Digital divides or dividends?
# Including basic services in Africa's digitalisation agenda: Cases from Mauritius

This document is part of a larger research project into the digitalisation of basic services in Africa. It concerns one of five case studies that assess, on a country-level, what interventions exist, which of these are inclusive of poor and vulnerable groups, and to what extent governments are facilitating the enabling conditions for digital transformation.

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Context
With the highest e-Government Development Index (EGDI) in Africa, Mauritius aspires to become a cyber island. Mauritius has achieved 100% access to electricity to its population since 2010, mobile data coverage through 4G stands at 99%, and 65% of individuals used the internet in 2020. However, the COVID-19 pandemic sparked a need to increase the range of e-services and revamp existing government portals.

Knowledge Management, Networking and Capacity Building (KMNCB) consortium

Key findings
Mauritius is cited as a model of economic and social development and (e-)governance in Africa. How come? And to what degree do its citizens benefit from digitalisation strategies?
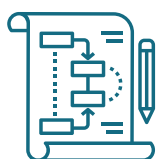
Successful digitalisation in Mauritius is in part thanks to the formulation of successive National Strategic Plans for ICT sector development since 1998. Periodic reviews of the national strategy ensure regular updating of policies and adaptations of the regulations to address new challenges

A national platform allows the sharing of data between government agencies and programmes, thereby integrating and synergising free e-services and ensuring the efficient sharing of information. Despite this, better monitoring of the perceived value and satisfaction of users is needed to improve e-services and increase participation.

Though internet in Mauritius is generally affordable, the majority of children from poorer households could not access online education during the first COVID-19 lockdown. This improved in following lockdowns.

Major services offered online:
InfoHighway
Initiated in 2014 for sharing data between government agencies, the current dashboard holds 557 G2G services from 31 providers: the National Transport Authority (107), Corporate Business Registration Division (89), Local Authorities (82), Central Population database (51), Passport and Immigration Office (22), Ministry of Social Security (20), Mauritius Police Force(17), Ministry of Education (15), and others). There is also a Citizen Support Portal for e-participation and communication between citizens and local governments.

Mauritius does indeed seem a poster-child for e-governance. But it must take steps to safeguard the progress made and keep up with increasing needs for digitalisation of public services for all.

Timeline

- **1988** — Telecom & Information Technology Acts
- **1989** — Civil Service Computerisation Programme
- **1997** — Copyright Act
- **1998** — Government vision to transform Mauritius into a Cyber Island; Information Communication Technology Authority (ICTA)
- **2001** — Liberalisation of the telecommunication sector
- **2003** —
- **'04** — National Telecommunication Policy
- **'05** — Government Online Centre
- **'06** — First National ICT Strategic Plan
- **2011** — Second National ICT Strategic Plan
- **2012** — National Broadband Policy
- **2014** — National Cyber Security Strategy
- **2017** — Data Protection Act
- **2018** — Digital Government Transformation Strategy - Citizen Support Unit Portal
- **2021** — Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act
- **2022** — Digital Mauritius 2030 Strategic Plan