

Digital Solutions for Sustainable Development

Digital Transformation Center Kigali

Challenge

The digitization of Rwanda's economy and society are declared priorities of the Rwandan government in order to noticeably advance the country's sustainable development. For several years, high investments have been made to improve the digital infrastructure, the population's digital skills and digital public services. Moreover, Rwanda being Smart Africa Secretariat's flagship for Smart Cities highlights the importance of more digitized, sustainable and climate-resilient as well as future-proof cities and communities.

However, a large part of the population has neither direct access nor the necessary digital skills to use information and services. Additionally, responsible public institutions, such as the Ministry of ICT and Innovation (MINICT) and the Rwandan Information Society Authority (RISA) need to be strengthened to carry out large IT-projects. The Digital Solutions for Sustainable Development (DSSD) program therefore supports MINICT and RISA in strengthening the structures and capacities of political institutions and the community in order to improve cooperation between the private sector and the government and thus make the digital transformation broadly effective and sustainable.

Approach

In 2021, the program has started to support MINICT in prioritizing, coordinating, and conceptualizing digital solutions with a focus on Smart Cities. The aim is to support the development of digital solutions based on emerging technologies in collaboration with MINICT and RISA as well as representatives from the private and public sector.

For this purpose, the cooperation between public and private actors in their digital transformation efforts shall be strengthened through capacity development measures in the areas of emerging

technologies and organizational development. Specific consulting services based on individual needs will help managers of public and private organizations to better meet their complex responsibilities.

Communities of Practice will provide an exchange and learning platform for people interested in emerging technologies such as Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Smart Cities, Gaming, and Cyber-Security.

In order to reduce the digital divide, a national strategy for digital inclusion and specific curricula will be developed that target the promotion of digital skills for people outside of Kigali, women and people with disabilities.

Furthermore, capacities in the area of machine translation will be built through the development of two open voice datasets in Kinyarwanda and different training measures.

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Benefits & Outcomes

By the end of this program, 12 new digital solutions will be developed as well as 40.000 people outside of Kigali trained on basic digital skills with 50% being women and 1.000 people with disabilities. Furthermore, 180 startups will have received personalized organizational support on different topics and 400 people will be trained on digital special knowledge.



Solution Demo Day at the Digital Transformation Center



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Social Media
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Left: Big Data Meetup at the Digital Transformation Center

Right: Networking training facilitated by African Institute for Mathematical Science

Other expected outcomes include an innovation support program to RISA, 5 project agreements to promote applied research as well as 8 curricula that target different vulnerable groups and take their different needs into account. Moreover, awareness for machine translation will be raised and two open voice data sets in Kinyarwanda developed.

Impact

Since the official launch of the Digital Transformation Center in 2019, 18 digital solutions have been developed or enhanced with new functionalities in partnership with the public sector and the local ecosystem.

In total, 90 events have been hosted with 3815 people attending. Furthermore, over 650 people have been trained in various areas ranging from design and innovation processes, Project

Management as well as Internet of Things and Machine Learning. Several study tours were conducted to Germany, Israel and Ghana.

As part of the personalized consulting services, 19 startups were supported and received individual advice on their Intellectual Property and Licensing challenge.

In cooperation with MINICT and other partners, 4 strategies and 6 studies were developed to promote digitization in different sectors.

Main Partners & Steering Structure

DSSD's main partners are MINICT and RISA. Other partners include the Smart Africa Secretariat, Rwanda ICT Chamber, Kigali Innovation City (KIC), National Industrial Research and Development Agency (NIRDA), Center for the 4th Industrial Revolution (C4IR), and Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority (RURA).

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