



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

DigitalFrontiers
— SCALING DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT —

DAI
Shaping a more livable world.

DIGITAL FRONTIERS AT THE FRONTLINES OF DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

WHAT IS DIGITAL FRONTIERS?

DAI-implemented
buy-in mechanism

\$74.4 million ceiling
(2017-2022)

DIGITAL FRONTIERS is helping USAID Missions and Operating Units implement USAID's first-ever Digital Strategy, which charts an Agency-wide vision for development and humanitarian assistance in the world's rapidly evolving digital landscape. The Digital Strategy aims to advance progress in communities in USAID's partner countries on their Journeys to Self-Reliance by improving measurable development and humanitarian assistance outcomes through the responsible use of digital technology and strengthening open, inclusive, and secure country-level digital ecosystems.

What is a Digital Ecosystem? ▶ A digital ecosystem comprises the stakeholders, systems, and enabling environment that together empower people and communities to use digital technology to gain access to services, engage with each other, or pursue economic opportunities.

The elements of USAID's digital ecosystem framework fall under three pillars:

- ▶ PILLAR 1: Digital Infrastructure, Access, and Use
- ▶ PILLAR 2: Digital Society and Governance
- ▶ PILLAR 3: Digital Economy

Digital Frontiers is implementing activities across all three pillars and supporting USAID to strengthen digital ecosystems and foster self-reliance in the digital age.

WHO DO WE WORK WITH?

USAID Missions and Bureaus

Private sector, governments, and international and local development organizations

— working in —

37

COUNTRIES

— working with —

21

USAID MISSIONS
AND BUREAUS

130

EXPERTS AND
SUBCONTRACTORS
*utilized to support
buy-in activities*

41

KNOWLEDGE
PRODUCTS
*developed and
disseminated*

11,611

STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED
through trainings and events



Photo: Ramundo Media for DAI



18-MONTH PROJECT IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

– OUTCOME –

**NUMBER OF FEMALE
PARTICIPANTS WHO FELT
SUPPORTED TO USE
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY**

– MORE THAN –

DOUBLED

– ORIGINALLY –

20%

OF MALE PARTICIPANTS
BELIEVED THE INTERNET
WAS BENEFICIAL
FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

– BY PROJECT'S END –

95%

OF MALE PARTICIPANTS
BELIEVED THE INTERNET WAS
BENEFICIAL OR
VERY BENEFICIAL FOR
WOMEN AND GIRLS

PILLAR 1: Digital Infrastructure, Access, and Use ▶ Encompasses physical infrastructure and end-user devices, as well as considerations around digital literacy, equitable access, and private-sector adoption.

Empowering women through digital connectivity:

Digital Frontiers has been identifying and supporting solutions that empower women and girls to access and use digital technology in order to drive positive health, education, and livelihoods outcomes for themselves and their families. Tested approaches include:

- ▶ Changing social norms around internet use in conservative Northern Nigeria where existing social and patriarchal gender norms inhibit women's and girls' access to technology. From the beginning to end of this 18-month project utilizing family listening groups and a radio broadcast, we saw substantial shifts around perception of internet use. The number of female participants who felt supported to use digital technology more than doubled, and while 80 percent of the male participants originally reported they didn't believe the internet was beneficial for women and girls, this shifted to 95 percent believing it was beneficial or very beneficial by the project's end.
- ▶ Utilizing digital mapping technology in Tanzania and Peru to prevent systemic gender inequities and gender-based violence. Over 400 participants were trained on using mapping technology to report instances of gender-based violence within their communities and map data was used to support ongoing rescues of girls at risk of female genital mutilation.

Supporting the development of digital communications infrastructure:

- ▶ In Timor-Leste, Digital Frontiers is supporting communications infrastructure development and generating private sector investment in ICT infrastructure, products, and services. To date, Digital Frontiers has undertaken significant baselining of the physical broadband infrastructure, including an analysis of the country's cable lines, fiber strand capacity and utilization and submarine cable use, in order to assess the current state of broadband infrastructure in Timor-Leste.
- ▶ Through a Digital Frontiers program, grantee AfCHIX has created the first women-led model of community networks (CNs), which serve as local internet providers that offer internet services and close connectivity gaps in underserved areas. Four CNs in Kenya, Namibia, Morocco and Senegal are staffed by at least 70 percent women and have not only extended network coverage to multiple schools but have provided digital opportunities to individuals including the creation of websites to promote local products and the ability to pursue online training.

PILLAR 2: Digital Society and Governance ▶ The laws governing the digital space (e.g., privacy, cybersecurity, intellectual property) and the digital interactions between government, media and civil society.

Drafting cybersecurity and internet connectivity policies and regulations:

Digital Frontiers is providing dedicated technical assistance to countries to assist in the design, development and implementation of their ICT policies. We are currently working with the Governments of Timor-Leste and Myanmar to support the drafting of legislation related to cybersecurity, e-governance, data privacy and data protection, intellectual property, and e-commerce. By advancing legal and regulatory efforts, we can promote open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet and communications networks worldwide, counter authoritarian influences on communications infrastructure, and catalyze economic growth by improving the enabling environment of the ICT industry.

Building cyber awareness and combating disinformation:

Digital Frontiers is helping citizens and small businesses across Asia become more digitally savvy and cyber-safe. Recently, we launched a Facebook-based campaign called "Online

Safety” to raise awareness about good digital security practices among Cambodian users, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises. The campaign addresses common problems and security-related challenges that Cambodian users face online and gives them “tips and tricks” to protect themselves, their data, and their businesses online.

Supporting e-government systems:

Over the past 14 years, the Government of Vietnam (GVN) has passed several laws and announced decrees and national programs to implement e-Government systems at the national and provincial levels. Digital Frontiers conducted a comprehensive GVN e-Government Policy assessment in 2019 and is now helping Vietnam to streamline and improve their e-government processes and standards so that Vietnam’s business environment will be modernized, thus contributing to the improvement of the overall economic competitiveness of the country and improved access to information to the benefit of citizens and businesses.

PILLAR 3: Digital Economy ► Digital channels for the delivery of financial services, e-commerce, and trade in digital goods and services.

Conducting country assessments on the digital economy for USAID Missions:

Digital Frontiers is conducting *Digital Ecosystem Country Assessments (DECAs)* to identify development opportunities and risks in a country’s digital ecosystem. The DECAs cover all three of the digital ecosystem pillars and the assessments completed or currently being conducted in Colombia, Kenya, Nepal and Serbia have included a comprehensive look at the digital economy in these countries such as how regulation and policy can bolster financial inclusion and technology-driven innovation, level of access to financial products, banking and connectivity infrastructure, e-commerce, and the strength of the digital talent pool. Recommendations from the DECAs will be used to inform decision-making about digital programming and investments for USAID and partner governments, donors, the private sector, and civil society.

Facilitating women’s access to the digital economy:

Digital Frontiers is supporting a partnership between USAID and Mastercard to improve gender equality and economic empowerment of women across India. Digital Frontiers will work with women owned-and-operated retail shops (kiranas) to increase their revenue streams, expand financial inclusion and digital payment adoption, and empower women’s decision-making through business development and digital literacy training. We also seek to help women gain access to affordable credit, which will give them the capital to expand their businesses as well as establish credit histories, which further unlocks access to tailored financial services.

DIGITAL FRONTIERS is well positioned to help USAID Missions and Operating Units support the implementation of USAID’s Digital Strategy. We have had the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to USAID’s digital development efforts, especially around emergent themes in the field such as cybersecurity and the gender digital divide, and we look forward to continuing to serve USAID’s goals of working toward a future where digital technology promotes inclusive growth, fosters resilient and democratic societies, and empowers all, including the most vulnerable.



Photo: Jack Gordon for USAID/Digital Development Communications

If you are interested in learning more about Digital Frontiers, please contact:

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