quality internet accessible to all sectors and segments of society across the Kingdom, at affordable rates, and in a dependable manner. The Kingdom is determined to secure national networks from disruption or damage, and establish national plans to ensure business continuity, including proactively managing the impacts of emergencies and disasters.
2. The Kingdom seeks to promote the investment and development of its digital infrastructure by building strategic partnerships between the public sector and privately owned service providers.
3. Driven by an interest to protect society and the environment from potential harm originating from any element of digital infrastructure, the Kingdom emphasizes the importance of strict compliance by operators and users with safety standards.
4. The Kingdom strives to optimize spending and operations across all digital infrastructure through alignment and integration of national efforts, capitalization on technology-based solutions and new business models, as well as the introduction of appropriate ICT procurement frameworks.

#### Data

5. Data is a vital pillar of the digital economy that enables innovative solutions to economic and social challenges. The effective use of data enhances decision-making, transparency, and efficiency

in the public sector. As such, the Kingdom encourages data collection, effective use, and sharing of open data, in compliance with national protection and privacy regulations.

6. The Kingdom aims to improve the quality and availability of data and develop policies, regulations, and processes necessary to integration and sharing of data across government agencies.

7. The Kingdom strives to improve user experience and data reliability through the adoption of a “once-only” policy, whereby data is not collected several times by separate agencies, thereby reducing redundancies and enabling a more integrated experience when using any e-government service.

### Digital Platforms

8. The Kingdom aspires to be a global leader in the field of digital government by adopting a “smart digital government concept,” leveraging data, and emerging technologies to create user-centric platforms delivering services to individuals, the public sector and private enterprises, which increase efficiencies and ease of access to all.

9. The Kingdom aims to enable digital platforms delivering social prosperity and economic growth, through effective adoption of digital technologies and modern innovative business models, through controls and regulation balancing between the rights of investors and users to nurture a safe and competitive environment for the development of such platforms.

### B. Technology Adoption and Use

1. The Kingdom affirms that the purpose of technology is to serve humanity and improve the standard of living. This principle will be central to any consideration for employing digital technologies in the Kingdom in order to avoid compromising fundamental human rights or social values.

2. The Kingdom aspires to play a leading role in the development of emerging technologies, and become the leading regional platform, and a leading global launch-pad for innovation and technological advancement.

3. The Kingdom supports the adoption of digital technologies to increase business productivity and competitiveness, through demand growth focused on increasing local content of digital products and services.

### C. Innovation

1. The Kingdom aims to harness innovation in support of civil society and enable access and participation for all to benefit from digital services.

2. The Kingdom supports the adoption of appropriate policies and governance models that leverage innovation to promote digital transformation and contribute to growth of the digital economy.

3. The Kingdom encourages and supports data and technology innovation initiatives, including establishing testbeds for local and international technology companies to test innovative business models in a safe environment, and facilitate the launch of products and services while assessing their economic, social, and technical impact.

4. The Kingdom supports scientific research across all fields of technology, guided by a drive to produce distinguished deliverables that serve society and create innovative solutions that add economic value.

5. The Kingdom aspires to provide a supportive environment for creativity and innovation across the digital economy through an emphasis on respecting intellectual property rights, and balancing between the interests of innovators and the public, in compliance with national laws and regulations.

#### D. Human Capital

1. The Kingdom is determined to create valuable and productive jobs through the digital economy and seeks to improve practices and workplace conditions, and upskill national talent to address future job requirements.

2. The Kingdom strives to provide a safe environment to support the growth of new employment models and meet the requirements of the modern labor market, while ensuring justice and protection for workers.

3. The Kingdom seeks to promote knowledge and increase the capacity of the national talent pool in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) skillsets through supportive programs and policies.

#### e. Social Prosperity and Inclusion

1. The Kingdom seeks to leverage digital technologies to elevate Saudi cities and enable them to become leading global centers focusing on achieving social prosperity and raising the quality of life in the country.

2. The Kingdom promotes digital culture and equal educational opportunities for all to ensure effective and productive participation of all members and segments of society in the digital economy, including residents in rural areas, individuals across all age groups, and the people with disabilities.

3. The Kingdom seeks to increase participation rates of people with disabilities in the labor force through upskilling and the reinforcement of digital skills to meet the requirements of job opportunities in the digital economy.

4. The Kingdom aims to increase women's participation in the labor force and to reinforce their role in achieving the Kingdom's digital economy aspirations.

#### f. Trust in the Digital Ecosystem

1. The Kingdom is committed to providing a safe and trusted digital environment through the development of needed cybersecurity laws and regulations, with the overall goal of encouraging individuals, public sector agencies, and private enterprises to actively participate in the digital economy, and engage socially and economically with confidence.

2. The Kingdom seeks to achieve the highest levels of transparency in digital transactions through a secure and trustworthy digital environment, encouraging investment and conducive to innovation.

3. The Kingdom aims to activate the adoption of digital trust and identity services through the issuance of appropriate laws and regulations.

#### g. Open Markets

1. The Kingdom embraces open markets to drive the digital economy as per its international obligations and in compliance with its national regulations.

2. The Kingdom aims to become the ultimate destination for digital investments in the region by creating a competitive environment and enabling a thriving digital economy.

3. The Kingdom supports the development of laws and regulations that enable the creation of new business models, driving growth in the digital economy.
4. The Kingdom aims to enable and facilitate e-commerce applications in all its forms, and is working towards supportive environments by facilitating necessary government procedures that will increase consumer confidence and adoption.
5. The Kingdom strives to empower participation of small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs in digital by actively removing obstacles and facilitating access to funding and favorable regulation.