

# Tanzanias' Lead in Digital Governance

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## A Benchmark of Progress in the GovTech Maturity Index.

**T**anzania, Under President Dr Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership, has significantly advanced its digital governance, earning a noteworthy position in the GovTech Maturity Index (GTMI) 2022 as researched by the WORLD BANK. This achievement communicates the country's dedicated efforts in harnessing digital technologies to reform public service delivery and engage citizens in governance processes. The e-Government Authority (e-GA) has played a crucial role in this transformation, steering Tanzania to become a model for digital excellence as recognized in the GTMI rankings.

The GTMI, developed by the World Bank, evaluates countries based on their use of technology to enhance the public sector's efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. It focuses on core government systems, online service delivery, digital citizen engagement, and GovTech enablers. Tanzania's ascent in the GTMI rankings to Group A shows that the nation is committed to digitalizing government operations and services," emphasized Eng. Benedict Benny Ndomba, The Director General of eGA. "This leap is backed by the successful implementation of strategic initiatives such as GovNet, a secure communication network that facilitates inter-agency data exchange, and the government e-office system (GeOS), which has digitalized administrative processes to reduce paperwork and expedite services."

Additionally, The Director General continued "The introduction of comprehensive online and mobile service platforms has made government services more accessible to citizens, significantly narrowing the digital divide. The mobile government (mGov) platform, offering services via SMS, USSD, and mobile applications, exemplifies Tanzania's approach to creating a user-friendly and inclusive digital ecosystem and through these concerted efforts, Tanzania has not only enhanced its digital governance landscape but also set a benchmark for progress in the GovTech Maturity Index, demonstrating the potential of digital technology to transform public sector operations and citizen engagement."

## Strengthening the Foundation of Digital Governance

Under Her Excellency's leadership, Tanzania has significantly advanced its digital governance, focusing on enhancing government operations and services. The e-Government Authority (e-GA) has embraced digital service digitization, cybersecurity reinforcement, and platform interoperability within public institutions. This strategic expansion marks a shift toward more integrated and transparent government operations.

More to this, the development and enhancement of the Government Communications Network (GovNet) has been pivotal, facilitating efficient communication and data exchange across government entities. Eng Ndomba notes "This backbone of Tanzania's digital governance not only improves internal communication but also lays the foundation for integrated public service delivery, moving towards a cohesive digital government ecosystem."

Recognizing cybersecurity as essential to digital governance integrity, the Tanzanian government has strengthened its cybersecurity laws and regulations. This commitment to cybersecurity ensures the protection of digital infrastructure and builds public trust in online government platforms, highlighting the administration's dedication to a secure digital environment.

Moreover, the government's effort to develop a comprehensive interoperability framework exemplifies its visionary approach. In ensuring that different digital platforms and services can efficiently interact, the framework breaks down operational silos, enhancing public service delivery and making government operations more citizen- and business-responsive. Eng. Ndomba emphasizes, "Interoperability is key to a responsive and citizen-centric government. It ensures that our digital services are not just available, but also accessible and useful to all Tanzanians."

## Revolutionizing Public Service Delivery

Tanzania's public service delivery has undergone a remarkable transformation, leveraging digital technologies to enhance accessibility, efficiency, and user-friendliness. This initiative, centered on making citizens the focal point of government services, aims to ensure that digital governance benefits are widely accessible.

"The overhaul of the Online Government Portal has been a game-changer," said the Director



Tanzania e-Government Authority, Director General, Eng Benedict Benny Ndomba.

General, "it now features a variety of digital services, including application tracking and digital payments. This portal simplifies processes like passport, permit, and license applications, significantly improving the citizen-government interaction."

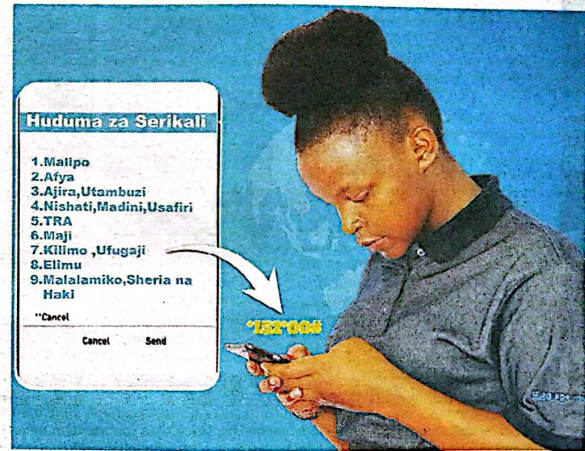
The mGov platform represents another significant stride, using mobile technology to extend essential government services nationwide. "This move has been pivotal in bridging the digital divide, ensuring service accessibility even in remote areas through SMS and mobile applications, reflecting the government's commitment to using technology for public benefit," commented the Director General.

In taxation, the Tanzania Revenue Authority's digital shift has streamlined tax filing and payments, enhancing transparency and efficiency. "This model of digital taxation paves the way for other sectors to utilize technology in improving service delivery" added the Director General. Additionally, digitizing land administration services has revolutionized land transactions, offering easy access to services and reducing bureaucracy. "This has not only aided in dispute prevention and transparency but also exemplified Tanzania's comprehensive approach to digital transformation in governance" highlighted Eng. Ndomba.

## Revolutionizing Trade and Information Exchange

Tanzania's digital governance journey has seen remarkable advancements, notably through the development and implementation of two critical systems: the Tanzania Electronic Single Window System (TeSWS) and the Government Enterprises Service Bus (GovESB). These initiatives have significantly enhanced trade processes and interoperability within the public sector, showcasing Tanzania's commitment to leveraging technology for efficient governance and streamlined operations.

The TeSWS, or 'Single Window' system, revolutionizes trade and customs processes by providing a single-entry point for the submission and processing of cargo documents and information. Developed in collaboration with key stakeholders like the Tanzania Revenue Author-



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ity (TRA) and the Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA), the system has dramatically improved operational efficiency and reduced cargo clearance times. "The Single Window system simplifies the trade process for businesses and public institutions involved in customs activities," highlighted Eng. Benedict Ndomba, illustrating the government's dedication to facilitating seamless trade and enhancing the business environment.

Parallely, Tanzania has advanced towards a paperless and cashless government, integrating public institutions and ICT systems through GovESB. This platform enhances interconnectivity and efficiency within public services, emphasizing Tanzania's commitment to a digital governance ecosystem. Eng. Ndomba highlights, "GovESB's success showcases our progress in creating a seamless public service landscape." Key systems like TeSWS, eMikutano, eOffice, and GePG support a variety of government processes, from licensing to procurements, ensuring services from NHIF, TRA, TPA, and BRELA are accessible online, reflecting Tanzania's stride towards innovative, integrated digital solutions.

## Advancing Digital Citizen Engagement

Under Samia, Tanzania has significantly advanced digital citizen engagement, demonstrating a robust commitment to an interactive governance model. This model has emphasized active citizen participation in the governance process, achieved through the development of e-Mrejesho platform. These initiatives work by facilitating a channel for citizens to voice opinions and engage in policy-making, ensuring government transparency and accountability.

Notably, digital feedback mechanisms integrated into public service portals emphasize the government's dedication to responsive governance. By institutionalizing digital communication channels, Tanzania has cultivated a governance culture that pri-

oritizes and acts upon citizen input, thereby enhancing the democratic process.

Furthermore, Tanzania's push for open data is transforming citizen engagement by making government data accessible, empowering citizens, journalists, and civil society organizations to analyze and utilize public data effectively. "The government's commitment to regularly updating and broadening the data scope signifies its dedication to an informed and engaged citizenry" said Eng Ndomba. "Through these efforts, Tanzania has set a new standard for participatory governance, ensuring its digital transformation benefits all societal segments" He finished.

## Embedding GovTech Enablers

Tanzania's digital governance has seen a transformative shift, emphasizing the integration of GovTech enablers crucial for the digital agenda's success. The government has spearheaded the expansion of the National ICT Broadband Backbone, significantly enhancing digital connectivity across the nation, including remote areas. "Legal and regulatory updates in areas like electronic transactions, data protection, and cybersecurity have been pivotal, safeguarding digital interactions and fostering public trust in online government platforms. The introduction of a national digital ID system has helped Tanzania mark a significant step towards inclusivity, enabling universal access to government services," commented the Director General.

Complementing these infrastructural and legal measures, Tanzania has made considerable strides in promoting digital literacy and skills development among citizens and officials. This approach aims to empower individuals to effectively engage with digital services, supporting the government's vision of a digitally literate populace capable of contributing to and benefiting from the digital transformation.