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Banjul – THE GAMBIA– February 5<sup>th</sup> , 2025

# STRENGTHENING REGIONAL DATA ECOSYSTEMS

## ECOWAS Initiatives on Data Governance

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Department of Infrastructure, Energy & Digitalisation



## Outline

1. Strategic background
2. A new regional Digital Strategy strengthening the data ecosystem
3. Key Initiatives and perspective on Data Governance



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# Strategic Background



## STRATEGIC BACKGROUND

### International strategic framework

**United Nations  
Sustainable  
Development  
Goals (SDGs)  
2030**

- **SDG4** : ensure inclusive education for all
- **SDG 5** : achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- **SDG 9** : build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- **SDG16** : promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- **SDG 17** : strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development



## STRATEGIC BACKGROUND

### Continental strategic framework

**African Union  
Agenda 2063**

**Digital  
transformation  
Strategy 2030**

- Promote development of innovation products that have commercial, social and economic relevance and are providing real added value for the African economy and contribute to social development
- Empower people to innovate and facilitate access to finance and funding mechanisms for digital enterprises
- Vital role Emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and 5G networks.
- Build a vibrant sector approach to digitalization of the agriculture, health and education sectors



# STRATEGIC BACKGROUND

## Regional strategic framework

### Vision 2050

“A fully integrated Community of peoples, living in a peaceful and prosperous region, with strong institutions and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, working for inclusive and sustainable development”

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Community Strategic Framework 2023-2027

Pillar 1 Peace, Security and Stability

Pillar 2 Governance and Rule of Law

Pillar 3 Economic Integration and Interconnectivity

Pillar 4 Inclusive and Sustainable Transformation and Development

Pillar 5 Social Inclusion

### 4X4 Strategic Objectives 2022-2026

S01 Enhanced regional peace and security

S02 Deeper regional integration

S03 Good Governance

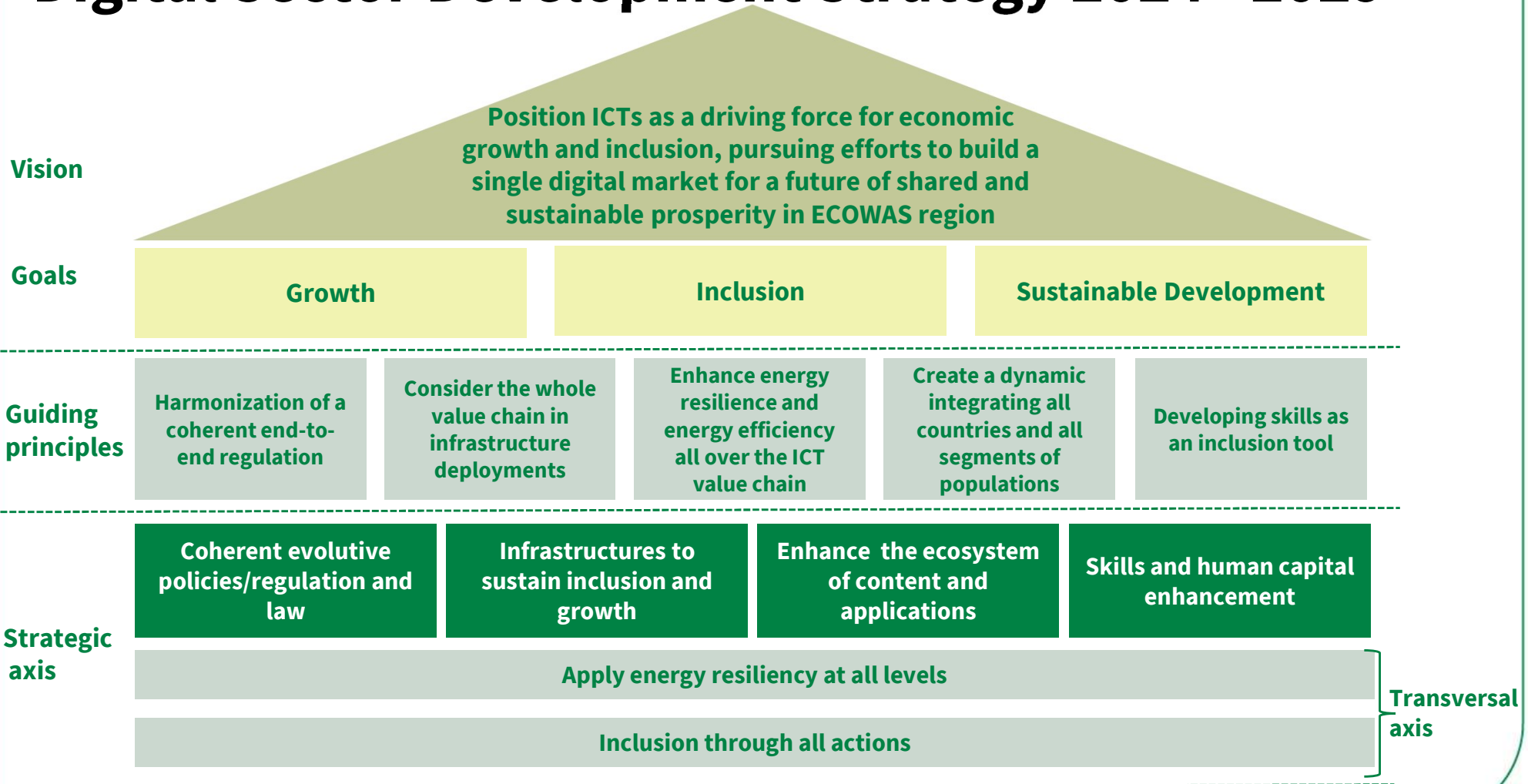
S04 Inclusive and sustainable development





# STRATEGIC BACKGROUND

## Digital Sector Development Strategy 2024 - 2029





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# A new regional Digital Strategy strengthening the data ecosystem





## A NEW STRATEGY STRENGTHENING THE DATA ECOSYSTEM

### Diversify data source: E-Government

#### 1. Challenges

- Gaps in terms of content and applications development
- Slow progress in establishing a single digital market in West Africa
- Public services not widely accessible online across regional borders
- Unavailability of local government content and applications offering more value added

#### 2. Actions outlined in the new strategy: Regional E-government strategy (ongoing)

- Creating a positive environment for content creation
- Establishing robust and inclusive Identity systems.
- Encouraging the connection of all governmental buildings to the national backbone, for deployment of and accessibility to e-services
- Establishing frameworks to facilitate access to services through eID
- Encouraging Member States to move from descriptive to interactive e-government platform.
- Establishing a regional guide for IoT and AI implementation addressing training needs, infrastructure requirements, connectivity, and software.



## A NEW STRATEGY STRENGTHENING THE DATA ECOSYSTEM

### Diversify data source: E-Commerce

#### 1. Needs

- Deepener regional integration
- Use of technology to accelerate structural change and development

#### 2. Actions outlined in the new strategy:

- Support the implementation of ECOWAS E-commerce strategy 2023-2027
  - Set guidelines and standards for electronic signature ensuring security, privacy, and interoperability
  - Set mechanism for electronic signature mutual recognition: regional trust system mechanism and supervision
  - Establishing a regional addressing policy.
- Support the implementation of African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in West Africa Region
  - Protocol on digital trade
  - Regulatory principle addressing personal data protection, Cross-border data transfers



## A NEW STRATEGY STRENGTHENING THE DATA ECOSYSTEM

### Diversify data source: Digital Identity

#### 1. Needs

- Increase number of people with government-recognised proof of unique identity
- Use a unique identity to access to services
- Ensure trust and confidence with regards to the technological development

#### 2. Actions outlined in the new strategy: Support West Africa Unique Identification for Regional Integration and Inclusion (WURI)

- Facilitate access to services through eID
- Create an ECOWAS Regulation on electronic identification and trust services
- Encourage establishment of National Identity System Authorities across all member countries.



## A NEW STRATEGY STRENGTHENING THE DATA ECOSYSTEM

# Improving storage facilities: Data centre infrastructure

### 1. Challenges

- Significant gap in accessing the required high-level standards in the region
- Insufficient government investment in datacentre infrastructures

### 2. Actions outlined in the new strategy

- Encourage Member States to establish resilient and redundant government data center infrastructure
- Encouraging investment through Public Private Partnership (PPPs)
- Support the creation of at least one virtual free of charge platform for content creators for each member states



## A NEW STRATEGY STRENGTHENING THE DATA ECOSYSTEM

# Promoting sustainable data governance to enhance the ecosystem of content and application

### 1. Challenges

- Many risk, threats and weakness undermining digital development
- Failure of legal and regulatory frameworks to keep up the pace with the rapid digital development

### 2. Actions outlined in the new strategy

- Evaluation of the state of data, its availability, implementing a data governance monitoring guiding Toolkit applicable in all countries
- Define the technical needs for achieving efficient data governance:
  - Data standards and classification
  - Data control (localization, sharing)
  - Data access (openness, quality, interoperability, exchange, portability)
  - Data processing
  - Data security, protection and privacy
- Establish a regional framework



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# Key initiatives and perspectives on Data Governance



## INITIATIVES/PERSPECTIVES ON DATA GOVERNANCE

### Policies and legal frameworks: Initiatives

- **2024: Revision of ECOWAS Supplementary Act A/SA.1/01/10 on Personal Data Protection**
  - rapid developments in the digital era worldwide
  - needs to ensure the continued relevance of the Act in supporting ECOWAS countries in promoting effective data protection, especially when dealing with complex cross-border data flows.
- **2025: Revision of the Directive C/DIR 1/08/11 on fighting cybercrime within ECOWAS**
  - enhance its relevance and effectiveness in combating emergent cybercrimes.
  - ensure alignment with recent international norms and standards, maintaining the Directive's relevance and effectiveness





## INITIATIVES/PERSPECTIVES ON DATA GOVERNANCE

### Policies and legal frameworks: Initiatives

- **2024-2025 : Elaboration of an Open Data Normative act**

- 1. Needs**

- Approach for creating the data-driven regional society, promoting open data and the digitalization of public services
- Empower Member states governments to take a central role in using open data to create value

- 2. Challenges to address**

- Evolution of ICTs, the impact of digital government that increase the volume of public data
- Issues of to data sovereignty, location, and flow
- Right of information and data protection
- Ambition of establishing a unified digital market for the ECOWAS region





## INITIATIVES/PERSPECTIVES ON DATA GOVERNANCE

### **Policies and legal frameworks: Perspectives**

- **Revision of the ECOWAS Supplementary Act A/SA.2/01/10 on Electronic Transactions**
- **Develop a regional framework on e-signature for mutual recognition and trust policy**
- **Develop a community Act on eID and services accessibility within ECOWAS**



## INITIATIVES/PERSPECTIVES ON DATA GOVERNANCE

### Leadership and Governance: Perspectives

- **Encourage establishment of National Data protection Authorities**
- **Support dialogue and cooperation on data governance**
  - Data sharing: to reach a data sharing agreement in ECOWAS region formulated as legal and regulatory frameworks to support secure and compliant data sharing practices
  - Creation of the West African Data Protection Authorities Network (WADPAN)



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# Thank you

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