



Digital Public Infrastructure: Assessing the Challenges and Priorities of Global South

(Hybrid Meeting)

Thursday, 24 September 2026 | 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm (IST)

G Parthasarathi Conference Hall, RIS

Concept Note

Background

Digital transformation has become an important development imperative for countries of the Global South. Digital technologies can enable governments to deliver public services more efficiently, expand economic opportunities, strengthen inclusion, improve transparency, and overcome longstanding constraints related to geography, limited administrative capacity and scarce fiscal resources. While many developing countries are pursuing digital transformation, their progress is shaped by diverse national circumstances, and they continue to face challenges relating to institutional capacity, regulatory frameworks, digital infrastructure, technological capabilities, financing and human resources.

In this context, DAKSHIN – Global South Centre of Excellence at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), in collaboration with the NEST Division (New, Emerging & Strategic Technologies Division), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, is organising a webinar in hybrid mode on “Digital Public Infrastructure: Assessing the Challenges and Priorities of Global South.”

The webinar aims to initiate a structured assessment of the digital needs and priorities of developing countries, with particular emphasis on identifying their technical assistance requirements and exploring opportunities for tailor-made cooperation. It will also provide a platform for sharing good practices and experiences from countries of the Global South in Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), in line with DAKSHIN’s mandate to facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building.

Digital Public Infrastructure and Development

DPI – including interoperable digital identity systems, digital payment platforms, trusted data-exchange frameworks and digital registries – can provide foundational digital rails on which governments and the private sector can build services across health, education, social protection, agriculture, finance and public administration. Well-designed DPI can improve the delivery of public services, facilitate financial inclusion, enable efficient transfer of social benefits, reduce transaction costs, strengthen transparency and extend access to services, including in underserved and remote communities. These capabilities can contribute to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, the challenge for developing countries is not merely to digitise existing processes, but to build inclusive, secure, interoperable, sustainable and development-oriented digital ecosystems.

Proposed Approach and Cooperation

The initiative will focus on country-specific DPI needs assessment, identifying technical, institutional, regulatory, infrastructure and capacity gaps. These requirements can subsequently be mapped with relevant Indian DPI capabilities, institutional experience and good practices, while also recognising solutions emerging from other countries of the Global South.

The assessment is intended to facilitate tailor-made technical cooperation, capacity building, expert and institutional exchanges, training, knowledge sharing and potential technology cooperation. The broader objective is to move from general discussions on digital transformation towards a structured “needs-to-cooperation” approach, enabling DAKSHIN to connect identified country priorities with appropriate knowledge, expertise and institutional partnerships.

The webinar will therefore serve as an initial platform for dialogue and consultation and may provide the foundation for a wider DAKSHIN-led programme on DPI needs assessment, capability mapping and South-South cooperation, supporting countries in developing inclusive, secure and sustainable digital ecosystems suited to their national priorities.