

Digital divides or dividends?

Digitalisation of basic services in Benin: challenges and opportunities

INCLUDE

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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.

Context

In Benin, huge investments have been made in national ICT infrastructure and electricity extension, and a national portal for the provision of public services makes it possible for citizens to access more than 560 public services online. However, investments have concentrated more in cities, while more than 50% of Benin's population still lives in rural areas with limited access to internet and electricity.

Key findings

Despite challenges in access to internet and electricity, the mobile and internet penetration rates increased from 84% and 27% in 2016 to 100% and 64% in 2021, following the launch of the Digital Sector Policy Document. How was this progress made and how beneficial is it for citizens?



Responsibility of management was delegated to various institutions: the Government of Benin set up various agencies and an entire Ministry to develop and implement digital strategies.

The market was restructured to promote fair competition between operators and compliance with laws and regulations.



Citizens have positive experiences with online services but there is a definite lack of use that requires clear government communication about procedures to access and use digital services.

Benin's investment in infrastructure has definitely paid off. However, for all citizens to enjoy access to digital services equally, more attention must be paid to rural areas. To increase the use of digital services, clear government communication will be needed about procedures to access and use digital services.



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Digital services in Benin include services for:

560 public services are offered online, covering civil status (birth, marriage, death, ID), water and energy (connection and bills), financial (pay slips and taxes), education and health. 132 are fully digitalised (apply, pay, complete access online). For other services, one can either find information online and apply in person, or apply and pay online but finalise access in person.

