

TPSD Facility – How-to tools

Supporting Business Environment Reform and Public-Private Dialogue through ICT tools

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About the TPSD Facility

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BER	Business Environment Reform
BFC	Better Factories Cambodia
CCIB	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Benin
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCED	Donor Committee for Enterprise Development
DI	Danish Industry
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies

ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITC	International Trade Centre
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
KEPSA	Kenya Private Sector Alliance
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NESG	Nigeria Economic Summit Group
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PPD	Public-Private Dialogue
PSO	Private Sector Organisation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SMS	Short Message Service

1 INTRODUCTION

This practical tool aims to provide INTPA and EU Delegations staff a collection of examples where ICT tools were used by public and private sector organisations, as well as by development partners, to support or facilitate public-private dialogue (PPD) and sustain Business Environment Reform (BER) in partner countries. Instead of adopting a theoretic approach, we opted for a pragmatic perspective allowing INTPA and EU Delegation staff to gain an understanding of what ICT tools can be instrumental to directly and indirectly support PPD and improve the investment climate. A special attention was given to identify lessons learnt from the use of specific tools in order to share them among PPD stakeholders.

This collection of experiences is based on extensive interviews with key respondents from public and private organisations in partner countries, development partners and literature review. Other organisations involved in PPD facilitation such as Danish Industry and Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) were consulted as well. **The aim of this paper is not to offer a comprehensive review of all ICT tools used to facilitate PPD, but rather to focus on a series of concrete examples, showcase their specific features, detect key success factors and draw lessons learnt.**

2 USE OF ICT TOOLS TO SUPPORT PPD

In this paper, we will refer the definition of ICT tools provided by the EU on the Capacity4Dev website[1]: *a range of technologies for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analysing, and transmitting information but also for communicating in real-time. They provide access to information through communication mediums such as the fax, fixed-telephony networks, computer networks, mobile phones, wireless networks, the Internet, satellite technology, video-conferencing facilities, online video telephony and other communication mediums*. It is important to mention

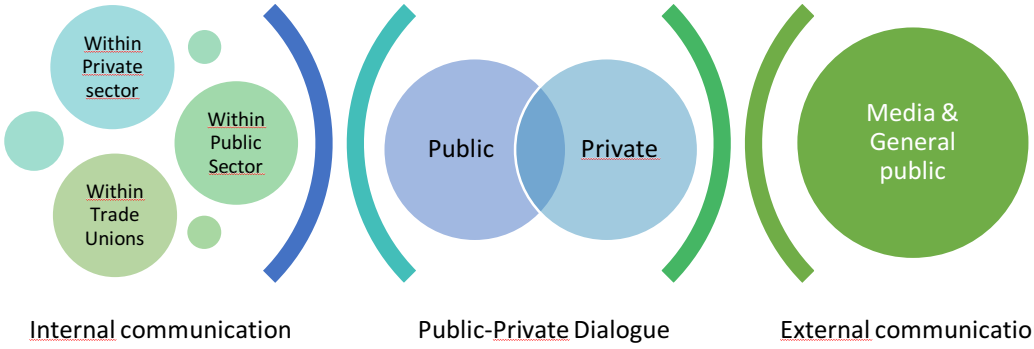
[1] https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-ict/wiki/why-ict-development-ict4d

here that "other communication mediums" might include radio and television, for instance, as this is the case for the UNESCO definition of ICT[2].

In developing countries, a broader access to the Internet, the fast diffusion of increasingly sophisticated mobile devices and the booming use of computers and tablets has opened new opportunities for online interactions between government, businesses, trade unions and civil society. It also allows to foster internal communication within these stakeholders, conduct diagnostics, collect feedback from members of private sector organisations (PSOs), trade unions and civil society organisations (CSOs) about government services delivery.

In this paper, our basic premise is that harnessing ICT tools can not only directly support PPD (meaning dialogue between public and private sector actors), but also foster communication within private sector, within public sector, and increase external communication with the general public – which indirectly allows to make PPDs better informed, more inclusive and more efficient. This in turn, supports Business Environment Reform and contributes to improve the investment climate.

Figure 1: Spheres of communication where digital tools can be used



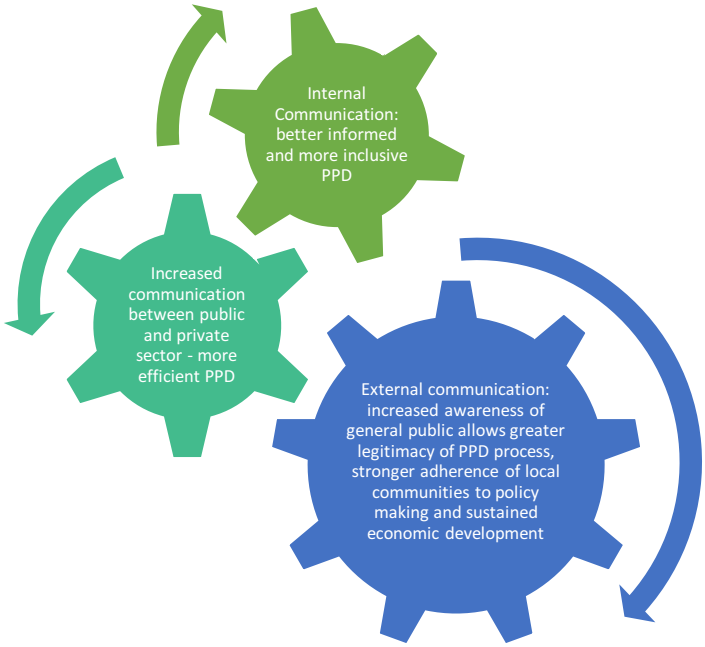
What we want to illustrate with this figure, is the fact the ICT tools can be used in 3 different spheres of interactions:

1) **Internal communication**: ICT tools can facilitate communication both within private sector, trade unions and CSOs, within public sector. In this paper, we will provide examples of usage of ICT tools enabling communication between PSOs (and more broadly trade union and CSOs) and their constituents, and between Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).
2) **Public-Private Dialogue:** this sphere comprises all interactions between public and private sector stakeholders in the context of PPD mechanisms. In Section 4, we will illustrate how ICT tools can be instrumental for all steps of the PPD value chain (diagnostic, design, implementation and monitoring & evaluation of PPD).
3) **External communication:** this sphere refers to the set of communications aiming to raise the awareness of the general public about a PPD process and more broadly engage local communities in a debate on issues related to economic development.

[2] According to UNESCO, ICTs are a "*diverse set of technological tools and resources used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange information. These technological tools and resources include computers, the Internet (websites, blogs and emails), live broadcasting technologies (radio, television and webcasting), recorded broadcasting technologies (podcasting, audio and video players and storage devices) and telephony (fixed or mobile, satellite, visio/video-conferencing, etc.)*". See http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/information-and-communication-technologies-ict

Figure 2: Interconnections between spheres of communication

The 3 spheres of communication are interconnected and reinforce each other: a stronger internal communication within PSOs, for instance, can lead to a better informed and more inclusive PPD. An increased flow of information exchanged between public and private sectors can bring positive effects on the one hand on internal communication within private sector, within public sector, and within trade unions, and on another hand on external communication with the general public. Finally, a higher awareness of the general public about PPD processes and economic development-related issues can also increase legitimacy and adherence to the policy-making process and ultimately sustain economic development at large.



In the following sections, we will provide practical examples of the use of ICT to foster communication in the three spheres, and show how these can contribute directly, or indirectly, to make PPDs more efficient and inclusive.

3 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

ICT tools can facilitate communication both within private sector, trade unions and CSOs, and within public sector – which contributes indirectly to reinforcing effectiveness and inclusivity of PPD. In the following sub-sections, we will offer examples of usage of ICT tools enabling communication between PSOs and their constituents (as well as between Trade Unions or Civil Society Organisations and their constituents) and between Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

3.1 Within private sector organisations

PSOs represent the collective economic and social interests of their members and deliver value through services that cannot be delivered by businesses individually. The core function of PSOs is to advocate, on behalf of their members, for policy and regulatory change allowing an improved investment climate. Through the services they provide, PSOs can also add value to businesses, for example by providing them information about market access and regulatory policies, training, or networking opportunities. Furthermore, PSOs are relevant to their members only if they are demand-driven: they cannot represent a credible advocate for their constituents without knowing what their members really want and meeting their actual needs.

In developing countries, mobile phones for instance are largely used by populations and have already demonstrated their role in delivering service in sectors such as SMS market information service (for weather information, business news or market prices) or money transfer. Mobile technology provides increased opportunities to: access and receive information anytime and anywhere; receive feedback and increase interactions; communicate and engage in discussions with low barrier to entry; and enlarge networks beyond geographical boundaries and reach out to decentralized areas.

Enhancing PSOs' engagement with their members through ICT appears to be useful to unite their membership, represent their interests and provide services to their constituents – which in turn increases revenue collection and financial sustainability. **This would also indirectly fortify their resilience and strengthen their role in context of future epidemics.** The International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International

Labour Organisation (ILO) have developed a specific toolkit for PSOs called '*Engagement with members through mobile technology*[3]'. PSOs can leverage mobile technologies to open and manage discussions with their members, send information on their activities, perform needs assessment surveys, deliver advisory services on demand, disseminate complementary information on policy business position papers, etc.

Many new ICT tools are now available and accessible for PSOs that increase the volume and speed of information sharing and can support them to perform three functions : to unite, to represent and to strengthen their members. There are multiple areas where the use of ICT can upgrade PSOs' work and reinforce member engagement: 1) Internal Communication, 2) Organizational management; 3) Financial management, 4) Membership development; 5) Service provision; and 6) Advocacy.

3.1.1 Pure communication purposes

PSOs can now rely on a very broad set of ICT solutions to inform members about their work, update them about their agenda, for instance by sending short information on PSO's activities, priorities, future events, and send notifications reminding members of the future general assembly/board/working groups meetings. Additionally, PSOs can disseminate electronically regular updates about policy changes and strategic economic information.

Box 1: Eurocham Myanmar's Government Affairs Weekly Updates[4]

On a weekly basis, Eurocham Myanmar publishes on its website the Government Affairs Weekly Updates. These policy briefs seek to update Eurocham Myanmar's members about policy and regulatory changes adopted by the Government of Myanmar. These updates are synthetic, straightforward and provide links to the specific new legal and regulatory provisions. The Government Affairs Weekly Updates is sent to Eurocham Myanmar's members, and posted on the organization's website.

The COVID-19 outbreak, and the consecutive social distancing and travel restriction measures, have stressed the need to organise virtual meetings to hold interactive discussions between PSOs and their members. **Videoconference tools such as Zoom, Webex, Microsoft Teams have allowed PSOs to continue engaging with their members at local level during lockdowns and even convene meetings regionally**. As a follow-up of virtual meetings, PSOs can also adopt digital tools to share the video recorded[5] (for instance, Powtoon) and open an online forum (i.e. WhatsApp, Signal, Helprace, Tapatalk apps) to continue discussions around specific subjects (using Blubbr[6], for example). An example of such virtual meeting organised at regional level is presented in Box 2 below.

Box 2: SADC Business Council's virtual meeting during COVID-19[7]

The SADC Business Council convened an online meeting on 10 June 2020 with the representatives of national PSOs from SADC[8] countries to discuss the post COVID-19 trade challenges and recovery strategies. The meeting discussed the COVID-19 induced regional trade challenges in SADC Member States, the priority sectors to be prioritized in the post COVID-19 period to stimulate quick economic recovery and provided recommendations for interventions required from SADC member states' Governments and Secretariat.

The recommendations identified through this virtual meeting were articulated around financial interventions (for instance, provision of loans to MSMEs at special lending rates), regional harmonization of border protocols,

[3] See https://www.itcilo.org/fr/courses/mobile-engagement-members
[4] See https://eurocham-myanmar.org/post/709/GOVERNMENT-AFFAIRS-WEEKLY-UPDATE
[5] An example of webinar recordings can be found here: https://kepsa.or.ke/kepsa-webinar-recordings/
[6] Blubbr is a free online service (still in Beta version) which allows to create questionnaires about YouTube videos
[7] SADC Business Council, Official Communiqué from Private Sector and Business Associations in the Southern Africa Development Community on COVID-19 trade challenges and post recovery strategies, June 10th 2020, see https://www.tralac.org/documents/resources/covid-19/regional/3781-sadc-business-council-post-covid-communique-10-june-2020/file.html
[8] Southern African Development Community

building the capacity of border authorities at entry points for goods and services fast clearance, regional standardization of COVID-19 tests and establishment of regional controlled test centres at points of entry and exit as part of the harmonization process. Finally, the participants expressed the need to share national and international best practices from other regions in managing COVID-19.

3.1.2 Organizational governance

Organizational governance refers to the legal and formal structures that define the functioning of PSOs and ensure PSOs' operations are in line with members' expectations. Various elements are common among all PSOs including adopting bylaws, electing board of directors, chairman of the board, executive committee, etc. A strong governance is requested for PSOs to effectively implement their programs, and meet the objectives determined by its members. With digital tools, bylaws can now be proposed and discussed online[9], and elections held electronically. The below box illustrates this with the case of CCIB in Benin, where elections of the board we held electronically.

Box 3: CCIB organizes electronic vote in Benin[10]

In January 2019, the Government of Benin decided to place the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Benin (CCIB) into provisional administration and to proceed to a series of reform aiming at restructuring the governance of the chamber, its representativity, the elections. The general objective was to make the chamber more operational and provide professional services to the members. New bylaws were adopted that changed the representativity and the governance (for instance, the elections had to represent the diverse sectors of the economy, and the number of elected representatives passed from 99 representatives to 60) .

To organize the elections, a benchmarking exercise was done by CCIB, and resulted in opting for partial electronic elections based on the way various French Chambers of Commerce elect their representatives (Paris, Marseille and Lyon Chambers of Commerce). It was then decided that half of the voters would elect representatives physically, and the other half would vote electronically. Three main reasons motivated this choice: 1) *outreach* : in Benin, mobile phone numbers are easily accessible (as opposed to the situation prevailing in Europe) and allow a very large number of voters to participate to elections; 2) *cost reduction*; and 3) *accelerate the announcement of the results*.

Additionally, CCIB has assessed the feasibility of organizing an electronic vote and analysed Internet access throughout the country, as well as possible ICT tools allowing to vote (laptops, tablet, smartphones). For the voters without access to the Internet, Community Centres within districts were requested by CCIB to provide access to the elections since they are connected to Internet. Telecom operators (MTN and Moov) were also involved to allow voters encountering issues to vote to be able to vote from their sales outlets. Finally, a simple and accessible IT platform was developed and tested in order to facilitate users to get through the voting process.

These electronic elections were a success: 5000 voters expressed their choice electronically throughout the country. At 10AM on the election day, already 90% of the voters had voted. At 1PM, the participation rate was 99%, which demonstrates the popularity of the electronic vote system. Based on the success of the electronic vote, CCIB decided to hold fully dematerialized elections next time.

A broad set of ICT tools can be instrumental to reinforce organizational governance of PSOs, from collaborative platforms to monitoring and evaluation tools. Among these tools, we can mention:

[9] This was the case for instance for the European Business Organization in Cameroon (EBO Cameroon) : the constituent general assembly was held in June 2020 due to the COVID-19 context. Bylaws were adopted, and members of the board elected via Webex. The TPSD Facility supported the EUD Cameroon in this process.
[10] Interview with Raymond Adjakpa Abile, Secretary General of CCIB, January 2021

- *Delta Monitoring & Evaluation software*[11]: M&E software for all people who need to plan, track and measure the performance of their projects
- *Asana* : web and mobile application aiming to help teams track their work (no-cost tool available on Android, iPhone, or desktop that tracks tasks and conversations to help project management)
- *Slack* : a free, cloud-based tool used for instant messaging and collaboration, hosted online but is accessible via mobile app or on computer desktops.
- *Trello* : a free, collaboration tool for program or project management that organizes projects into boards. The interface allows for staff or group members to quickly see what's being worked on, who's working on what, and where something is in the process – with capabilities to add deadlines/due dates, assign group members to certain tasks, and comment.

3.1.3 Financial management

PSOs requires effective management of its financial resources to be financially sustainable. A well-functioning financial management is also key to ensure donors know how their funds are used and how spending is monitored. There exists numerous free or low-cost ICT tools improving PSOs' financial management. Among these tools, we can mention:

- *QuickBooks*[12]*:* is a low cost online accounting tool for financial management. It allows to easily monitor expenditures, revenue, invoices and payments due dates
- *FreshBooks*[13]*:* a low-cost accounting tool, conceived as an easier version of QuickBooks that features invoicing, payments, expenses, time tracking, and reporting. The tool also provides a mobile app version.
- *WaveAccounting*[14] : a free online accounting tool including bookkeeping, invoicing, tracking of expense, and payroll. The tool provides a mobile app version as well.

3.1.4 Membership development / online fundraising

In addition to adopting a sound financial management system, PSOs need to **ensure a large base of revenues to cover their budget and operate in a sustainable manner**. The larger the budget, the more professional and diverse services they offer to their members, and the more likely they will retain members. **To increase their revenue collection, PSOs can send targeted information to potential members in the framework of a membership recruitment campaign**. Such a campaign implies to record membership, design products and services addressing members' needs, decide a pricing structure for membership fees, and monitor revenues.

In order to increase and maintain both high membership recruitment and retention rates, PSOs can adopt effective means for implementing communication campaigns with their members, including **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems**. Free or low-cost CRM tools exist for non-profit organizations and improve membership development/management as well as implement fundraising campaigns among donors[15]:

- *NeonCRM*[16] : a fully cloud based CRM system for non-profits that requires no software. The system includes features for e-commerce, member management, staff users, fundraising, events, website integration, email communications and can be synced to a QuickBooks account. The system allows you to keep track of databases and trends pertained to your association or organization.
- *Salesforce*[17] has built a non-profit cloud targeting specifically non-profits organisations. It provides non-profits a complete, 360-degree view of every part of their organization's work. Organizations can create personalized engagement plans to track donor movements and improve their fundraising efforts.

[11] https://www.delta-suivi-evaluation.com/newsite/assets/img/delta_monitoring_evaluation.pdf
[12] https://quickbooks.intuit.com/fr/
[13] https://www.freshbooks.com/
[14] https://www.waveapps.com/
[15] For fundraising campaigns, specific tools exist such as Fundly CRM, see http://fundly.com/
[16] https://www.neoncrm.com/
[17] https://www.salesforce.org/nonprofit/

3.1.5 Service provision

More and more PSOs are digitalizing the services they offer to their members as a way to better address their needs, improve their productivity and, in turn, increase membership and revenue collection which enhances their financial sustainability. The set of services PSOs can deliver to their members through ICT tools include:

- *Market information service*: this service is particularly useful for agricultural producers' cooperatives seeking to increase transparency of the marketing system of their produce. Marketing information services can be channelled through SMS or online platforms. An example of market information service is provided in box 4.
- *Online marketplace*: such online platforms aim to support businesses to market their products or services online. Two examples of online marketplaces are provided in box 5.
- *Online trainings*. Online trainings can be provided to a broad range of workers, agricultural producers (extension services) and entrepreneurs, and target a very large set of skills, from technical skills to managerial skills.
- *Business support services*: coaching, mentorship, guidance, as well as online platforms to facilitate access to finance can be made available to the business community through digital solutions. Box 6 illustrates this type of services with the example of KEPSA digital services for business continuity during COVID-19

Box 4: Farmer Unions provide services through ICT in Ghana[18]

The Africa Cashew initiative, funded by GIZ, supported several farmer groups and unions to professionalise the services provided to their members. Producer organisations in the African context are often weak when it comes to service delivery to their members, limiting the attractiveness for producers to remain members. The limited interest in joining the farmer associations in turn reduces the ability of the association to deliver quality services to its members. Under this initiative, two new services delivered via mobile phones have been introduced: Price and buying information system via SMS; and SMS extension services (associated with reminders).

At the end of the pilot project (during which access to these services was free of charge), evaluations revealed the willingness, from farmer beneficiaries, to start paying for the new services introduced – which confirmed their relevance. Options were analysed to allow farmer groups to continue providing such services in a sustained manner. A limitation was observed: some farmers lacked proficiency with the SMS functions of cellular phones. Most of the older farmers use their mobile phones exclusively for phone calls, not for SMS, mobile banking, etc. To mitigate this, the project started with a training session for zonal facilitators, which was quite effective in that most of the zonal facilitators became proficient in receiving SMS and some were able to begin teaching farmers how to receive and reply to SMS.

Box 5: Online marketplaces

In the digital age, online marketplaces can be developed by PSOs to give the opportunity to their members to market their products and services. Again, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the consequent market disruptions, such online marketplaces can offer valuable solutions to entrepreneurs to keep their businesses afloat during the crisis and boost their revenues after its end. In this box, we provide two examples of online marketplaces established by PSOs :

ECAM Network : this online platform allows member businesses of E.Cam[19] to exchange goods and services among them, value their unused or impaired assets, network with other businesses and access procurement opportunities from both private and public actors[20]. It also streams low-cost webinars for managerial trainings.

[18] Africa Cashew Alliance, SMS Text Messages: Farmer Unions enhance Services to their Members through the Application of ICT Systems, 2011, pp1-7

[19] E.Cam is a business association gathering Cameroonian SMEs, see http://patronat-ecam.cm/

[20] https://www.ecam-network.com/

STOP COVID 19 marketplace: CCIB (see also in box 3) is currently developing a cost-free marketplace for the online purchase and sale of products made in Benin[21]. This platform is being developed by three Beninese start-ups: Odjala (online sales and warehouses), Logistify (online logic and traceability) and Fedapay (payment aggregator) and is operated by Odjala[22], a specialist in e-commerce.

Box 6: KEPSA's efforts to digitalize services during COVID-19 crisis

The COVID-19 crisis led Kenya Private Sector Association (KEPSA), the apex body of Kenyan PSOs, to develop several online services for its members and for the community at large. Among these e-services, we can mention:

Digital Commerce Program: In June 2020, KEPSA partnered with Jumia to help digitize businesses to help them grow their digital sales and save jobs amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. Through the Digital Commerce Program, thousands of businesses should be registered and trained to sell online with access to over 4M Kenyans that visit Jumia's platform monthly. Jumia, Africa's leading e-Commerce platform, provides free online training, ranging from the basics of e-commerce to operations, marketing, finance, and sales. A series of online self-study modules are available at their Vendor Hub page[23]. Jumia also offers working capital financing to vendors – to help them grow. The initial phase of the KEPSA Digital Commerce Program is limited to Nairobi but will be expanded to other counties.

MSME COVID-19 resilience and recovery program[24]: this online programme is the result of a partnership between KEPSA and Mastercard Foundation. It seeks to support women/youth-led or owned micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) whose operations have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 by overcoming difficulty to access financing from formal lending institutions such as banks and micro-financers. Through this program, at least 400 MSMEs, should receive interest free short-term loans ranging between EUR 750 to EUR 11,200 without any collateral, and payable within six months. The conditions to access these loans include being a member of KEPSA, member of members of KEPSA through Business Associations or pay the minimal joining fee; have been in operation for at least six months; being a business owned/led by women (18-70 years) or youth (18-35 years); and a MSME of not more than 50 employees and with an annual turnover of up to EUR 37 500. In addition to providing loans, the program also allows MSMEs to share knowledge between them and provides coaching to businesses to cope with market disruptions, through training and mentorship sessions.

KEPSA COVID-19 information site[25]: This information portal, launched by KEPSA in March 2020, seeks to allow all businesses to obtain responses on business and health matters for workers, strengthen supply chains, business initiatives, and economic mitigation. The website further enables the sharing of information, essential medical supplies and ensure continuity of supplies for local businesses. Finally, businesses can also contact a 24-hour call centre for any business inquiry.

3.1.6 Advocacy

Last but not least, ICT tools can be used by PSOs to open and manage discussion forum with members on priority issues, perform survey needs and share with their members complementary information on policy papers adopted. Social media can add tremendous value to your PSO's advocacy efforts. These tools can help increase the visibility of their advocacy campaigns, recruit more supporters, and positively influence the stakeholders involved in the advocacy issue. In box 7 below, we present a project from Danish Industry seeking to reinforce employers' organisations advocacy capacities by conducting online diagnostics of businesses.

[21] https://www.ccibenin.org/blog/2020/04/15/marketplace-cci-du-benin-la-plateforme-de-promotion-du-made-in-benin/
[22] https://odjala.com/en/
[23] https://vendorhub.jumia.co.ke/knowledge-center/
[24] https://kepsa.or.ke/msme-covid-19-resilience-and-recovery-program/
[25] http://www.covid-19.ke/

Box 7: Danish Industry's project: Business Climate Index[26]

PSOs must base their policy advocacy on research and data. Often the window for advocacy depends on governments' plans and initiative. However, establishing a Business Climate Index can be a way for the PSOs to promote current member challenges and suggest policy action addressed to government and their institutions.

This training programme developed by Danish Industry (DI) aims at strengthening PSOs' role in fact-based policy making by **establishing a recurrent process where business members participate in a survey usually 3-4 times a year**. Based on the survey results, the PSOs can make a **Business Climate Index that takes the current temperature on members' perspectives on the business outlooks**. Related to the Business Climate Index, PSOs can develop recommendations to government and plan their policy advocacy accordingly to the current political situation. In this online programme, the participants are coming from various functions in PSOs (for instance research, policy advocacy and communication) which is crucial for establishing a recurrent routine.

The training takes place on either Microsoft Teams or Zoom and is divided in three online modules. DI can give each participating PSO access to SurveyMonkey, if the organization does not have a system to distribute surveys and collect data. As of today, DI's beneficiary PSOs were trained in Uganda, Tanzania and currently in Jordan. The results expected from this training are:

- Align policy advocacy with members' current challenges
- Show members that the PSO listens to their needs
- Demonstrate that the PSO base its policy on data and facts
- Promote policy recommendation at a time that fits into the PSO's agenda and not the government's
- Integrate multiple surveys in the PSO into a fixed concept
- Develop joint capacities across PSO units

According to DI, it is key to consider that such Business Climate Indexes should not be one-off exercises but rather a routine to be adopted by PSOs over the long term. One of the strengths is that the training engage staff across units inside the individual organisation and increases internal collaboration. Another strength of this programme is that because it is provided online, DI can have more frequent interactions and adapt the program to the needs or capacities of the organization concerned.

It is also interesting to note that, from DI's perspective, online trainings can be more effective and quicker to show results: similar trainings offline were done in the past by DI, implying several field missions in the field to train beneficiaries. Implementation was slow and the organizational anchoring was low, as in worst cases the participants could not remember the last training or some of the participants were shifted out. Online trainings show quicker and lasting improvements. Finally, as opposed to traditional training programme with fixed timelines, curriculums etc, the planning of online training programmes must be kept flexible.

A diverse set of ICT and mobile phones solutions can be used as **polling and surveying tools**, such as TextIt[27], Viamo Mobile[28] and Geopoll[29]. **These techniques can not only support the private sector, but also benefit to trade unions, formal and informal workers, and the civil society at large and advance their cause, notably on labour rights and decent work conditions.** In 2015, the ILO published a paper presenting lessons learned on the **use of mobile technology for labour rights** and development outreach by the ILO and other organizations,

[26] Information shared by Jesper Friis and Bjarne Palstrøm from Danish Industry
[27] https://textit.com/
[28] https://viamo.io/
[29] https://www.geopoll.com/

and presents mobile technology as a platform for big data collection, analysis and outreach to support decent work conditions[30]. The box 8 below illustrates the work done by Good World Solutions under the Laborlink Data project.

Box 8 : Laborlink's efforts to advance decent work through mobile technologies

The non-profit organization Good World Solutions conducts mobile surveys through the project Laborlink Data[31]. Laborlink offers a variety of use cases from data collection, worker feedback and monitoring of evaluation for workers' issues such as working hours and sexual harassment. To survey working conditions, workers only need to place a missed call to Laborlink and then they receive a call back from the interactive voice response (IVR) system. This surveying technique is specifically used to overcome literacy challenges and the cost burden is not borne by the end user. The surveys usually focus on specific topic such as health and safety or gender discrimination. Laborlink currently covers more than one million workers reached across 16 countries including Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Uganda, Turkey, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China and Vietnam.

Laborlink has been used to monitor and evaluate education and training initiatives and identify worker grievances, providing companies deeper insights into their supply chains. By way of example, Laborlink was used to measure wages, benefits and turnover of 1,200 garment workers in Tirupur, South India. The survey found that 80 per cent of respondents were not receiving legally mandated health benefits. Marks and Spencer also undertook a survey to measure supply chain workers' financial literacy and health and nutrition knowledge. The technology helped it to reach 20,000 workers and measure its progress on delivering on its goal to train 550,000 workers in its supply chain by 2015.

More broadly, the surveys stress that mobile technology enables greater outreach and allows better understanding of working conditions and productivity in supply chains through the collection of feedback from a large number of workers.

Box 9 : Better Factories Cambodia : improving garment workers' understanding of labour rights[32]

Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) was established in 2001 as partnership between the UN's International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The programme engages with workers, employers and governments to improve working conditions and boost competitiveness of the garment industry. Among other objectives, BFC seeks to disclose publicly factory-specific compliance information in order to:

- Enhance Cambodian garment industry's reputation for decent working conditions
- Support the Government of Cambodia to improve working conditions regulations and enforce them
- Promote positive change among non-compliant factories
- Identify and decrease the occurrence of critical issues (sexual harassment, dismissal of pregnant women, child labour, discrimination, freedom to join trade unions, etc.)

To collect data and disseminate information, BFC leverages three types of ICT tools: 1) an interactive voice response (IVR) system, 2) an app serving as a guide to the Cambodian labour law, and 3) tablets for factory assessments. **These interventions have efficiently disseminated information about labour rights and generated data in terms of what is being accessed, looked at, and what knowledge gaps may exist.**

The **BFC app** is available for free download and available in English, Chinese, Khmer and Korean. It features a description of the Better Work programme, information on labour and interactive quizzes. The app provides details about all aspects of the labour law such as working hours, wages, occupational safety and health (OSH), and hiring and dismissal policies. It also comprises a calculator for paid maternity leave. The toll-free **IVR system** is also used to raise workers' awareness about OHS, personal health and labour rights. Finally, quizzes aim to identify what areas of understanding related to labour law might be lacking among the workers.

[30] ILO, ILO Asia-Pacific Working Paper Series, The future of work: Increasing reach through mobile technology, 2015

[31] https://goodworldsolutions.org/

[32] ILO, ILO Asia-Pacific Working Paper Series, The future of work: Increasing reach through mobile technology, 2015, p17

To amplify their advocacy campaign, PSOs (as well as trade unions and CSOs) increasingly use **social media such as Twitter and Facebook**. The keys for successful advocacy campaigns via social media is to keep the message simple, promote interactivity, post messages frequently, and disseminate data that can be easily visualized – not only pictures and video, but also infographics like Infogram[33] or mapping tools such as Carto[34].

3.2 Within public sector

Government throughout the globe are expected to improve the functioning of public administration and their relationships with the private sector and the general public. **To rationalize public administration, e-governance[35] clearly has a role to play**. The rationale to support e-governance is that it simplifies governance for all parties : government, citizens and businesses. The use of ICTs can connect all three parties and support processes and activities**. E-governance refers to three levels of interactions: Government to government (G2G), Government to Businesses (G2B) and Government to Citizens (G2C).**

In this section, we will focus on efforts to digitalize government-to-government (G2G) communication, processes and operations. We will cover e-democracy and co-creation processes in Section 4.

In this paper, we will not cover e-services for public service delivery (G2B and G2C) as this subject is out of the scope of our research, although they can definitely contribute to improve the investment climate. For instance, a study done in Pakistan has demonstrated that e-services implemented by the Punjab State Government has increased the transparency and efficiency of public services perceived by citizens and businesses, lowered the cost of delivering these services, and decreased levels of perceived corruption[36].

Regarding G2G, **E-governance has the potential of facilitating cross-agency cooperation on complex problems and enhance customer focus on services**. G2G cooperation can become more efficient through the adoption of ICT-based tools for information sharing within own policy area, across policy areas or administrative levels, or ICT-based reporting systems for documentation of results and activities are used to a great extent in the daily work of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). Using ICTs for G2G enables **real-time and informed decision support for public officials through analytical methods and visualization and develop data systems, solutions and designs that support secure cross-sector collaboration and planning with MDAs**.

Governments willing to embark on e-governance should first and foremost **digitising databases as a prerequisite for any e-service provision**, even establishing a government portal. Recently, many governments have turned their data from paper to digital format. Examples of digital databases include civil registry (population register), real estate registry and business registry. **The majority of e-services use data from different databases, so interoperability of databases can provide important efficiency gains**. But the process of digitising data comes with two main challenges: on the one hand, it entails to ensure citizens' and businesses' data protection and it requires important planning, time and financial efforts.

In 2019, a report prepared by the e-governance academy (eGA) for the DEVCO C5 entitled Guidelines and Roadmap for full deployment of e-governance systems in Africa[37] notes that "*the extent of digital databases and digital exchange of data is to a large extent difficult to identify. Most countries are in the process of digitising records*

[33] https://infogram.com/
[34] https://carto.com/
[35] E-governance refers to the use of ICT to establish communication channels that enable the inclusion of the various stakeholders with something to say about the policy-making process. This could be for example a consultation on whether a specific speed limit should be kept. See https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20170224STO63943/e-democracy-opportunities-and-risks
[36] Vikram Singh and Subhash Chander, On the role of e-governance for economic development, An impact study of rural and semi-urban Penjab, 2012
[37] European Commission, Guidelines and Roadmap for full deployment of e-governance systems in Africa, January 2019, p26

but in almost all cases, this process is ongoing with a lot of data still only in analogue form. ***For example, as of 2016, South Africa's Department of Home Affairs had 286 million records, 90% of which were in paper format. The country launched a comprehensive digitisation project in 2016 so that new entries are made digitally while old records are digitised. Since the project's goal is to digitise 5.8 million old birth records per year, this process can be expected to take several decades****. South Africa has a wealth of information-rich websites but has been slow in moving to transactional websites".*

Furthermore, this report stresses the **need for high level coordination of e-government activities between MDAs**, to identify the capacity to introduce e-government elements into the functioning mechanisms of government institutions. Coordination is key to support the innovation and service delivery modernisation in every government institution in a harmonised manner, avoiding duplication and overinvestment. The tools for coordination are policies, legislation and regulations; budgeting; monitoring; common standards; allowing nation-wide re-use of data; data exchange; re-use of the software solutions; and rapid development of the online services.

To reinforce coordination, clear roles should be assigned to MDAs, mandates and responsibilities between the institutions. In addition to existing organisations, it may be necessary to **create a new central coordination unit as an independent agency or otherwise to explicitly give this task to an existing organ**. The best option would be that the central coordination unit reports directly to the Prime Minister (or to the President), to secure high-level political support and appropriate resources. eGA also recommends centralising development of the policies and standards and decentralise the implementation.

Recently, several African countries have either created special agencies or designated some organisations in government structures to help introduce e-government elements. By way of example, Senegal established in 2017 an agency for ICT development (Agence de Développement d´Informatique de l´Etat – ADIE) at the President´s Office. Nigeria has created in 2007 the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) as the national authority responsible for planning, developing and promoting the use of ICT[38]. Box 10 below provides further details of a similar agency, the DSTI, established in Sierra Leone.

Box 10 : Directorate of Science Technology and Innovation in Sierra Leone[39]

The Directorate of Science Technology and Innovation (DSTI) was created in 2018 in an effort to leverage science, technology and innovation to support the Government of Sierra Leone to deliver on its national development plan and transform Sierra Leone into an innovation and entrepreneurship hub. DSTI sits in the Office of the President and executes its functions through the Office of the Chief Minister. The Chief Innovation Officer (CIO) serves as an Advisor to the President and Chief Minister of Sierra Leone.

DSTI's key function is to support Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), as well as the local tech and innovation ecosystem. To achieve its objectives, DSTI is supported by various international partners such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), UNICEF Innovations, TED, eGA, Kiva, Tony Blair Institute, and the World Bank. DSTI implements various projects including the national financial data services mapping platform to integrate and track government spending, projects to ease doing business, and environmental projects using geographical information systems (GIS).

4 PUBLIC-PRIVATE DIALOGUE

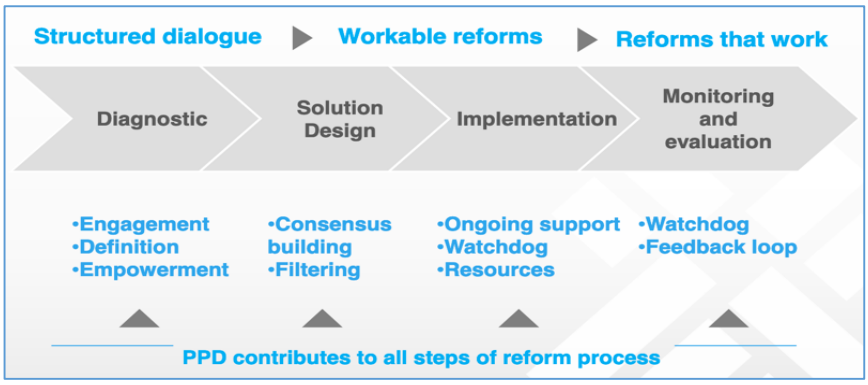
While section 3 previously discussed the indirect benefits of harnessing ICT for public-private dialogue, namely improving internal communication within private sector and within public sector, this section will focus on the direct improvements resulting from their use as communication channels for dialogue between public and private actors.

[38] European Commission, Guidelines and Roadmap for full deployment of e-governance systems in Africa, January 2019, p33

[39] https://www.dsti.gov.sl/

If we look at the public-private dialogue process, the IFC has proposed **the PPD value chain** which consists of the consultation steps through the dialogue process. Each step in the chain adds value towards developing a sustainable, beneficial and equitable policy or regulation. The consultation steps forming the PPD value chain outlined by the IFC are: 1) Diagnostic; 2) Solution Design; 3) Implementation; and 4) Monitoring and Evaluation. Figure 3 below illustrates the PPD value chain stages as well as the benefits and activities occurring at each stage.

Figure 3: PPD process and the value generated from that process (Source: IFC)



In the following sub-sections, we will provide practical examples of the use of ICT tools at each step of the reform process.

One important remark should be made at this stage. Instead of looking at the ICT tools allowing citizen-focused consultation, we will focus on business-focused uses: As opposed to citizen-focused tools seeking citizens' view on public policies, infrastructures, and services, the business-focused tools tend to focus on legal and regulatory constraints, ease of doing business aspects, and relate to specific policies already in place or reforms to be adopted to support business and economic growth and job creation.

4.1 Diagnostic

ICT tools can be used to facilitate engagement between public and private sectors. In the context of the COVID-19 context, examples of such digital engagement are numerous. Digital meeting platforms such as ZOOM, Google Meet, MS Teams, Skype and others have served to hold PPD meetings to assess the impact of the pandemic on businesses, put forward recommendations to mitigate the economic and social consequences of the crisis, and discuss mitigation and/or recovery plans. Here, we provide two examples where digital tools allowed to maintain dialogue between public and private sector stakeholders: KEPSA in Kenya and NESG in Nigeria.

Box 11: Virtual PPD through ICT in Kenya[40]

The Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) is the private sector apex and umbrella body was established in 2003, to engage and influence public policy for an enabling business environment. With current membership of over 500,000 direct and indirect members, KEPSA is a key player in championing the interests of the Kenyan business community in trade, investment and industrial relations[41].

During the coronavirus epidemic, KEPSA has continued to have its PPD engagements during the COVID-19 period using ICT tools; and it has been mostly ZOOM, although a few of its partners have used Google Meet, Teams, Skype, among others.

The main strength of using ICT tools is that it has allowed KEPSA to continue its engagements, while maintaining social distance as guided by the government, giving us an opportunity to continue our work. The main challenge at the moment is connectivity, Kenyan Internet services have significantly improved in the last few years, but not

[40] Information provided by Patrick Maingi, Public- Private Dialogue Specialist, KEPSA, Kenya
[41] https://kepsa.or.ke/about-us/

everyone is connected, therefore, using ICT tools tends to leave some people out. Internet services are also expensive, hence adds an extra cost to running a business.

KEPSA intends to continue using ICT tools for its PPD work, especially since the pandemic is not over yet, and even after it ends, KEPSA sees an opportunity of having quick online meetings in the future. KEPSA also uses ICT tools for other purposes as well. In the recent past, KEPSA has used ICT to conduct business surveys on various topics, to conduct trainings for various stakeholders (see box 6), as well as holding KEPSA management / strategy meetings online.

Box 12: NESG digitalizes its engagement activities during COVID-19[42]

The Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) is a non-profit, non-partisan private sector-led think tank with a mandate to promote and champion the reform of the Nigerian economy into an open, globally competitive economy. Over the years, NESG has achieved significant progress in the areas of research outputs, execution of programmes, seminars, conferences and workshops aimed at facilitating the formulation and implementation of social and economic reform programmes for the growth and transformation of the Nigerian economy[43].

NESG has emerged as the most notable platform for PPD in Nigeria. The flagship of NESG's advocacy efforts is the **annual Nigerian Economic Summit** (NES), which provides government and private sector an opportunity to review the progress made in the economic reform process and agree on practical ways to manage issues which may have constrained effective policy implementation.

NESG decided to use ICT tools to keep PPD despite social distancing measures and travel limitations imposed during COVID-19 outbreak. As all the interactions were physical before the crisis, and that frequent travels were necessary for public officials (mostly based in Abuja) and private sector representatives (operating in majority in Lagos), this change required some adjustment, mainly from the public sector who wasn't familiar with using ICT tools until then.

Continuing PPD through digital tools has allowed NESG to achieve two main results:

- The **annual Nigerian Economic Summit** was held mostly virtually in November 2020 and attracted more than 6000 participants from public and private sectors. This event was organised on a hybrid model, bringing together online participants (roughly 5700) and physical attendees (354). Discussions were articulated around five sub-themes: Mapping the Future; New Trends, New Opportunities, New Horizons; Embracing Technology and Innovation; Building Resilience and Charting the Path to Recovery. Panel discussions took place, as well as sectoral events. To foster interactivity of the event, a broad range of digital meeting platforms were used (primarily ZOOM), as well as social media (YouTube, Instagram and Facebook). Mentimeter[44] was also instrumental to collect participants' feedbacks during panel discussions. Finally, a dedicated app was developed to convene an online marketplace where participants could receive information about participating businesses' products/services and collect virtual business cards (allowing to analyse and draw lessons at later stage).
- **Drafting of the National Development Plan 2050 (Nigeria Agenda 2050)**: this plan provides a long-term vision to address developmental challenges in Nigeria. The drafting the Agenda 2050 started in 2019 as a consultative process involving public and private sector but was interrupted by the coronavirus pandemic. Digital tools were used to continue the discussions around the National Development Plan 2050 during COVID-19 since the process could not be kept on hold any longer. This was challenging since the consultation involves a large spectrum of actors (different ministries, PSOs and CSOs), the subjects are highly complex and often imply macroeconomic modelling. The final report of this plan will be presented soon to NESG Steering Committee and submitted to the President.

[42] Information provided by Olayinka Iyinolakan, Seun Ojo, Titilope Oni, Wilson Erumebor, NESG, Nigeria
[43] https://www.nesgroup.org/about
[44] Mentimeter helps speakers interact with their audience using real-time voting

4.2 Solution design

After the diagnostic phase comes the solution design step, where consensus is sought from public and private stakeholders on specific legal or regulatory changes. This process can also be enhanced by ICT tools and be part of e-governance efforts. In this case, we speak more broadly of a subset of **e-democracy efforts**[45]. E-democracy refers to the use of ICT to create channels for public consultation and participation, for example for elections, consultations or referendums[46]. EU Member States have increasingly committed themselves to engaging stakeholders through electronic means[47]. **Online portals in particular are being widely used to provide opportunity for commenting on draft regulations**.

Here, we touch upon the concept of **co-creation**. "The principle of co-creation is the process of creating new public policies and services with people and not for them[48]." A report from the European Parliament published in 2020 entitled *Using technology to 'co-create' EU policies* [49] identifies three main benefits obtained from harnessing technology to 'co-create' EU policies:

1) *Enhanced innovative potential of public administrations*: due to structural and knowledge gaps, decision-makers have limited capacity to engage meaningfully with citizens. Technology can contribute to overcome possible knowledge and skills gaps between civil servants and private-sector workers.

2) *Increased effectiveness of public policies*: today, the scale and complexity of regulatory issues are so important that traditional bureaucratic problem-solving is too slow, or not adequately designed, to address them effectively.

3) *More transparent, accessible and participatory decision-making*: technology is the medium through which public administrations and citizens can engage in a mutually beneficial process of co-creation of public policies. Public officials enhance their legitimacy by harnessing the skills and expertise of citizens in policymaking; the latter, in turn, are empowered in that they gain the opportunity to shape new policies according to their needs.

An example of co-creation work we want to highlight in this paper is the work implemented by I4Policy, called **Policy Hackaton**. It is detailed in box 13 below.

Box 13: i4Policy's Policy Hackatons

i4Policy is a pan-African movement gathering over 140 Innovation Hubs from 43 African countries. The i4Policy process was originally developed by Jon Stever, who co-founded the Innovation for Policy Foundation to support the development and use of the process, and associated open source co-creation tools, methodologies, protocols and software. The i4Policy process emerged from a practice-based design, and remains under continued, iterative development through practice, research and dialogue with practitioners, academics, policy professionals, trainees and participants.

In addition to the process, i4policy may also refer to both the Foundation and to a grassroots movement called the #i4Policy movement that was collaboratively initiated by innovation community leaders across Africa and brings together community conveners sharing common values and an interest to deploy co-creation

[45] For example, the ICT4D Network in East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) aims to harness ICTs to achieve economic, social and political goals in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. ICT4D seeks to enhance communication between ordinary citizens and duty bearers at both regional and national level, so as to advance the right to seek, receive and impart information that supports civic empowerment and good governance using ICT. It tackles issues relating to corruption, service delivery monitoring, respect for human rights, and promoting civic engagement. The network is composed of seven partners who use SMS, FM radio, social media like Facebook and Twitter, toll free call centres, crowd sourcing platforms as well as direct community engagement. See https://ict4democracy.org/about-ict4d/

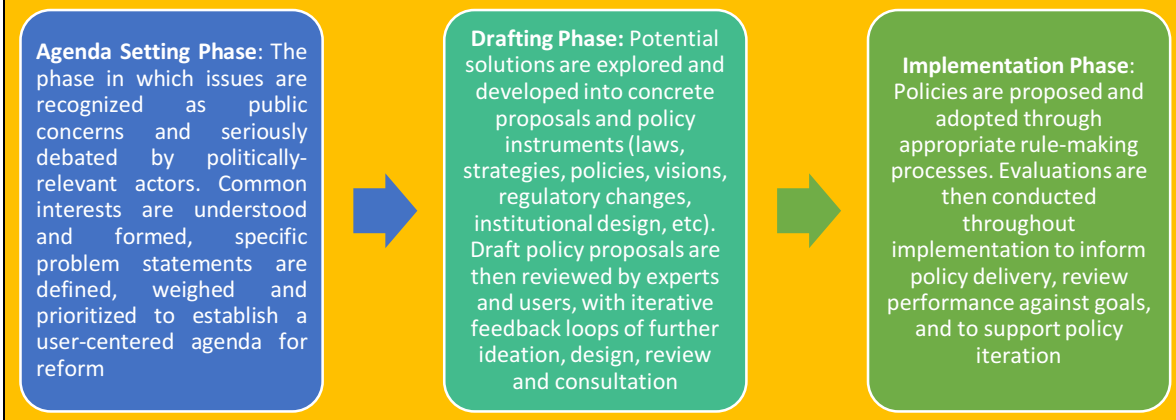
[46] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20170224STO63943/e-democracy-opportunities-and-risks

[47] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/646127/EPRS_BRI(2020)646127_EN.pdf

[48] https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/three-essential-steps-co-creation

[49] European Parliament, Using technology to 'co-create' EU policies, February 2020, p3

methodologies to support their governments with innovative policy-making for innovation[50]. The I4Policy process can be illustrated by the below sequence of activities (feedback loop):



To implement the i4Policy process, the Foundation, with the support of local Governments and international partners organizes **policy hackatons** in countries such Rwanda, Nigeria, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Togo and Botswana to co-draft national policies intended to accelerate entrepreneurship and innovation. Today, 17 countries throughout Africa benefit from i4Policy's support to draft national strategies and formulate reforms to enable entrepreneurship.

The first i4Policy hackathon took place at the Impact Hub Kigali in 2017 in partnership with the Rwandan Ministry of Commerce, DfID and the Swiss Government. The local entrepreneurial community worked with the government to draft Rwanda's national strategy for private sector development and youth employment. **This resulted in the adoption, by the Rwanda Government, of the Start-up Act that seeks to improve the business environment for start-ups, and bolster start-up growth infrastructure**.

More recently, i4Policy initiated the **pan-African Digital Assembly** (#pADA) as an effort to gather health experts and political, cultural and innovation leaders and propose solutions to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. This initiative was supported by many partners including Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Enabel, Facebook, GIZ, UNESCO and British Council. The #pADA was a three-day virtual forum held from May 13-15, 2020. It combined bottom-up policy co-creation – through a continental entrepreneurs forum involving over 420 entrepreneurs working across multiple thematic rooms with trained facilitators from 48 countries – and high-level panel discussions among public and private stakeholders.

The #pADA also served as the launchpad for a **preliminary report on the impact of the pandemic on African businesses that analyses the effects of the COVID-19** based on an online survey (649 MSMEs consulted)[51]. As a follow-up of the impact study, and based on the discussions held during #pADA, i4Policy released a report called *Crowdsourced policy solutions to support entrepreneurship development and Covid-19 response & recovery in Africa*[52]. This document lists the policies and interventions requested by the respondents, including:

- Increase access to working capital and liquidity to maintain business operations and retain employees
- Increase the adoption of e-platforms, digitize public services and promote partnerships that improve internet access and digitization of MSMEs
- Increase access to local / regional markets through government procurement and purchase of local products and services
- Reduce costs of public infrastructure and health services for start-ups and SMEs
- Support local R&D targeting COVID-19 response to drive innovation and open new markets

[50] See https://i4policy.org/innovation
[51] This impact analysis can be accessed here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bXH_PWGZ-jlmPca0ZGaFanzijTer_LSX/view
[52] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OXENShauEL-LYXPMwc6fyVRBlFXj285V/view

4.3 Implementation

As a World Bank guidance note stresses it, "*a primary form of PPD communication is **consensus building** among stakeholders. The project will establish dialogue "platforms" using communication tools for knowledge sharing. It is important that the dialogue platform is trusted by all involved. Using the tools will help share and validate information, build trust, and ultimately, lead to the notion that PPD is a platform for consultation. An effective PPD relies on all parties working with the best available information. Well-informed stakeholders will be in a position to negotiate and make decisions based on facts*[53]".

In World Bank's understanding, the communication function described above should be ensured by the PPD secretariat and refers to the **internal communication between PPD stakeholders**. This means that a PPD secretariat should communicate with participating public and private sector participants by sending them meeting invitations, agenda and minutes, policy briefs and background analyses on specific topics addressed. Doing this, PPD facilitators tend to remove communication obstacles from the PPD mechanism. Surely ICT tools can be instrumental for that purpose, including PPD website, online forums and repositories, group discussion channels, collaborative work platforms (Asana, MS Teams, etc). For instance, the NESG in Nigeria publishes systematically on its website annual PPD meeting reports that include proceedings of all discussions held as well as key priorities, action steps, responsibilities and KPIs for each of the issues addressed in the framework of the dialogue process[54].

Besides, once legal reforms or regulatory changes are enacted as a result of a PPD process (or even before their entry into force), Governments can use online portals to publish them in order to ensure businesses' compliance. This is particularly useful when tax administrations have their own websites. For example, the Rwanda Revenue Authority has a dedicated website providing updates on fiscal policy updates, domestic tax services and guidance for businesses operating in the country[55]. This is particularly useful in a country where entrepreneurs express difficulty to cope with an ever-changing business environment - Rwanda's government is highly reformist. More broadly developing countries' government can put in place **e-gazettes**, websites that centralize all legal and regulatory changes implemented. An example of this can be found in India[56]

4.4 Monitoring & Evaluation

Lastly, **monitoring and evaluation reforms adopted is also one of the biggest ways to improve PPD globally**, according to PPD practitioners[57]. What we are referring to here is the use of ICT to access to data for policy development and monitoring implementation of reforms. This also includes to collect private sector feedback on public service delivery/policies through technology-enabled feedback mechanisms.

The DCED has recently published a very thorough analysis on PPD with the use of new technologies that focuses on feedback tools and their integration with data-driven policy reform[58]. According to this report, the benefits of a technology-enabled private sector feedback process in PPD include:

1) Coordination and transparency of information on both public and private sector sides
2) Speed of feedback loop between the two sides, allowing for faster reform
3) Opportunity to make feedback more inclusive, allowing more representatives of the private sector to participate

The note further details considerations to be addressed before development of a technology-enabled tools to collect feedback from private sector and presents the risks of harnessing them – firstly highlighting the limits of government policy and capacity and understanding just how dissatisfied the private sector is. Secondly, inclusivity might also be problematic when using technology tools to collect feedback from private sector: *While lack of inclusivity was*

[53] World Bank, Communicating Public-Private Dialogue, p6
[54] NESG, 25th Nigeria Economic Summit Report, 2019, p60
[55] https://www.rra.gov.rw/i
[56] http://egazette.nic.in/
[57] Anna Kompanek and Hanna Wetters, CIPE, USA
[58] DCED, William Nielsen, PPD with the Use of New Technologies, A Focus on feedback tools and their integration with data-driven policy reform, March 2021

previously noted as a risk in PPD, the same risk exists when moving to a technology-enabled data collection for PPD. Those businesses such as SMEs in rural areas that may have been less likely to participate in traditional PPD, may also be less likely to have the access or capacity to participate in an internet-powered data collection process[59].

Specific tools can be leveraged to mitigate this risk such as collecting feedback thanks to SMS or IVR systems. For instance, **TIMBY** (This is My BackYard) is a suite of digital tools that helps streamline evidence-based communication and monitoring between individuals working in the field and influencers: lawyers, policymakers and journalists. TIMBY has developed a reporting and monitoring system that involves three interconnected digital tools: an encrypted app, a searchable dashboard and a drag-and-drop story/report maker. All may be used on their own, together or with other apps/data collection mechanisms and visualization tools, through Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). In box 14, we present the work of **VIAMO** in that field. Other more advanced solutions have been developed by **Premise Data**, see box 15.

Box 14: Viamo's project in Ghana : Marginalized voices shaping local policy and priorities[60]

Viamo is a social enterprise seeking to improve lives through mobile engagement. To carry out interactive, targeted and measurable mobile engagement campaigns and surveys, Viamo implements an approach that allows mobile engagement solutions to serve complex programming on IVR, SMS, Apps, Web and IM bots[61]. Its partners include USAID, GIZ and the World Bank.

In three northern regions of Ghana, district assemblies wanted to find a way to use mobile technology to include the voices and opinions of marginalized groups for their annual planning process in order to plan and prioritize community projects and investments, such as boreholes, schools, and clinics. In 2013, Viamo partnered with ICT development NGO Savannah Signatures, consulting service Amplify Governance, and local ICT organization Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS) to develop a free hotline people could use to communicate with the government and register their requests and complaints.

The project was financed by Star-Ghana[62], a special development fund co-financed by USAID, the European Union, DFID and DANIDA, and identified four main goals:

- Increase the participation of women, youth and people with disabilities in development planning
- Increase awareness about social inclusion in developmental decision making on the part of planning officers
- Communicate the opinions of marginalized groups for development planning
- Include those opinions of marginalized groups in the allocation of public goods and services

Through the IVR and SMS-based feedback collection system developed by TIMBY, responses from 1,200 participants were collected, including disproportionate representation from the key marginalized groups: women, youth and people with disabilities. This surely helped marginalized communities participate in decision making: two regional district assemblies effectively integrated the survey results to inform their 2015 Annual Actions Plans, which resulted in an increased budget dedicated to education — a concern identified in the survey on social accountability and transparency.

Box 15: Premise Data[63]

Premise developed a cloud-based software platform that is deployed across a broad network of stakeholders to respond to emerging operational needs. Premise's platform has been used by international development clients

[59] DCED, William Nielsen, PPD with the Use of New Technologies, A Focus on feedback tools and their integration with data-driven policy reform, March 2021, pp16-17
[60] https://viamo.io/
[61] An IM bot is a chatterbot program that uses instant messaging (IM) as an application interface
[62] https://www.star-ghana.org/about-star-ghana/approach
[63] www.premise.com

including USAID, the US Department of State, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Bank, and the World Food program. The key components of the Premise Platform include the: Operations Console, Smartphone App and Analytics Dashboard & Visualization. These components are presented below:



By way of example, Premise has implemented a project in the Philippines aiming at tracking fiscal compliance rates of a new tax on cigarettes and spirits. Premise worked with the World Bank and the Philippines Department of Finance to monitor compliance rates. Data collected informed efforts to drive compliance with the new law. Revenue that the Department of Finance recovered from higher compliance contributed significant funding to the country's universal health care system.

The key results achieved by this project were:

- Data contributed key insights on compliance with the roll-out of a tax stamp on cigarette packages
- Raising tax compliance rates contributed significant revenue to the Philippines health care system

For the readers who would like to dig deeper on this subject, the DCED research report that we mentioned above[64] presents other case studies (Macedonia, Finland, Macau, United Arab Emirates and Kyrgyz Republic) where all private stakeholders – businesses, citizens, civil society are allowed to provide their input either for drafting and revision of policy, or by giving their feedback on the delivery of government services.

5 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Finally, the external communication with the general public is also an area where ICT use can bring positive outcomes to PPD. As a World Bank guidance note mentions, "*engaging the media in PPD so that its expected and achieved results are shared with the broader community needs to be driven by substance. The concept of PPD, especially if apolitical, inclusive, and transparent, is usually welcomed by civil society and the general community. It is difficult to contend that dialogue for resolving issues is wrong, especially because improving economic conditions to drive jobs is essential to stability in developing and transitional economies[65]*".

With this understanding, various projects supporting PPD engage the media, mainly for two purposes:

1. *Capacity building*: Print and broadcast media in developing countries may have limited experience in reporting economic and business news. To overcome this limitation, the PPD secretariat can provide background and context for journalists, to help them understand and capture the essence of the issues.

[64] DCED, William Nielsen, PPD with the Use of New Technologies, A Focus on feedback tools and their integration with data-driven policy reform, March 2021
[65] World Bank, Communicating Public-Private Dialogue, p7

2. *Ongoing briefs*: When the media are briefed and they report on PPD, maintaining interest depends on timely and informative updates. Over time, the capacity of the media will increase. Journalists will then become a part of the check and balance of a dynamic PPD process.

For instance, the **Business Enabling Environment Programme (BEEP)**, co-funded by DFID and DANIDA, had two components: 1) a policy-level investment climate reform component, delivered by the World Bank; and 2) technical assistance to Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Private Sector Organizations (PSOs) to effectively engage in dialogue and utilise research to develop and implement pro-growth policies. This second component included **activities aiming at producing issue-based, business environment content targeting the mass of micro and small entrepreneurs by providing training as well as mentorship to business journalists**. It worked with various media (written press and radio) including the Sunday Mail, the Herald, ZIFM, the Chronicle, SKYZ FM, the Sunday News and ZBC.

Thanks to the multiplication of digital communication channels, the role of both PPD secretariats and the media to ensure external communication about PPD processes, as well as business-related issues can be strengthened. As a result, the general public (civil society) is likely to be more informed of governments' efforts to improve the business environment– which strengthens legitimacy of PPD processes and secures buy-in from the citizens. Furthermore, the **media can contribute to inform economic actors about their rights and obligations, which adds pressure on Governments to improve the business environment and enhances political accountability**. The example in box 17 highlights how a radio programme supported by the DFID project ENABLE led the Kano State Government in Nigeria to stop illegal and multiple taxes on small businesses.

Box 16: Kano State in Nigeria stops illegal and multiple taxes as a result of a radio programme

ENABLE was a DFID-funded business advocacy programme designed to promote improved PPD and business environment in Nigeria. It was implemented in two phases[66]:

- ENABLE1 (2008 to 2014; 13 million EUR) worked with partners at the federal level as well as Lagos, Kaduna, and Kano.
- ENABLE2 (2014 to 2017; 12 million EUR) ended work with Lagos but added new focal states in Northern Nigeria (Jigawa, Katsina, and Zamfara).

As opposed to a donor-led reform programme, ENABLE avoided hosting its own dialogue events, or advocating directly for reforms. Instead, **ENABLE sought to strengthen the process of reform within existing Nigerian institutions and organizations; supported them to better research and advocate on issues related to business environment**. Instead of directly performing a function in the system (such as hosting and funding a public-private dialogue platform), ENABLE's objective was to promote a systemic change of the BER system. More precisely, ENABLE supported all the stakeholders of the BER market[67]:

- Strengthen private sector demand for reform by supporting PSOs to engage in effective advocacy on behalf of the private sector
- Enhance the BER reform supply (quality and quantity of reforms) by building the ability and willingness of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies to dialogue with the private sector
- **Strengthen the role of the Nigerian media as a driver and supporter of BER, a channel for information, and a platform for debate and discussion**
- Supporting research Institutions, both public and private, to improve the supply of policy research and information in order to promote informed, evidence-based dialogue.

To strengthen the role of the Nigerian media as a driver and supporter of BER, a channel for information, and a platform for debate and discussion, ENABLE supported for instance **Freedom Radio**, a commercial radio media group based in Kano, broadcasting in Hausa and English. At the start of ENABLE1, Freedom Kano was the most popular radio station in the north, with about 6 million listeners. In 2009, ENABLE proposed to the Freedom Radio to support **the station to develop a new, investigative, field-based small business programme**. At

[66] https://beamexchange.org/practice/programme-index/114/
[67] ENABLE, Case Study, Making Business Membership Organisations work for the Poor, p2

the time, Freedom Radio had no radio programme dedicated to small business and produced no real field-based or investigative content. This is why ENABLE supported Freedom Radio to develop and launch **Da Rarrafe, a 30-minute small business programme**.

To achieve sustainability and convince the radio senior management that such a programme could become commercially sustainable, it was **key to demonstrate that Da Rarrafe was both high-quality and popular, and that this popularity generate increased revenues and sponsorship**. ENABLE therefore provided training and mentoring to both the production team – to develop the initial concept and to build skills in story identification, field-based reporting, and investigative journalism – and the marketing team.

By the end of ENABLE1, an audience research revealed Da Rarrafe was the 6th most popular programme broadcasted by the radio station (out of 137), and a sponsorship deal convinced management of the commercial viability of the programme. Thanks to ENABLE's support, the quality of Da Rarrafe improved, its listenership raised to 440 000 listeners, and Freedom Radio decided to double the time allocated to this programme. **To encourage Freedom Radio to further expand its coverage of rural issues, ENABLE piloted a community journalism scheme based on a network of 45 community journalists, allowing it to identify and investigate issues across Kano at moderate cost.**

By the end of ENABLE2, Da Rarrafe had been broadcasted for over 7 years, without receiving any direct financial support from ENABLE. Due to the programme's popularity, Freedom Radio decided to move Da Rarrafe to a prime-time slot. Many aspects of Da Rarrafe have been replicated to other Freedom Radio programmes, and Da Rarrafe itself has been replicated on Freedom Kaduna and Freedom Jigawa, which translates a **strong buy-in from the radio station management and good chances of sustainability.**

This new small business programming provides a dialogue platform for poor men and women, particularly in rural areas, on the Business Environment issues that matter most to them. For example, Da Rarrafe investigated complaints of small businesspeople in Kano about multiple and illegal taxation. The investigation was attributed by traders in Kano to have directly contributed to an improvement in the situation; Kano State has stopped official tax collection while the situation is reviewed and revised.

A market trader from Kano confirms that **"***Listening to Freedom Radio has helped. Look at me, I sell groundnut oil in this market and the tax collectors collect taxes from us like three or four times a month,* ***but since people listened to the radio on multiple taxation and complained bitterly about it, they have stopped for now. Now the state government knows what local government is doing and we also know our rights and why we should pay tax*****"**[68]**.**

In addition, raising awareness of the general public about business-related issues can have positive impacts for instance on business registration and compliance with fiscal obligations. On the long-term, all this might trigger a virtuous circle where the media (using ICT, where possible) contribute to local economic development made possible through public-private dialogue. The Box 17 below presents a success story of a GIZ project in Ghana.

Box 17 : Radio programmes for small businesses: Using Media for Economic Development in Ghana[69]

The Programme for Sustainable Economic Development (PSED) was implemented by GIZ in Ghana from 2006 to 2019 primarily with the aim of supporting the development of light industrial zones. It later included other interventions seeking to develop financial systems, improve vocational training and promote employment for returnees and potential migrants.

In this context, GIZ suggested **using radio programmes to support the development process of industrial zones** in the Districts and Municipalities supported by PSED. Five radio stations were supported to broadcast programmes focusing on business opportunities allowed by industrial zones with remarkably positive results. According to GIZ, since radio was the most important source of information for many people in Ghana, it was ideally suited to support debates on local economic issues.

[68] ASI, *Is a genuinely sustainable, locally-led, politically-smart approach to economic governance and Business Environment Reform possible?* , Lessons from 10 years implementing ENABLE in Nigeria, 2017, pp22-23

[69] GIZ, Radio programmes for small businesses: Using Media for Local Economic Development in Ghana, 2012

The radio programmes on industrial zones involved relevant stakeholders and combined both investigative and educational aspects. They were professionally designed in order to attract listeners. PSED supported the stations with training, production costs and technical equipment, but did not buy airtime. The broadcasting stations had ownership of the programmes.

The programmes created wide public debates on the industrial zones as well as on other economic issues and sped up the relocation of artisans from the town centres to the new sites. They successfully marketed the businesses on the new sites and **enhanced the dialogue among businesses and local authorities**. In some instances, they were even used by the local authorities to inform the public about their activities. Since the programmes generally attracted a large listenership, they also boosted the profile of the participating radio stations. The programmes also served as a platform for the discussion of other issues of interest to small businesses such as road networks, potable water, business registration[70], and tax obligations.

6 LIMITATIONS

In this paper, we have highlighted a series of direct and indirect benefits gained from using ICT tools on PPD and BER. Nevertheless, limitations exist since leveraging ICT tools generate the following risks rightly identified by the DCED research report[71] :

1- ***Risk of negative feedback from the private sector****:* This is an inherent risk of conducting PPD in general: collecting the feedback from the private sector on government policy and capacity might stress how dissatisfied businesses are with the Governments' ability to perform its functions. As Dan Hetherington formulates it, *"The main risk to government of engaging with new PPD processes is that greater transparency will publicly highlight shortcomings in government policy and capacity or reveal that the private sector is dissatisfied with the government's performance. Governments are most likely to show reluctance in environments where there is a lack of media openness, and where performance management systems within government are weak, meaning that government institutions may have little awareness of their own performance[72]".*

2- ***Inclusivity issues:*** In developing countries, the digital divide reduces the extent to which ICT tools can be harnessed to allow engagement of marginalized categories into policy making. For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa, Internet access remains far behind the rest of the world, with only 20% of the region's population enjoying Internet usage in 2015[73]. This unequal access particularly affects the low-income, rural households and disproportionately women. In this paper, we have seen that development partners can play a key role to increase inclusivity by implementing solutions targeting marginalized categories and overcome the challenges of cost, literacy and technological divide: these include supporting the development of radio programmes, adopting SMS-based solutions, leveraging IVR systems and training community facilitators at grassroot level.

3- ***Data privacy issues:*** this threat is particularly acute in countries where freedom of speech is low and citizens and businesses lack trust towards the way their Governments use and protect personal data. This risk can be mitigated by supporting developing countries to adopt and enforce data protection regulations that ensure transparent use of data collected. Furthermore, when consultations are conducted, implementers should commit to respect data privacy and anonymize the data collected.

[70] Anecdotal evidence supports that some of these radio programmes increased the number of business registrations in some municipalities.

[71] DCED, William Nielsen, PPD with the Use of New Technologies, A Focus on feedback tools and their integration with data-driven policy reform, March 2021, pp18-19

[72] Dan Hetherington, Business Environment Facility, Public–Private Dialogue Interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons for Zimbisa, 2016, p11

[73] World Bank Group, Internet Access in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2019, p1

7 CONCLUSION

The paper aimed to highlight how ICT tools can directly and indirectly support PPD and BER. Our approach seeks to demonstrate that harnessing ICT tools can bring positive effects in three spheres of communication:

1. **Internal Communication within private sector organisations and within public sector actors** : By using ICT tools, PSOs can enhance their legitimacy, unite their membership, reinforce their financial sustainability, and bring further evidence-based analyses or reform proposals to the Government – fostering their business advocacy function. On the public sector side, E-governance and upgraded G2G interactions with the use of digital technologies enable better coordination between MDAs and enable real-time and more informed decision making.

2. **Public-Private Dialogue**: Increased flow of information exchanged between public and private sectors made possible with ICT tools can contribute to reinforce mutual trust, build consensus among PPD stakeholders and allow for an improved monitoring and evaluation of the policy making and reform implementation processes. ICT tools are particularly well suited to support policy co-creation processes.

3. **External communication**: higher awareness of public about PPD processes and economic development-related issues increases legitimacy of and adherence to the reform process and can increase pressure on Governments to improve the business environment. Raising the knowledge of general public, including civil society and workers, about their rights and obligations as well as business-related subjects can sustain economic development, support business formalization, and improve working conditions.

In addition, we have stressed that ICT tools can foster economic resilience during crisis episodes, such as observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, many PSOs have digitised their services, providing much-needed support to businesses, conducted economic and social impact surveys of the effect of the crisis on their members' activity, and advocated – sometimes successfully – for the adoption of mitigation measures and recovery plans.

To support the adoption of ICT tools in the three spheres of communication, development partners have a key role to play. Their interventions can be particularly useful to make PPD better informed, more efficient, and more inclusive. In developing countries, where the digital divide is more acute, adapted solutions such as supporting the development of radio programmes, implementing SMS-based solutions, leveraging IVR systems and training community facilitators at grassroot level have demonstrated their usefulness to overcome the challenges of cost, literacy and technological divide that impede marginalized categories to play an active role in PPD.

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