

Digitalisation and Environmental policy: looking at key trends

(IGF Policy Network on Environment (PNE))

Background

Mitigating climate change, addressing waste and pollution, and ensuring environmental sustainability are among the world's most pressing issues. The Internet and other digital technologies can pose challenges to the environment (for instance through energy consumption for data production, storage, usage and transfer, and through the production of devices and disposal of e-waste), but they can also be leveraged to advance environmental sustainability. Policies and actions are therefore needed to 'green' the Internet, reduce the environmental impact of new technologies (including artificial intelligence and big data) and facilitate their use to address environmental challenges. Examples include improving the circular economy for digital devices (e.g. enabling reuse and recycling), extending the lifespan of software and devices, reducing the energy use associated with the Internet, and promoting technologies that help reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption. Also important is to develop and put in practice adequate governance frameworks that enable the sharing and re-use of environmental data. At the same time, more focus needs to be placed on promoting environmental education and building awareness on environmental sustainability within Internet governance and digital policy spaces.

Description

This interactive multistakeholder dialogue will outline some of the key opportunities and challenges digitalisation brings to environmental sustainability. Building on the outputs of the IGF 2021 policy network on environment, this workshop will especially look into the role of open and big data for environment, food and water systems and supply chain transparency and circularity aspects.

Key Facts

- Digital technologies can accelerate achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- The UN Environment Report estimates that 68% of the 93 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators related to environmental dimensions of sustainable development under the 2030 Agenda cannot be measured due to a lack of data (<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/36447/CDEE.pdf>).

Moderator



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