

Digital Development Paradigm in the Arab Region: Between Digital Economy and Digital Transformation Approaches

{ Arab IGF AMPAC - STF }

Background

The spread of the Corona virus globally has led to destabilizing the and threatening numerous economies, and freezing economic and social activities in vital sectors, be it education, health, public administration, or the activities of political parties, syndicates, civil organizations, and others.

Due to the enforcement of social distancing measures and the limitations put on face-to-face meetings, the growth in ICT use and the acceleration of content digitization become among the most important challenges facing most countries globally, spotlighting the deep digital divide across and within countries. Countries with well-developed connectivity infrastructure can mitigate by up to half the negative economic repercussions of the pandemic.

Also, the digital economy has emerged as one of the key drivers to the global economic recovery since e-commerce plays an increasing role in achieving a remarkable recovery and becomes an integral part of the economic landscape.

To help create economic value, especially emerging economic values, the adoption of digital identity becomes an important factor for GDP potential growth, as it opens access to banking, government, education, healthcare, and many other important services.

However, this has led to the emergence of new challenges due to the negative domination of giant technology companies on global markets, which is detrimental to competition with emerging or smaller companies. Economic researchers have noted that the current budget of giant companies exceeds the budget of many countries and expressed fear that these giant companies become a financial and technological force that is difficult to challenge or control in the future.

Description

The session seeks to discuss the aforementioned problematic issues while trying to answer important and relevant ensuing questions, including the following:

- What are the fundamental mechanisms to close the digital transformation gaps in the Arab countries?
- To what extent the digital transformation has contributed to the shift towards the digital economy? Has the status of digital economy pillars in the Arab countries been assessed lately? As a result of this assessment, what are the indicators that highlight the main elements for digital economy recovery?
- What obstacles hinder e-commerce growth as one of the essential digital economy pillars in the Arab countries? Have national policies to encourage consumers adopt e-commerce while ensuring their rights protection put in place? How can financial institutions keep pace with the emerging e-commerce companies and support them?
- To what extent national identifiers interoperability contributes to defining an Arab digital identity that creates a strong economic harmony? What is the impact of banks modernization and digital currencies use on Arab countries economy?
- What main obstacles hinder foreign and national investments in technology as key to digital economy success? Do Arab strategies focus on this sector?
- How do government policies deal with digital taxation and dominance of large cross-border companies? What is the role of scientific research and innovation in limiting this dominance? What will be the future of services and personal data amid these conflicts?

Moderator:



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