

ZAMFARA STATE GOVERNMENT

ZAMFARA STATE

DIGITAL ECONOMY POLICY

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List of Acronyms:

ZAMDICT Zamfara Directorate of Information and Communication Technology

ZSMG Zamfara State Government

BYFSF Building Your Future Strategic Framework

ZDEP Zamfara Digital Economy Policy

ICT Information and Communication Technology

IT Information Technology

NDEPS National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy

NITDA National Information Technology Development Agency

NGEA Nigerian Government Enterprise Architecture

NCC Nigerian Communication Commission

TCV Time, Cost and Number of Visits

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this dynamic landscape of global economics, DIGITAL ECONOMY emerges as a strong force, catalyzing innovation, job creation, and

economic growth. With contributions amounting to 16% of the global GDP and projected growth to over \$300 billion in Africa alone by 2025, the digital realm presents unprecedented opportunities for States and Countries in Africa to position themselves as leaders in technological advancement.

Against this backdrop, Zamfara State, through the Zamfara Directorate of Information and Communications Technology (ZAMDICT), seeks on an ambitious journey to harness the full potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to drive economic growth. Guided by the "Building Your Future Strategic Framework (BYSF)," Zamfara State sets its sights on becoming a digital hub, transitioning towards a Knowledge-Based Economy.

This transition holds profound implications, as it seeks to propel Zamfara State into the forefront of technological innovation, shifting its identity from a region of rich traditional heritage to a beacon of technology and innovation. With a youthful population and a growing internet user base, Zamfara State is poised to leverage its digital infrastructure to foster an ecosystem ripe with economic opportunities.

The Zamfara Digital Economy Policy aims to cultivate an enabling environment for stakeholders within the ICT ecosystem, as well as Zamfara's growing internet users to flourish, propelling socioeconomic development and enhancing the quality of life for its citizens.

Zamfara State boasts a youthful, educated, and innovative population. This demographic advantage positions Zamfara to excel in transitioning towards a Knowledge-Based Economy. With a growing number of skilled individuals ready to engage in digital innovation, Zamfara State can harness its human capital to drive technological advancements and economic growth.

Emphasizing the transformative role of transitioning to a Knowledge-Based Economy, this policy endeavours to harness the collective power of internet penetration, paving the way for a prosperous and digitally empowered future for Zamfara State.

INTRODUCTION

The Zamfara Digital Economy Policy marks a pivotal moment in Zamfara State's journey towards economic prosperity through digital transformation. Aligned with the "Building Your Future Strategic Framework (BYSF)," this policy sets out to position Zamfara as a leader in technological innovation and economic growth within the African continent.

Against this backdrop, Zamfara State seeks on an ambitious journey to harness the full potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to drive economic growth. Guided by the "Building Your Future Strategic Framework (BYSF)," Zamfara State sets its sights on becoming a digital hub, transitioning towards a Knowledge-Based Economy.

This transition carries significant implications as it seeks to propel Zamfara State into the forefront of technological innovation, reshaping its identity from a state of rich cultural traditions to a dynamic center of technology and innovation. With a youthful population and an expanding internet user base, Zamfara State is

uniquely positioned to leverage its digital infrastructure, fostering an ecosystem ripe with economic opportunities.

The Zamfara Digital Economy Policy (ZDEP), adopted from the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS), serves as the blueprint for this transformative journey. Comprising 7 strategic pillars, this policy is designed to create an enabling environment for the promotion of digital jobs across Zamfara State:

Pillars of the Zamfara Digital Economy Policy (ZDEP):

1. Developmental Regulation
2. Digital Literacy and Skills
3. Solid Infrastructure
4. Service Infrastructure
5. Soft Infrastructure
6. Digital Society and Emerging Technology
7. Indigenous Content Development and Adoption.

The ZDEP aims to cultivate an ecosystem where stakeholders within the ICT sector and Zamfara's growing internet users can thrive. By doing so, it seeks to propel socioeconomic development and enhance the quality of life for Zamfara's citizens.

Central to this endeavor is the recognition of Zamfara's demographic advantage — a youthful, educated, and innovative population. This demographic provides the foundation for Zamfara to excel in transitioning towards a Knowledge-Based Economy. With a growing pool of skilled individuals poised to engage in digital

innovation, Zamfara State is well-positioned to harness its human capital to drive technological advancements and economic growth.

VISION

"To transform Zamfara State into a leading digital economy, enriching the lives of all its citizens and advancing towards a knowledge-based economy."

MISSION

"We endeavour to cultivate a vibrant ecosystem in Zamfara State, where digital innovation and entrepreneurship flourish, generating value and prosperity for all."

OBJECTIVES

Target 90% broadband penetration in Zamfara State by 2027

1. Develop and implement policies and initiatives to enhance digital infrastructure and connectivity across Zamfara State.
2. Establish educational programs and training initiatives to equip Zamfara's populace with the necessary digital skills for participation in the knowledge-based economy.
3. Invest in the development and maintenance of robust digital infrastructure, including broadband networks and data centers, to support the growing demands of the digital economy.
4. Enhance accessibility and reliability of digital services, such as e-government platforms and online payment systems, to streamline processes and improve citizen engagement.

5. Foster an environment conducive to digital entrepreneurship through supportive policies and initiatives that encourage innovation and startup growth.
6. Facilitate the adoption and integration of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, to address societal challenges and drive digital inclusion.
7. Promote the creation and consumption of locally relevant digital content to preserve cultural heritage and stimulate economic opportunities within Zamfara State.
8. Collaborate with stakeholders from government, private sector, and civil society to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of initiatives aimed at advancing Zamfara State towards a knowledge-based economy.

DIGITAL AND NON-DIGITAL ENABLERS OF THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

Digital Enablers

1. **Zamfara Identity Management System:** Implementing a comprehensive system for managing and authenticating identities across various digital platforms and services.
2. **Cybersecurity Initiatives:** Implementing measures to protect digital assets, information, and systems from cyber threats and attacks.
3. **Zamfara Interoperability Framework:** Developing standards and protocols to ensure seamless exchange of data and interoperability among digital systems and services.

4. **Statewide Database:** Establishing a centralized database infrastructure to store and manage digital information efficiently and securely.
5. **Tailored Sectoral Solutions:** Developing customized digital solutions to address specific needs and challenges across different MDAs within Zamfara State.
6. **Service Portals and Applications:** Creating user-friendly portals and applications to deliver digital services and information to citizens and businesses effectively.

Non-digital Enablers

1. **Political Will:** The presence of commitment and support from the current political leadership towards the digital transformation agenda.
2. **Fiscal Framework:** Establishing financial policies and mechanisms to support digital initiatives and investments effectively.
3. **Change Management:** Implementing strategies and processes to manage organizational and cultural changes associated with digital transformation.
4. **Legal Framework:** Enacting and enforcing laws and regulations, such as the ZAMDICT Law, ICT Policy, and Startup Bill, to provide a conducive legal environment for digital innovation and entrepreneurship.
5. **Institutional Structure:** Strengthening institutions like ZAMDICT to oversee and coordinate digital initiatives, ensuring effective governance and implementation.

THE SEVEN PILLARS OF ZDEP

Pillar 1: Developmental Regulation

Regulation is crucial for achieving the social, economic, and environmental policy objectives of the government. The Zamfara Digital Economy Policy recognizes the importance of regulatory frameworks that support rather than stifle development and innovation. Under this pillar, ZAMDICT aims to establish converged regulations that promote the growth of the digital economy while ensuring consumer protection and fostering innovation.

Objectives:

1. Establish regulatory frameworks conducive to the growth of the digital economy in Zamfara State.
2. Ensure that regulations support innovation and competitiveness while safeguarding consumer interests.
3. Promote an environment that encourages investment in digital infrastructure and technology.
4. Enhance regulatory convergence across sectors to facilitate the seamless operation of digital businesses.
5. Foster collaboration between regulatory bodies and industry stakeholders to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

Government Actions:

- Develop and implement policies that promote developmental regulation in the digital sphere.
- Review and update existing regulatory frameworks to align with the needs of the digital economy.
- Provide support and guidance to startups and entrepreneurs navigating regulatory requirements.
- Facilitate dialogue and partnerships between government agencies, industry players, and civil society organizations.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of regulatory measures to ensure they meet their intended objectives.

Pillar 2: Digital Literacy and Skills

The level of digital literacy and skills among Zamfara citizens directly impacts the vibrancy of the digital economy. This pillar focuses on providing policy backing for massive training initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy and skills across all demographics. By creating a Digital Skills Database, ZAMDICT seeks to identify and match digitally literate individuals with job opportunities, thereby facilitating their participation in the digital economy.

Objectives:

1. Enhance the digital literacy levels of Zamfara citizens across all demographics.
2. Provide comprehensive training programs to equip individuals with the necessary digital skills for employment and entrepreneurship.
3. Create awareness about the importance of digital literacy and its impact on socio-economic development.

4. Develop a robust digital skills database to match skilled individuals with job opportunities.

5. Foster a culture of continuous learning and upskilling to keep pace with technological advancements.

Government Actions:

- Launch digital literacy campaigns targeting different segments of the population.
- Establish training centers and online platforms for digital skills development.
- Collaborate with educational institutions and industry partners to integrate digital skills into formal education curricula.
- Implement incentives and scholarships to encourage participation in digital training programs.
- Monitor and assess the effectiveness of digital literacy initiatives and adjust strategies accordingly.

Pillar 3: Solid Infrastructure

Solid digital infrastructure, including broadband networks and mobile connectivity, is essential for the growth of the digital economy. ZAMDICT aims to deepen broadband penetration in Zamfara State, particularly in underserved areas, by deploying advanced technologies such as 4G and 5G networks. The establishment of the Zamfara State Broadband Alliance underscores the commitment to boosting infrastructure to support digital transformation.

Objectives:

1. Increase broadband penetration and accessibility across Zamfara State.
2. Deploy advanced technologies such as 4G and 5G networks to improve connectivity.
3. Expand the fiber optic network to reach underserved areas and remote communities.
4. Enhance the resilience and reliability of digital infrastructure to withstand disruptions.
5. Collaborate with private sector partners to invest in and maintain digital infrastructure projects.

Government Actions:

- Invest in the expansion and upgrading of broadband infrastructure throughout Zamfara State.
- Partner with telecommunications companies to accelerate the deployment of 4G and 5G networks.
- Implement policies and incentives to encourage private sector investment in digital infrastructure projects.
- Conduct regular audits and assessments of digital infrastructure to identify areas for improvement.
- Establish a dedicated task force to oversee the planning and execution of digital infrastructure initiatives.

Pillar 4: Service Infrastructure

Robust service infrastructure is critical for facilitating online transactions and interactions, driving the digital economy forward. This pillar focuses on providing digital platforms for government services and citizen engagement, thus streamlining administrative processes and improving accessibility. By leveraging data analytics, ZAMDICT aims to gain valuable insights to further enhance service delivery and inform policy decisions.

1. Develop robust digital platforms to facilitate online transactions and interactions.
2. Enhance the efficiency and accessibility of government services through digital channels.
3. Establish a unified online platform for citizen engagement and service delivery.
4. Promote the adoption of paperless systems to streamline administrative processes.
5. Leverage data analytics to gain insights and improve service delivery.

Government Actions:

- Develop and deploy user-friendly digital platforms for government services and interactions.
- Integrate backend systems to enable seamless data exchange and process automation.

- Provide training and support to government employees and citizens on using digital platforms.
- Monitor user feedback and satisfaction to continuously improve service infrastructure.
- Collaborate with the private sector to develop innovative solutions and expand service offerings.

Pillar 5: Soft Infrastructure

Soft infrastructure, including cybersecurity measures and data privacy frameworks, is essential for building public trust in digital technologies and fostering participation in the digital economy. ZAMDICT seeks to strengthen cybersecurity and promote adherence to standards and guidelines that encourage digital adoption. By addressing cybersecurity concerns and promoting data privacy, this pillar aims to create a conducive environment for digital innovation and growth.

Objectives:

1. Strengthen public confidence in digital technologies and participation in the digital economy.
2. Enhance cybersecurity measures to protect digital assets and information.
3. Establish standards and frameworks to promote data privacy and security.
4. Encourage the adoption of digital technologies through awareness campaigns and education.

5. Implement measures to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and industry best practices.

Government Actions:

- Develop and implement cybersecurity initiatives to safeguard digital infrastructure and data.
- Provide resources and support for organizations to enhance their cybersecurity posture.
- Educate citizens and businesses on the importance of data privacy and security.
- Establish guidelines and standards for the responsible use of digital technologies.
- Collaborate with international partners to share best practices and strengthen cybersecurity capabilities.

Pillar 6: Digital Society and Emerging Technologies

The development of the digital economy should be aligned with societal well-being and sustainable development goals. This pillar focuses on promoting digital and financial inclusion, fostering innovation, and facilitating partnerships to drive digital transformation. By mapping digital economy initiatives to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ZAMDICT aims to ensure that the digital economy contributes to positive societal outcomes.

Objectives:

1. Promote digital and financial inclusion to ensure equitable access to digital opportunities.
2. Align digital economy initiatives with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relevant to Zamfara State.
3. Foster innovation and entrepreneurship in emerging technologies.
4. Facilitate partnerships between government, private sector, and civil society to drive digital transformation.
5. Monitor and evaluate the impact of digital economy initiatives on societal well-being and economic development.

Government Actions:

- Implement programs to increase access to digital services and financial resources for underserved communities.
- Integrate SDGs into digital economy strategies and initiatives.
- Support research and development in emerging technologies through grants and incentives.
- Create platforms for collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders.
- Conduct regular assessments to measure the effectiveness and impact of digital society initiatives.

Pillar 7: Indigenous Content Development and Adoption

Prioritizing indigenous content development and adoption is essential for driving economic growth and creating opportunities for digitally skilled citizens. This pillar aims to support digitally skilled individuals by prioritizing them for government projects and employment opportunities. Additionally, efforts will be made to repatriate outsourced jobs and promote "Made in Zamfara" digital products of globally accepted quality. Through these initiatives, ZAMDICT seeks to position Zamfara as a hub for digital innovation and outsourcing.

Pillar 7: Indigenous Content Development and Adoption

Objectives:

1. Prioritize digitally skilled citizens for government-funded projects and employment opportunities.
2. Repatriate outsourced jobs to digitally skilled individuals in Zamfara State.
3. Ensure that digital products and services made in Zamfara meet global quality standards.
4. Position Zamfara State as a nationwide outsourcing destination for digital jobs.
5. Implement strategies to promote Impact sourcing business process outsourcing (BPO) to improve economic conditions in disadvantaged areas.

Government Actions:

- Enforce relevant Executive Orders to prioritize digitally skilled citizens for government projects and jobs.
- Identify outsourced jobs and support their repatriation to Zamfara State.
- Establish quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that "Made in Zamfara" digital products meet international standards.
- Promote Zamfara State as an attractive destination for digital outsourcing through marketing and investment incentives.
- Implement Impact sourcing BPO initiatives in collaboration with industry partners and development agencies.

CONCLUSION:

The Zamfara Digital Economy Policy (ZDEP) represents a strategic roadmap designed to accelerate the development of Zamfara's digital economy. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and technology-driven, embracing digitalization is essential for fostering economic growth and competitiveness. ZDEP outlines a comprehensive set of initiatives and strategies aimed at leveraging digital technologies to drive innovation, create jobs, and enhance overall socioeconomic development in Zamfara State.

One key aspect of ZDEP is its recognition of the symbiotic relationship between the digital economy and the traditional economy. While the digital economy encompasses activities such as e-commerce, digital services, and online platforms, its development also has a ripple effect on traditional sectors such as agriculture,

manufacturing, and commerce. For example, the adoption of digital technologies can optimize supply chains, improve market access for local products, and enhance productivity in traditional industries. Thus, the growth of the digital economy is expected to have a significant positive impact on the overall growth and sustainability of Zamfara's traditional economy.

The successful implementation of ZDEP relies heavily on the active involvement and collaboration of various state ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). These government bodies play a critical role in driving policy formulation, regulatory oversight, and program implementation across different sectors. For instance, MDAs responsible for education and training will be instrumental in implementing initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy and skills development among the populace. Similarly, MDAs overseeing infrastructure development will be tasked with ensuring the deployment of robust digital infrastructure, including broadband networks and digital service platforms, to support the digital economy ecosystem.

The effective implementation of ZDEP requires a coordinated effort among all stakeholders, with state MDAs serving as key partners in realizing the vision of a thriving digital economy in Zamfara State. Through collaborative action and strategic investments, Zamfara aims to harness the transformative power of digital technologies to drive inclusive growth, improve livelihoods, and position the state as a digital leader in the region.

Furthermore, the implementation of ZDEP is complemented by existing regulations and frameworks within the ICT sector in Zamfara State, especially the state ICT Policy. These regulations provide a framework for guiding digital initiatives, ensuring compliance with standards, and promoting innovation and investment

in the ICT sector. By aligning ZDEP with these regulations and frameworks, Zamfara State can create a conducive environment for digital innovation and growth.

Ultimately, ZDEP aims to leverage key aspects of the Building Your Future Strategic Framework (BYSF) to propel Zamfara State towards a knowledge-based economy. BYSF emphasizes the importance of data-driven decision-making and the adoption of innovative technologies to drive economic development. By embracing these principles, ZDEP seeks to harness the power of ideas and data to inform policy decisions, drive innovation, and propel Zamfara towards becoming a leader in the ICT sector.