



Norwegian Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs

## Digitalisation for Development

### *Digital strategy for Norwegian development policy*



Minister of International Development Nikolai Astrup in Malawi. Photo: Kristin Enstad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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## Foreword

The world is in the midst of a digital revolution. We are communicating and interacting in new and more efficient ways. Digitalisation is a tool for renewal, simplification and improvement that must be incorporated into our approach to development policy. New technologies and digital solutions can help developing countries to achieve economic growth and improve welfare, and even to skip some developmental stages – often highly polluting ones. Digital solutions also offer the potential to make Norwegian development aid more effective and far-reaching. This strategy is my response to the Government's request to all ministers to promote digitalisation in their areas of responsibility.

The internet and social media are making it easier to search for and share information, and are opening up new communication channels for groups that otherwise struggle to be heard. This is revolutionary. Street vendors can now progress from crushing poverty to creditworthiness, while the unemployed can start their own businesses in markets previously inaccessible. Schoolchildren equipped with tablet computers get more out of their instruction, just as digital tools make disabled people more independent and simplify daily tasks. E-ledgers and registers are improving welfare services by facilitating transparency, anti-corruption controls and tax collection. Satellites are being used to detect illegal logging and mining in rainforest regions.

In April, I visited a primary school in Malawi, one of the world's poorest countries. With a population of close to 20 million and a fiscal budget the size of the City of Oslo's school budget, Malawi has a long way to go in providing a good education to all young people. There were few similarities between the school I visited and schools in Norway. The classrooms were simple, with no chairs, desks, computers or projectors in sight. However, there was one exception: in one classroom, the pupils sat with tablet computers in their laps. Using apps, they were learning to read and do sums. The school I visited is participating in a project funded by Norway that is providing pupils at selected schools with access to tablet computers for teaching purposes for between 30 minutes and an hour a week. I was fascinated to observe how focused the pupils were while using the teaching programmes for their allotted time. These digital aids are a real help to the 19 teachers responsible for almost 2 000 pupils. The pupils involved in the project have improved their reading skills by 100 per cent and mathematics skills by 65 per cent.

These children will have a far better chance of succeeding in life, finding a job, providing for their family and achieving their dreams.

If developing countries are to take part in the rapid digital development, they must possess sufficient expertise and infrastructure, including mobile networks and electricity grids. An app alone is no guarantee of success. Countries also need electricity, internet access, good teachers, innovation-friendly financial conditions, and the political will to pave the way for a digital economy.

The digital revolution is well underway in many developing countries. Even in rural areas with poorly developed power grids, smartphones glow with power from solar cell chargers, and village charging stations are in high demand. Smartphones are a promising platform for mobile banking, eHealth and teaching services, and banks no longer need a branch in each town to develop effective lending services.

Successful digital transformation demands new forms of partnership in which the private and public sectors in donor countries and developing countries alike – including their academic institutions and civil society organisations – all help to define problems and find solutions.

New technology can function as catalysts for development, growth, social change, democratisation and inclusion. It may also present challenges and dilemmas, however. Development policy must promote security, data protection, freedom of expression and human rights, including in cyberspace. It is therefore vital to raise awareness of the challenges that digitalisation may entail for both donor and developing countries.

We will not achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 without the adoption of technological advances and digital innovations. Doing so requires new forms of strategic collaboration.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has established a high-level panel on digital cooperation, and I have been invited to participate. The panel will discuss the enormous potential of digitalisation to bring about social change. The work of the panel can provide valuable input for our future digitalisation efforts in development policy.

Digital transformation is proceeding at high speed. It is hard to predict which new technologies the future holds, but it is already obvious that they will bring about great changes. In all aspects of its development policy, I want Norway to be a leader in

enabling developing countries to benefit from the opportunities provided by innovation and digitalisation. The aim is to achieve a higher return on development assistance invested. This strategy mandates staff at all levels within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at diplomatic and consular missions abroad to promote digital solutions as a means of improving development cooperation results.

Nikolai Astrup  
Minister of International Development



The Global Digital Library is part of the Global Book Alliance, an initiative co-funded by various organisations including USAID. Photo: Pål Laukli

# Introduction and analysis

## Purpose and definition

Digitalisation is a collective term for the adoption of computerised tools and methods for making processes and societal changes more efficient.

This digital strategy for development policy is to be a foundation for digitalisation measures and initiatives to improve the results achieved by Norwegian development policy. Digitalisation is not an aim in itself, but rather a development policy instrument. This strategy discusses:

1. Opportunities to utilise digital solutions in the priority areas of Norway's development policy.
2. Ways to use Norway's digital expertise and experience to benefit developing countries and to target potential areas and partners for strategic cooperation, including multilateral fora.
3. Ways to strengthen and further develop digital administration in development policy.

Digitalisation and new technological solutions may make it easier to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and promote quicker, more inclusive growth and development in many countries. Successful digitalisation is about far more than adopting new technology, however. The 2016 World Bank report "Digital Dividends" strongly emphasised that technical solutions alone do not secure development. Other decisive factors include favourable framework conditions and an education system that prepares people for modern working life and for universal participation in the global digital economy.

New digital opportunities based on innovative solutions and new types of partnerships must be reflected in Norway's development policy and its cooperation with partner countries. There is also room to enhance digital proficiency in Norway's public administration and to use technology to improve the management and implementation of Norwegian development cooperation.

## The digital divide

Digitalisation is altering the lives of billions of people, influencing human interaction and communication, changing workplaces, boosting value creation and human welfare and contributing to cuts in greenhouse gas and other emissions. Although less than half of the world's population has access to the internet, more than five billion people have access to a mobile telephone. This offers great opportunities. However, millions of poor people, particularly in rural areas, and other vulnerable groups – often the elderly and women – still have no access to digital tools. According to UNICEF, ten per cent more men than women use the internet. Developing countries and vulnerable population groups thus risk exclusion from perhaps the most promising change factor for development and growth the world has ever seen. Universal access to digital tools has become a major factor in securing inclusive economic growth.

## The opportunities

Technology and innovation have the potential to change societies fundamentally. Digitalisation may result in increased transparency and stronger democratic processes.

New technology offers enormous opportunities to disseminate knowledge and information to marginalised groups, and thus to encourage increased political participation and engagement. It enables new business models and the opening up of new markets. Technology can provide girls and women better access to education and the labour market. Mobile technology may provide marginalised groups access to saving, lending and insurance services. Digital tools enable people to create their own jobs and invest in their own future. Digital money transfers are increasingly being used in humanitarian crisis response. Such cash transfers are often more cost-effective than traditional methods, and more beneficial to affected individuals and local communities.

Digital technology can support disabled persons in many ways. By using mobile telephones to access agronomic knowledge via satellite, farmers can engage in climate-adapted food production. Weather data permit early warning of extreme weather conditions. Digitalisation of property, tax and corporate registers may boost transparency, counter corruption and promote economic growth. Digital ID systems and population registers have the potential to improve access to public and private services for more than two billion people who still lack identity papers. In the long run, such technologies may facilitate tailored health and educational services and a modern tax

system. Digital ID systems may also facilitate improved regional labour mobility and reduce irregular migration.

## The pitfalls

Digitalisation may also present challenges, dilemmas and risks. Fundamental prerequisites such as infrastructure, reasonable internet access, electrical power and predictable framework conditions for investment and innovation must be in place for digitalisation to work optimally. Lack of infrastructure, expertise or knowledge may increase inequality between population groups. Investment in digitalisation must therefore be considered in combination with other priorities.

Digitalisation holds potential to create new jobs but may also entail automation and robotisation that eliminate jobs, including in developing countries.

Digitalisation also increases vulnerability to cyberattacks. Cybercrime and network operations originating from both state and non-state actors represent serious threats to national security and the economy, and may impact critical infrastructure. This is discussed further in Norway's [international cyber strategy](#) and in the white paper *Global security challenges in Norway's foreign policy: Terrorism, organised crime, piracy and cyber threats* ([Meld. St. 37 \(2014–2015\)](#)). The authorities in countries with a democratic deficit may use data and internet monitoring to increase control rather than inclusion and transparency. Digital tools can be directed at political opponents, journalists and critical voices in civil society. Digital platforms can be misused to spread hate and disinformation, and to encourage violent extremism. Personal data can be harvested and used illegally.

Although most countries face many such challenges, countries with weak structures and those involved in conflicts or located in vulnerable regions often lack the resources to handle them. A further challenge is that important decisions linked to digitalisation and technology development are often made by commercial or other non-state actors. This underlines the importance of working strategically to help ensure that digitalisation in the context of development policy also safeguards freedom, security, democratic values and universal rights.

## The role of development policy

We will not achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 without the application of digital tools. The strongest driver of digitalisation is the private sector. Individuals motivated to fund better solutions are another key factor. In states with well-functioning and well-funded public administrations, the public sector can identify and realise digital efficiency gains. Development policy has an important part to play as a catalyst and strategic coordinator of change processes in developing countries. Development cooperation is generally offered by countries that are more digitally advanced than the recipient countries, creating a major opportunity for transfer of technology, expertise and digital skills. However, Norway fully recognises that developing countries are best positioned to identify their own needs.

## The Norwegian resource base

Norway is among the world's most digitised societies. Norway is home to large, internationally competitive companies and numerous smaller, innovative ICT companies. The public sector has developed internationally leading digital services. These assets make Norway an attractive partner. Norway's partners within the UN system, the World Bank, civil society and the private sector are already involved in digital projects in the development sector. However, much potential remains untapped. Norway intends to support further intensification of digitalisation as an integral aspect of the work done in the Government's existing development priority areas.





Digital tools in use at Kamuzu Central Hospital in Malawi. Photo: Ken Opprann/Norad.

## 2 Strategic priorities

We will prioritise financing digital solutions in the development areas in which Norway is already playing an important role. We will also emphasise knowledge transfer and strategic partnerships, particularly with multilateral organisations, and maintaining and intensifying digital transformation in the administration of Norwegian development aid. The first two priorities concern the actual content of Norwegian development assistance, while the third relates to our own work processes. In all three areas, Norway will work with the private sector and other partners to improve the scope, speed and quality of Norwegian development policies and assistance.

### 2.1 The Government's thematic priorities

Digitalisation will be integrated into the Government's existing thematic priorities for Norway's development policy, and the areas where Norway is already playing an important role will be prioritised. The thematic priorities are health, education, climate, the environment and oceans, business development, agricultural development and renewable energy, as well as humanitarian aid.

#### *Health*

Norway has provided funding for a number of successful digital initiatives in the field of global health, including a health-information system developed by the University of Oslo that serves more than two billion users in more than seventy countries. Norway also supports a digital tendering system for medicines, and the use of big data to predict the development of epidemics. Norwegian companies are active in the health sector. One example is Telenor. In Pakistan, Telenor demonstrated the value of big data to predict the development of epidemics. In Bangladesh, customer contributions to health insurance using mobile payments is being explored. Telenor is also in cooperation with UNICEF, helping countries to register births by mobile phone.

Norway is well positioned to support countries in the development of effective health systems facilitating universal access to primary healthcare, including through digital tools.

#### *Education*

The UN Millennium Development Goals have shown that access to education is insufficient. Digital learning aids, including tablets and apps, can help improve quality in

education. Norway is involved in various digital initiatives, including EduApp4Syria – a mobile app that provides Syrian child refugees with quality-assured reading instruction in Arabic – and the creation of a digital library that will cover 100 languages by 2021. Digitalisation is increasing the demand for digital skills. For instance, skilled workers are needed to protect IT systems and digital solutions in different sectors. Therefore, Norwegian aid to vocational training will be targeted towards enhancing ICT skills and digital literacy..

#### *Climate, the environment and oceans*

Digitalisation in these areas is already accelerating, as experienced in a variety of ongoing projects. Satellite data are already being used to monitor deforestation and to map disaster areas. The Norwegian Meteorological Institute is providing sister organisations in developing countries with training in data use and analysis and in weather forecasting. The website [yr.no](http://yr.no) provides weather and flood warnings that are also used in developing countries. The Nansen Programme's research vessel houses laboratories, sonar systems, echo sounders and advanced technological systems that developing countries can utilise in the sustainable management of fisheries resources.

#### *Business development, agricultural development and renewable energy*

Start-up businesses and entrepreneurs are important job creators in both industrial and developing countries, and significant contributors to digitalisation.

Along with access to electric power and the internet, sound framework conditions and business-friendly policies are important factors in successful broad-based digitalisation. Examples include transparency, predictability, non-discriminatory legislation and an investment-friendly environment. Knowledgeable ICT trade organisations that promote stable, growth-inducing framework conditions as needed have a significant role to play in this regard.

Digital financial services have included new, previously marginalised groups in the formal economy. M-pesa, a mobile-based banking service that now has more than thirty million users in approximately ten countries, is a good example. Many of its users would not have qualified for an ordinary bank account. M-pesa allows users to take out microloans, deposit income securely, receive payments and create new financial opportunities.

Yara is providing farmers with free mobile apps that help them to identify the nutrient needs of their crops using image comparison.



Syrian refugees trying out a mobile game designed to help children who are not attending school to learn to read. Norway has supported the development of two Arabic-language mobile learning apps in cooperation with NTNU, mobile telephony operators, game developers and others. Photo: Marit Hverven

Investment in digitalisation will be strengthened through existing funding mechanisms for business development and job creation. The Enterprise Development for Jobs scheme, administered by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) provides companies planning to invest in developing countries with support for preliminary studies, pilot production, partner searches and expansion projects. The scheme has already been utilised by well-established Norwegian ICT businesses seeking to expand into developing countries.

#### *Humanitarian aid*

Use of new technologies and digitalisation in the humanitarian context is saving lives and making it easier to concentrate on the victims of disasters. One example is increased use of cash rather than traditional humanitarian aid. Digital transfers have advantages for both individuals and local communities.

The Norwegian Refugee Council was an early adopter of digitised cash payments to refugees. In cooperation with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, it has also run a

pilot project focused on the identification of individuals in refugee camps in Jordan, including by means of iris scans. Innovation Norway and a Norwegian start-up have worked with UN Women to develop an app that enables refugees to document their educational achievements. The app, which uses blockchain technology, has won several innovation prizes.

However, digitalisation and data processing also present new challenges. It is particularly important that collected data are not processed in a way that gives rise to new difficulties for persons affected by humanitarian crises.

In cooperation with its partners, Norway will actively work to exploit the opportunities offered by digitalisation and promote partnerships between the public and private sectors and humanitarian organisations.

### *Going forward*

Numerous examples can be cited to illustrate the potential of digitalisation to improve the results of development cooperation. Nevertheless, Norwegian support for digital initiatives has often been uncoordinated and fragmented. This is true of all thematic areas. Digital opportunities must be integrated into all relevant development projects. This will be achieved by:

- Developing action plans for digitalisation in priority areas, starting with health and education.
- Identifying where digital solutions can add value and increase development effect, based on the experience gathered so far.
- Reviewing successful aid projects with digital elements to assess opportunities for upscaling and/or transferring experience and cooperative models to other projects, measures and thematic areas.
- Cooperating with developers and relevant actors to help spread and otherwise make available digital tools and methods.
- Inviting aid organisations to define problems that can be solved by digital means in cooperation with innovators and the private sector, and being open to digital opportunities throughout the aid portfolio.
- Entering into strategic partnerships with Norwegian and foreign research institutions to use digitalisation to create opportunities in new and traditional supply chains.

- Establishing guidelines for mobile-network infrastructure investments through the development banks.
- Promoting digital transformation within the governing bodies of relevant multilateral organisations.
- Prioritising digital projects in business development initiatives.

## 2.2 New initiatives and strategic cooperation

This strategy also describes new initiatives in areas in which Norway possesses valuable digital expertise and in which strategic partnerships are seen as useful in pursuing development policy objectives.

### *Digitalisation for development – new programme*

Norway plans to share digital knowledge and experience with partner countries through a new Digitalisation for development programme, which aim is to build skills and capacity in partner countries.

The programme will be a flexible instrument with an emphasis on innovation, complementarity and partnership with international stakeholders. Partner countries' own expressed needs and strategies, as well as donor coordination, are core elements. The following are expected to be key components of the programme:

- Sharing of Norwegian expertise in public-sector digitalisation, for example through capacity- and institution-building projects in selected developing countries, including the development of systems for improved data management and utilisation. In addition to ongoing cooperation in the area of statistics, consideration will be given to coordinating Norwegian assistance aimed at the creation of basic public registers, including population, business, property and address registers. The programme will examine how solutions developed in Norway can provide a foundation for relevant services in developing countries.
- Fostering innovative partnerships between the private sector, research institutions and civil society through dedicated funding.

Norway will intensify its support for local incubators and innovation centres, both directly through existing strategic partnerships and indirectly through participation in the World Bank's infoDev programme, which is working to promote entrepreneurship

and innovation around the world. Moreover, Norway's new humanitarian policy strategy includes a digital innovation programme.

### *Strategic cooperation*

Norway wishes to strengthen its strategic partnerships with a broad range of actors, such as UN agencies, civil society, academic institutions, public authorities and the private sector. The ultimate aim is to spur as many of them as possible to employ digital technologies and services that will accelerate progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We must use all available means to reach the poor and marginalised population groups, including during humanitarian crises.

### **Cooperation with selected countries**

New digital-based opportunities are to be emphasised in Norway's political dialogue with countries where Norwegian ICT companies and trade organisations are already collaborating with local partners. Moreover, Norwegian initiatives should always build on partner countries' own existing digital strategies, ambitions and expertise in the fields of innovation and digital solutions. A growing number of developing countries, including several in Africa and Asia, have recently demonstrated success in developing innovative and cost-effective digital solutions that other partner countries and countries like Norway can learn from.

### **Multilateral initiatives**

Multilateral organisations play a vital role in digital transformation and as key strategic partners. Norway will promote digitalisation in the governing bodies of relevant multilateral organisations. Many of Norway's multilateral partners already have extensive digitalisation programmes, including the World Bank, the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and UNDP. However, the capacity of multilateral organisations to exploit the benefits of digitalisation varies considerably. Norway is focusing its multilateral efforts on the following main initiatives:

#### **World Bank**

The World Bank plays a key role in defining the framework for digitalisation of development policy. In 2019, Norway will join the recently launched multi-donor fund for the World Bank's Digital Development Partnership programme. Norway's main priorities will be the ocean and small island developing states, as outlined in the Government's [Oceans Strategy](#).



## UN

Norway was among the first contributors to the UN Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries. The mandate of the technology bank is to promote capacity building in the fields of science, technology and innovation. Its focuses include national needs assessments and situational analyses, as well as cost-free digital access to scientific publications, books and databases.



UN Secretary-General António Guterres and Prime Minister Erna Solberg. Photo: Rick Bajornas, UN

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is a strategic partner in various areas, including the fight against digital crime. Norway will give priority to a programme designed to combat digital crimes relevant to both Norway and developing countries. The programme is concentrating on issues such as prevention of online child abuse and the trade in drugs and weapons.

Norway will also maintain its core support for the UN International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and continue to be actively engaged in negotiations between all UN member states on frequencies and other digital rights and resources. The ITU is also running digitalisation projects on digital skills and security in developing countries.

### **Multilateral arenas for development of standards**

Many countries are actively promoting national interests in the development and use of cyberspace. This is apparent from a variety of multilateral negotiations, including those



under the auspices of the UN, Nato and the WTO as well as regional forums such as the OSCE, the EU and Asean. While there is international agreement that, in principle, customary international law also applies to cyberspace, few or no UN conventions and multilateral agreements regulate states' use of cyberspace. However, some processes are still in their early stages, including possible WTO negotiations on e-commerce. According to the present strategy, Norway is to contribute actively whenever possible to the creation of framework conditions for digital development and use that are beneficial to both Norway and developing countries.

### **UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation**

The UN Secretary-General has appointed Minister of International Development Nikolai Astrup to participate in a newly established high-level panel on digital cooperation. Norway will contribute actively in the process and engage with relevant stakeholders.

### **Human rights in cyberspace**

Norway will promote respect for human rights also in cyberspace. In the UN General Assembly and other relevant forums, Norway will seek to promote and protect human rights in negotiations on topics such as freedom of expression, internet access, violence against women and children, and protection of human rights defenders. Norway's support for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights may also provide a starting point for closer cooperation on human rights and digitalisation. Norway will continue its active participation in the Freedom Online Coalition.

### **Standardisation and international coordination**

Norway will support standardisation efforts. There are numerous examples, of measures that overlap, raise costs and in some cases compete with one another, including in the e-government field. There is a clear need for stronger coordination of processes and, preferably, agreement on the types of solutions chosen by different countries. Improved coordination and agreement on certain basic standards should make it easier to scale up successive measures.

Norway will promote coordination and cooperation, particularly between the many UN agencies mandated to engage in digital transformation.

### **UN principles for digital development and innovation**

Norway will support and apply the UNICEF [Principles for Innovation and Technology in](#)

[Development](#), which are followed by many UN agencies, as well as the [International Principles for Digital Development](#).

## **Cybersecurity**

The risk of digital attacks is increasing as more personal and organisational data, processes and assets are connected to the internet. Illegal digital activity in developing countries has cross-border implications. Cybersecurity expertise and capacity are therefore a prerequisite for successful digitalisation. Norway will help developing countries to improve their expertise and capacity to prevent, detect and deal with digital threats.

Cybersecurity will be included in the dialogue with select developing countries, potentially in connection with capacity building. This may take place in a bilateral context or, for example, under the auspices of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Bank or the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The ITU also provides recommendations, educational programmes and financial strategies for developing countries. The Global Forum on Cyber Expertise (GFCE), which has as an objective to promote international cooperation on capacity building and experience sharing in the cybersecurity field, is another arena in which Norway contributes.

## **Strategic cooperation with other actors**

Through the International Climate and Forest Initiative, Norway is supporting the Global Forest Watch digital platform developed by the World Resources Institute (WRI). The platform provides freely accessible independent analyses of satellite data on, for example, deforestation, forest fires and ownership. This has given developing countries, the private sector, civil society and others a useful tool for improving rainforest management. Norway is also involved in the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), which uses satellite data to measure progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Norway will continue to participate in the G20 track on financial inclusion. Norway will also maintain its cooperation with the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, a partnership of thirty collaborating organisations, placed with the World Bank.

### *Input on the digitalisation of development policy*

Norway will facilitate cooperation and the exchange of ideas through informal input meetings, with the aim of promoting development of new, innovative and effective

solutions to development policy challenges. A further objective is to identify suitable partnerships for:

1. Maximising the development effect of Norway's initiatives through more effective use of digital means.
2. Supporting innovation in donor countries' organisation of development assistance measures.
3. Discussing opportunities to use new technologies and engage in international dialogue on cooperation.

### 2.3 Digital transformation in the administration of Norwegian development aid

In its own administration, Norway will increase digitalisation in aid projects. It will amend and adjust work processes to enhance the effect of aid by the application of new technologies. The adoption of new technologies and working methods also entails risks.

#### *More efficient and effective work processes*

The effect of mainstreaming digitalisation in our development cooperation will be enhanced by making greater use of digital technologies in the administration of Norwegian development aid. Many measures are already in place, based on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' strategy for the period 2018–2021. The Ministry will continue to explore opportunities offered by new technologies, with a particular focus on strengthening the Foreign Service's analytical capacity and the ability to collect and evaluate information.

Norway has launched two projects for the administration of grants: The grants portal and The results portal.

Together, these digital efforts are intended to help ensure 1) compliance with reporting and documentation requirements related to Norwegian aid; 2) more efficient grant administration; 3) performance management based on goal achievement; and 4) transparency of progress and results in the development context. The long-term aim is to gather data into a single source of information on performance and results assessment, statistics and communications.

### *Implementation*

Digitalisation is to be emphasised as an integral element of our development policy. This strategy applies to the agencies involved in managing Norway's development cooperation, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad, Norway's Development Finance Institution Norfund, and the Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (Norec).. Everyone working with development policy should have basic knowledge of the opportunities offered by new technologies in their particular areas of responsibility.

This strategy directs staff at all levels within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at diplomatic and consular missions abroad to consider the increased use of digital solutions as a means of improving development results. This topic will also be raised in the agency management of Norad and Norec, and in management dialogues with Norfund.

### *Follow-up*

The digital strategy for Norwegian development policy is designed to be a living strategy. This implies learning from experience. Norway will adjust and refine its approach in response to new knowledge and the ongoing rapid developments in the area of digitalisation. Norway will learn from the results of its own development projects, from its international partners, and from feedback from businesses and civil society.

## Guidance to own administration

The principles outlined in this strategy are designed to be consistent with policy as set out in relevant development policy white papers, national strategies, adopted digitalisation principles and international obligations, including human rights conventions. In its efforts to digitalise development policy, Norway will:

**Improve, simplify and streamline administrative processes:** Support the development of better, easier and more effective solutions for developing countries and users, including in Norway's own administrative processes.

**Engage in collaborative development with users:** Users (local communities, public sector, private enterprises and civil society) in developing countries and their needs and own strategies must guide our efforts.

**Reduce the digital divide:** Digitalisation can facilitate integration of marginalised groups such as disabled persons, the elderly and inhabitants of rural areas – and in many developing countries, women – with the overarching objective of leaving no one behind.

**Target its efforts:** Norway will concentrate its initiatives in areas in which it has comparative advantages, and integrate digitalisation efforts into ongoing activities.

**Promote data protection and data security:** It is vital to focus on digital challenges and dilemmas, including the importance of data protection and data security.

**Promote digital democracy:** Norway will work with its partners to promote and protect democracy and human rights in its development programmes. Universal human rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of religion also apply in cyberspace.

**Respect the importance of the analogue foundation for digitalisation:** It is important to have a realistic view of what technology alone can achieve. Norway will emphasise broader social processes and infrastructure development as means for achieving digitalisation objectives and finding the right balance between digital and traditional approaches.

**Cooperate with international and national partners:** Norway will be a smart, constructive and creative partner in the context of digital development aid, including by facilitating cross-sectoral approaches and public-private partnerships.

**Promote transparency and accessibility:** Norway will seek to ensure that digital services are freely and openly accessible to the greatest possible number of users, particularly when initiatives receive financial support from Norway. This is an important measure for the promotion of joint solutions, which in turn facilitate cost-effectiveness and broad participation.

**Recognise the importance of scaling up:** Norway will seek out opportunities to adapt well-functioning solutions and scale up pilot projects.

**Promote knowledge sharing:** Norway will evaluate and learn from past activities, and report on results achieved.