

International Digital Dialogues

A Guide to Representation, Profitability & Engagement

29 April 2024

Ellen John
Franco Antonio Bastida
Nodoka Kudo
Roy David Frankel
Sophia Tawonga Longwe

Executive Summary

International Digital Dialogues (IDDs) is the German Federal Government's bilateral cooperation tool with relevant partner countries. IDD enables the engagement of stakeholders across all sectors involved in digital governance.

After presenting the theoretical framework underscoring the execution of IDDs, this study analyzed the IDDs of Germany with five countries (Brazil, Japan, India, Mexico, and Kenya) to learn the success factors and challenges of this kind of cooperation.

Through semi-structured interviews and primary document analysis, we understand that IDDs benefit all involved countries, fostering the digital sector and enhancing international partnerships. We also include recommendations for incremental and transformational changes to strengthen and spread even further IDDs' benefits.

29 April 2024

1/28

* This paper is an assignment for a discipline in Hertie School. This work is the sole responsibility of the authors, does not necessarily represent the opinions of any institutions or governments to which they can be related.

1	Introduction	3
2	Theoretical Framework	3
3	Methodology	5
4	What are International Digital Dialogues?	6
5	Why Bilateral Dialogues?	6
6	Why Stakeholder Engagement?	8
7	Lessons from Partner Countries	8
7.1	How do Partner Countries Profit? Some Examples	8
7.2	How do German Stakeholders Profit? Some Examples	10
7.3	Brazil	10
7.4	India	11
7.5	Japan	13
7.6	Kenya	14
7.7	Mexico	15
7.8	Challenges moving forward	16
8	Conclusion	18
8.1	Improvements: incremental change	19
8.2	Improvements: transformational change	20
8.3	What can be improved in the long run?	22
Bibliography		25
Attachment A – Comparative Table		26
Attachment B – Script for Semi-Structured Interviews		27

1 Introduction

In the evolving landscape of digital governance, bilateral digital dialogues are an essential pathway for governments to engage multistakeholder groups equally, learn from and showcase country and subnational practices, and, ultimately, coordinate stances in the anteroom of international fora. The Federal Republic of Germany offers such a model for collaboration with the “International Digital Dialogues” initiative, led by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport (BMDV) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

One needs to look no further to find success stories of digital transformation in the Global South. In Brazil, the streamlining of public services and increased citizen engagement is a reality thanks to the gov.br platform. In Kenya, digital payments have made landmark progress, and over 16,000 services have been digitized in the eCitizen portal, with 80% of all services expected to be accessible before 2030. Within this context, bilateral dialogues like the India-German Digital Dialogue are a valuable mechanism for both Germany and partners to navigate together, in a practical and locally oriented manner, the policy, business, and regulatory landscape related to developments in artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), 5G applications, data centers and clusters, blockchain and more.

Today, as global players, German ministries and diverse stakeholders exchange knowledge and draw inspiration from these examples. What are the success factors and benefits of “International Digital Dialogues” (IDDs)? In this paper, we (1) review the theoretical framework related to bilateral cooperation and multistakeholder forums; (2) explain the methods used to analyze IDDs as an initiative; (3) explore the benefits, challenges, and success factors of bilateral dialogues; (4) provide a series of key findings and recommendations rooted in incremental and transformational scenarios. Based on this analysis, we conclude that bilateral dialogues foster international cooperation with horizontality and contribute to a global digital ecosystem where economies thrive through shared knowledge and best practices.

2 Theoretical Framework

Dialogue spaces within digital governance are relatively new due to the novelty of the technologies and policies. A policy implementation gap in the academic discourse around digital governance calls for an in-depth evaluation of this vital stage of the policy cycle (Hudson et al., 2019). The policy implementation gap in digital governance has become increasingly crucial for multilateral institutions and development cooperation, particularly with the growing reliance on digital technologies and the increasing flow of data across borders (Taylor, 2017). Scholars have acknowledged the need for multi-stakeholder approaches to address the complex challenges of digital governance (Daniels et al., 2023; Calzati, 2021; Gstrein, 2020; Hofmann, 2016).

It remains crucial to include various stakeholder groups, with civil society, research institutions, enforcing authorities, and the private sector, to guide digital governance on every scale of policymaking (Daniels et al., 2023). The rationale for multistakeholder

engagement lies in its democratic and inclusive nature, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are heard and accounted for. This approach allows for a comprehensive consideration of various interests and expertise, enhancing the effectiveness and legitimacy of decision-making processes (NetMundial, 2014).

However, implementing multi-stakeholder approaches in digital governance has well-documented challenges, such as historically grown power asymmetries and divergent stakeholder interests (Calzati, 2021). On the one hand, multi-stakeholder approaches are essential for the success of policies in situations where multiple stakeholders are involved in decision-making processes (Daniels et al., 2022). Hofmann (2016) has identified the following advantages:

1. **Improved representation and diversity of perspectives:** The involvement of civil society, the private sector, local authorities, and youth can lead to more comprehensive and inclusive decision-making processes (Hofmann, 2016). Deliberation considers various perspectives and is more accessible to traditionally marginalized or underrepresented collectives so that everyone affected can sit at the table (Hepp et al., 2022).
2. **Increased legitimacy:** Multi-stakeholder approaches can enhance the legitimacy of procedures by ensuring that all affected actors have a voice in the process, which has the potential to lead to a greater acceptance of results (Gstrein, 2020).
3. **Enhanced problem-solving:** Considering diverse stakeholders can bring different perspectives and expertise together, leading to innovative or best-practice solutions and enabling civil society (Hofmann, 2016).

On the other hand, Brunetti et al. (2020) associate the following disadvantages with multi-stakeholder approaches because they require careful organization and management to ensure inclusive consultation, implementation, and evaluation:

1. **Time-consuming and resource-intensive:** Processes that ensure active participation from multiple stakeholders take more resources and time than other governance models (Hepp et al., 2022). These efforts also require increased coordination, which can be demanding for management and the organization (Brunetti et al., 2020).
2. **Challenging consensus building:** When many stakeholders are involved, achieving consensus can be impossible, leading to ineffective outcomes and delays in the policy process (Hudson et al., 2019).
3. **Uneven power dynamics:** When power asymmetries exist among stakeholders, multi-stakeholder approaches can lead to inequitable representation, lack of funding, and one-sided decision-making (Hofmann, 2016).

On a global scale, some notable cases of multi-stakeholder fora for International Digital Dialogues include:

- **UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF):** A platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue on internet governance issues convened by the United Nations.

- **World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS):** A series of UN conferences focusing on information, communication, and technology issues, particularly in developing countries.
- **NetMundial (+10):** This is a follow-up initiative to the NetMundial Conference 2014, which addressed internet governance principles and frameworks, focusing on privacy, security, and internet governance models by defining the multi-stakeholder approach.
- **Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF):** An open international community of network designers, operators, vendors, and researchers concerned with the evolution and smooth operation of the Internet.
- **Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN):** A nonprofit organization responsible for coordinating the maintenance and procedures of several databases related to the namespaces and numerical spaces of the Internet, ensuring its stable and secure operation.

3 Methodology

For its analysis, this research builds upon the theoretical framework presented by aiming to understand the contributions of Germany's bilateral Digital Dialogues in two areas:

1. *What are the benefits of bilateral dialogues in comparison to multilateral dialogues?*
2. *What are the benefits and success factors of stakeholder engagement in those bilateral dialogues?*

To break down each question into solution-oriented insights, the analysis is based on these methods and inputs:

- A comprehensive literature review analyzes the primary available documents related to the IDDs, providing foundational insights, practices, and challenges. Additionally, exploring scholarly perspectives and best practices in stakeholder engagement and bilateral dialogues considers views that can bridge the policy gap between the approach and implementation.
- **Semi-structured interviews with 12 stakeholders** representing a sample of partner countries selected by GIZ, with which BMDV has ongoing bilateral Digital Dialogues: Brazil, India, Japan, Mexico, and Kenya. Participants were anonymized and included GIZ representatives, implementing partner agencies (e.g., Ministry of the Economy) officials, and directors or spokespersons from industry or civil society organizations. All interviews are divided into themes that later frame the conclusion and recommendations. Interviews provide firsthand perspectives and a nuanced view of the challenges and opportunities related to stakeholder engagement (see Annex for a more detailed explanation of the process).
- **Thematic analysis**, which divides the data collected into three core areas:
 - **Profitability:** Refers to the success factors and gains of participants.
 - **Engagement:** Referring to the quality, format, and improvements the stakeholders associated with the engagements compared to other fora.
 - **Representation:** Referring to the voices invited, whether they are representative, and if any stakeholder should be included.

This research culminates in generating two scenarios for change (incremental and transformational), gathering recommendations around the thematic areas that can be implemented parallelly.

4 What are International Digital Dialogues?

Since 2016, the German government has engaged with important partner countries to address specific issues in the bilateral agenda regarding digital policy. In the case of the BMDV's approach to the IDDs, the initiative seeks to create "a common international framework for action in order to make the opportunities offered by digitization available to all people in the best possible way and thus contribute to sustainable economic development." Current bilateral digital dialogues include Brazil, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore, with an additional two planned for Ghana and South Africa.

For the German government, these dialogues serve as a pivotal instrument in digital policy cooperation set out in Germany's newly cabinet-approved "Strategy for International Digital Policy of the Federal Government" to foster the comparison of digital policy agendas, address specific issues in bilateral economic relations, and collectively formulate positions for multilateral forums with third countries outside the EU. Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Action (BMWK) and the BMDV are pursuing this goal in the G20 digital minister process, which is "strengthened by bilateral Digital Dialogues with strategically important partners."

By facilitating these bilateral Digital Dialogues on behalf of BMDV, GIZ provides advisory and logistical support, offering a secretariat function and contributing to solution-finding through the design, alignment, and implementation of cooperation activities. The stakeholders, representing government, business, civil society, and science, engage in continuous exchanges on current political and regulatory developments related to digitalization. The GIZ team supports the preparation of high-level meetings and technical exchanges, enhancing networking and cooperation across borders and sectors. Additionally, GIZ monitors technological, political, and economic developments, providing valuable information and serving as an entry point for anyone wishing to engage.

5 Why Bilateral Dialogues?

IDDs occur in a landscape with various stakeholders, where building alliances and cooperating as much as possible is essential. Initiatives by Germany and the European Union (EU), like "Global Gateway," are often overshadowed by trans-Atlantic debates between the EU and the United States (US) and the critical role of China in digital governance. The trans-Atlantic debate about the Brussels effect argues that there are two camps — the European discourse around human-centric and value-based governance clashes with the American laissez-faire (Braman, 2009). Globally, perspectives lead from Chinese digital authoritarianism via American digital totalitarianism to European digital paternalism (Arora, 2019). Bendiek and Römer (2019) argue that the trans-Atlantic debate

between European and North American scholars is the most formative and influential global discourse. Comparing the views of scholars from all perspectives is valuable in determining the crucial role of IDDs in this complex field.

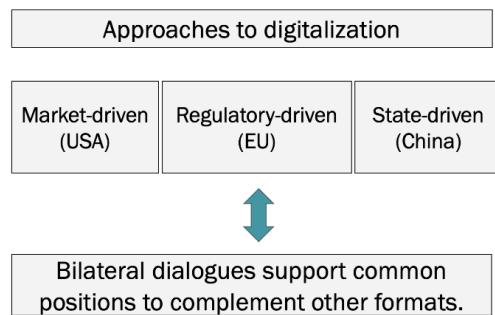


Image 1 – Relation of bilateral dialogues to digitalization approaches
(source: authors' elaboration)

At the BMDV, two departments within the “National, European, and International Digital Policy” subdivision are responsible for international digital policy. There is DP13, responsible for multilateral digital policy that includes G7, G20, OECD, and multi-stakeholder forums, and DP14, responsible for the bilateral dialogues.

There is a need for more policy and academic discussions outside the trans-Atlantic and Chinese debate about digital governance. This missing conversation can be filled with multilateral and bilateral Digital Dialogues. However, the catch is that relevant stakeholders must be engaged. In a context of great complexity in international scenarios, with the emergence of bilateral, regional, and global relations, it is essential to understand the role of bilaterality. Hassler (2003) states that when there is potential gain from cooperation between self-interested actors, there are also incentives for strategic behavior. Modern-day state cooperation theory uses game theory extensively (e.g., the Prisoner’s Dilemma model), but modern international relations occur through sequential and repeated interactions.

In this kind of situation, if one State would like to influence some other state to change its behavior, such influence seldom comes without a cost, in most cases not a monetary one, but a “loss in terms of lower expected gains from future interactions with this and other actors who have observed their interaction” (Hassler, 2003, p. 6). Also, in this kind of setting, the intensity of cooperative behavior of actors is directly related to the amount of potential gain from cooperation and its distribution between actors: more equitable distribution of gains and higher cooperation benefits increase the likeliness of cooperative outcomes (Hassler, 2003, p. 19, p. 28).

Rana (2020) understands that bilateral processes are the oldest form of diplomacy, developed and complex over time into multilateral processes. Nevertheless, bilateral diplomacy (BD) and multilateral diplomacy (MLD) are not mutually exclusive but

intertwined instruments. BD is seen as the “basic building block of the international state system and is often crucial to regional and multilateral work” (Rana, 2020, p. 2). According to Rana (2020), four factors are the leading causes of cooperative bilateral relationships between countries (as opposed to more fragile, adversarial, and low engagement relationships): confidence, few rivalries, ease of working together, and significant action canvas, in an aligned way to Hassler (2003) inputs for cooperative outcomes. In Rana's (2003) typology, IDDs could be identified as a “joint bilateral action” taken by Germany and the partner countries.

6 Why Stakeholder Engagement?

With a rapidly evolving technological space, effective digital governance requires comprehensive stakeholder engagement to ensure inclusivity, transparency, and ethical decision-making. Academic discourse has predominantly emphasized governmental perspectives in the past. However, it is paramount to recognize both the under and over-representation of civil society and the private sector. Controversial initiatives like Facebook's Free Basics underscore the importance of broadening the discussion beyond governmental spheres (Nothias, 2020). Scholars such as Hepp et al. (2022) shed light on a notable policy implementation gap within the digital governance process, as stated before, emphasizing the need for thorough analyses of power dynamics.

Stakeholder engagement becomes imperative when delving into critical issues like digital labor and exploitation. A shocking example is OpenAI's practices, where Kenyan workers are reportedly compensated less than \$2 per hour for identifying harmful content (Perrigo, 2023). This alarming revelation underscores the urgency for involving diverse stakeholders in conversations about digital governance. Civil society, the private sector, parliamentarians, youth, and academia bring unique perspectives, challenging normative practices and contributing essential expertise often overlooked in government-to-government conversations. To address the wicked challenges of the digital era, an inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach is essential, fostering a more just, responsible, and sustainable digital future(s).

7 Lessons from Partner Countries

7.1 How do Partner Countries Profit? Some Examples.

Stakeholders from partner countries also derive significant benefits from their engagement in the “International Digital Dialogues”:

The “International Digital Dialogues” offers a valuable platform for partner countries to collaborate and advance their digital landscapes. Here is how various countries benefit from participation, along with specific examples:

Alignment for Multilateral Talks: Partner countries can leverage the dialogues to prepare and align their positions for more extensive international discussions on digital policy. For

example, Japan can use these dialogues to refine its approach before participating in multilateral talks, ensuring a more unified and impactful voice.

Knowledge and Technical Exchanges: Sharing best practices and technical expertise is a cornerstone of the dialogues. India has benefited significantly in data policy, learning from Germany's experience with the GDPR. Similarly, Mexico has gained valuable insights into data center management through these exchanges.

Private Sector Channel: The dialogues provide a platform for private sector engagement. This allows countries like Brazil to connect with international businesses and experts, potentially leading to training opportunities, improved processes, and better public policies that enhance the digital business environment.

Leveling the Playing Field: The dialogues offer a space for countries at different stages of digital maturity to learn from each other. Kenya, for instance, can leverage the dialogues to strengthen its civil society engagement in digital policy discussions.

Knowledge Transfer: Partnering with Germany provides stakeholders from partner countries with access to valuable expertise and best practices in digital governance and innovation. This knowledge transfer empowers them to enhance their capabilities, adopt innovative technologies, and address local challenges more effectively.

Technological Innovation: Collaborative initiatives with Germany enable partner countries to access cutting-edge technologies and solutions, driving technological innovation and competitiveness. By leveraging German expertise, they can modernize infrastructure, improve service delivery, and unlock new growth opportunities.

Policy Development: Engagement in bilateral dialogues facilitates policy alignment and development, enabling partner countries to create regulatory frameworks that promote digital innovation and inclusivity. By exchanging ideas and experiences, partners can develop effective digital policies that protect rights, foster innovation, and support economic development.

Market Access and Collaboration: Collaboration with Germany opens new market opportunities and fosters collaboration between businesses, governments, and civil society organizations. By leveraging German partnerships and networks, partner countries can expand their reach, attract investment, and drive economic growth through digitalization.

Capacity Building: Engaging in technical exchanges and capacity-building initiatives enhances stakeholders' digital skills and capabilities from partner countries. They can develop the expertise needed to harness digital technologies for sustainable development and prosperity by participating in training programs and workshops.

7.2 How do German Stakeholders Profit? Some Examples.

Brazil BR	Government App
Japan JP	Technical Expert Talks
Kenya KE	Speed of Digital Transformation
India IN	Harmonizing Interoperable Standards
Mexico MX	Inclusiveness in Digital Policy

Access to Best Practices: Engaging with partner countries like Brazil and Germany gains insights into innovative digital solutions such as the "gov.br" platform, which streamlines public services and enhances citizen engagement. Drawing inspiration from such success stories, German ministries can tailor digital solutions to improve government-citizen interactions.

Technological Advancements: Collaborative initiatives with countries like Japan give German stakeholders access to advanced technological know-how and solutions. Germany can modernize its operations through platforms like the Technical Expert Talks, boost productivity, and stay competitive in global markets.

Accelerated Digital Transformation: Partnering with countries like Kenya, known for their rapid digital transformation, allows German stakeholders to expedite their digitalization efforts. Learning from Kenya's agile strategies and innovative approaches, Germany can streamline processes, innovate new products and services, and drive digital growth.

Standardization and Interoperability: Collaborative efforts with countries like India focus on harmonizing interoperable standards, benefiting both nations by facilitating smoother data exchange and collaboration. By aligning with global standards, Germany enhances its digital infrastructure and promotes seamless connectivity, fostering innovation and economic growth.

Inclusive Digital Policies: Collaboration with countries like Mexico, which prioritize inclusiveness in digital policy, enables German stakeholders to learn strategies for promoting equitable access and participation in the digital economy. By adopting inclusive policies and practices, Germany contributes to societal well-being and ensures that digital benefits are accessible to all.

7.3 Brazil

The German-Brazilian Digital Dialogue began in 2019 with the signing of a Joint Declaration of Intent between Germany's BMWK and Brazil's Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation, and Communication (MCTI); it aimed to create an international framework for digitalization through political dialogues and an industry-driven multistakeholder forum. The main areas of cooperation included 1) Internet governance and data policies, 2) emerging technologies, and 3) digital business opportunities and models.

More recently, the cooperation documents show that the focus on business has expanded towards a broader perspective. Instead of "digital business opportunities and models," there is a shift to "frameworks for Digital Innovation," an approach that integrates public and private solutions. It is also essential to notice the inclusion of a specific topic of cooperation on "twin transition," an emerging topic that is important for both countries.

To this date, three annual meetings have been held, and two workshops have been organized, focusing on "Unlocking the Potential of Open Data in Digital Governments" and "Industrial Data Spaces for Sovereignty and Competitiveness." The recent shift of topics could be associated with the change in the German Ministry responsible for IDDs (the BDMV since 2022) and the increased discussion and personnel related to digitalization in Brazil since the start of the current Federal Government (2023).

Regarding stakeholder participation, nowadays, some are actively contacted, and some directly ask GIZ for participation. Both GIZ and MCTI state that this is adequate, but MCTI shows interest in adequately including stakeholders in the subsequent phases of the cooperation. MCTI also states that the current practice of IDDs, starting with bilateral talks between governments, followed by an open session, is a well-established and exciting format. Given funding constraints, GIZ states a worry about adequately supporting and increasing civil society participation.

One aspect of the German-Brazilian Digital Dialogue praised by GIZ and MCTI is the stated "horizontality" in the discussions. Neither of the countries imposes their agenda or perspective, but they effectively exchange perspectives on the subject to achieve common objectives. As MCTI stated, Germany is interested in different solutions implemented in Brazil, like "gov.br", a unified digital login for all citizens, "sou gov," a unified digital solution for public servants, the possibility of digital processing of public process through the Electronic Information System ("SEI!") and the digital management of the Unified Health System (SUS). At the same time, Brazil shows interest in some critical areas where Germany has more robust capacities, like private sector participation in the digital sector, the regulatory environment, the twin transition, semiconductor advancements, and quantic technologies. The horizontality and openness of the discussions are aspects that make MCTI prioritize this dialogue. These characteristics of the German-Brazilian Digital Dialogue align with cooperative success factors for bilateral diplomacy, as Rana (2020) stated.

Another relevant aspect of this dialogue is that in 2024, Brazil will host the G20 events, an essential partner for Germany's foreign relations policy. The mutual respect and results brought by this partnership show that the German-Brazilian Digital Dialogue is seen as prolific and successful.

7.4 India

The digital landscape necessitates international cooperation to foster smooth collaboration and leverage national strengths. Germany and India, recognizing this need, have established a framework for bilateral dialogues on digital issues.

Finding Common Ground and Nudging Policymaking:

When applied to the digital realm, bilateral diplomacy focuses on engaging with individual foreign states on a range of issues (Rana, 2020). The core objective of these dialogues is to identify areas of mutual interest while acknowledging and productively discussing potential differences. This collaborative approach creates platforms for India, Germany (and the EU) to discuss and align their digital policies. The goal is to create a conducive environment that facilitates trade and business opportunities, promotes standardized regulations for smooth collaboration, and allows both nations to leverage each other's strengths.

Firstly, harmonized policies and regulations can eliminate unnecessary hurdles for businesses. Secondly, standardization efforts pave the way for seamless data exchange, joint projects on cutting-edge technologies, and the development of interoperable digital infrastructure. Finally, these dialogues present an opportunity for knowledge transfer. German companies can harness India's vast pool of software talent, while Germany's established best practices in data protection (e.g., GDPR) can inform India's evolving legal framework (e.g., Data Protection Law 2023). Notably, these dialogues are a nudge towards advancements that showcase each nation's strengths. For example, India's expertise in software development can be combined with Germany's focus on ethical AI development, leading to the creation of more responsible technologies.

Benefits of Collaboration: Sharing Knowledge and Building Synergy

Interoperable standards are a prime example of a mutually beneficial outcome. Sharing best practices, as seen in Germany's experience with implementing the GDPR, can provide valuable insights into India's evolving Data Protection Law. Regarding ethical AI development, Germany can benefit from combining its emphasis on responsible technology with India's data protection framework.

Platforms like the G20 Summit, Internet Governance Forum (IGF), and NASSCOM delegation visits facilitate knowledge exchange. During a NASSCOM visit to the Port of Hamburg, discussions focused on digitization challenges and how Indian software companies could contribute solutions.

Multi-Stakeholder Engagement: A Broader Voice at the Table

While government ministries are the driving force behind the dialogues, a holistic approach requires private sector participation. Industry associations like NASSCOM, representing Indian IT, software firms, and startups, provide valuable insights from a business perspective. Their involvement ensures that policies are formulated with real-world considerations in mind.

The level of CSO involvement depends on the specific ministries and the Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI). GIZ, acting as a facilitator, has invited experts like Pramod Varma to participate in IGF sessions on digital public infrastructure. CSOs can bring critical perspectives on issues like digital rights and inclusivity. Their inclusion adds a crucial layer of nuance to the policymaking process, ensuring that it addresses all stakeholders' diverse needs and concerns.

Challenges and Considerations: Ensuring Continuity and Addressing Concerns

Despite the evident benefits, the success of these dialogues relies on overcoming specific challenges. Sustained commitment from both sides is essential for ensuring continuity. A signed Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) with a clear work plan ensures that dialogues stay on track even when political landscapes shift.

Digital rights advocacy groups have yet to be formally included in the dialogues. These groups possess data on internet shutdowns, deliberate disruptions, and executive orders that have caused significant inconvenience for millions in recent years (Ellis-Petersen & Hassan, 2023). Their inclusion ensures that policy discussions address concerns about digital rights and internet freedom.

The German-Indian Digital Dialogue faces a "tripartite alignment" challenge. This means ensuring sustained government commitment on both sides, balancing the diverse interests of private and civil society stakeholders, and aligning digital standards across their distinct regulatory environments. Bridging these gaps requires navigating political fluctuations, finding common ground amidst varied needs, and fostering a flexible approach to harmonize digital regulations for smoother collaboration.

7.5 Japan

The German-Japanese Digital Dialogue, known as the "Japan-German ICT Dialogue" in Japan, began in 2016 and is the first bilateral digital dialogue. Since then, annual meetings with Germany and Japan, alternating between host countries, have been held. While the standard is on-site meetings, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced hybrid settings, potentially allowing more stakeholders to participate. Past topics have included IoT, Beyond5G/6G technology, and internet governance. However, they are different in every session. The common practice in setting the agenda is for the host country to present the initial agenda, which the partner country reviews, and there is some back and forth between the two countries based on their interests. Nonetheless, the host country usually holds more power in setting the agenda for that year.

Through the dialogues, the two countries have benefitted from 1) Exploring potential joint projects, 2) Alignment for multilateral frameworks, and 3) sharing best practices. Regarding 1), Germany and Japan have vital tech sectors and their respective field of research and development. Together with the similar values of the two countries, the dialogues have enabled the two countries to explore joint projects in the field of Beyond5G/6G research and development. Regarding 2), Germany and Japan are members of multilateral frameworks like the G7 and G20, where important digital policy issues are also discussed. The Digital Dialogues serve as a momentous occasion for the two countries to understand each other's objectives and align their positions regarding the broader international digital policy.

Non-governmental stakeholders from different sectors of society have been involved in the German-Japan Digital Dialogue from both sides. However, within this group, the

involvement of private tech-sector companies has been most visible primarily from the Japanese side. GIZ aspires to involve a better diversity of stakeholders, but something is preventing this. One possible reason is that there are more human resources in the relevant ministries. For example, the Japanese ministry in charge of Digital Dialogues is the MIC, which has different regional divisions in charge of digital affairs, of which Europe is one. However, only three people are in this division in Europe. A Japanese government official from the MIC has explicitly stated that this is the primary reason further cooperation has been prevented, at least from the Japanese side. This issue, however, can also be analyzed from the perspective of coordination. In recent years, both the German and Japanese governments have experienced institutional shifts. For example, digital dialogues shifted from being the responsibility of the BMWK to being the responsibility of the BMDV in Germany. In the case of Japan, the new Digital Agency was created in 2021, which has complicated the turf regarding digital affairs with the MIC. The replacement of officials responsible for these dialogues and the different ways digital affairs are divided amongst government ministries and agencies pose hurdles to efficient coordination within the respective governments. However, better coordination may be the most realistic solution for further bilateral cooperation and for a more fruitful multistakeholder dialogue.

The on-site format of the Digital Dialogues is also crucial for the involvement of different stakeholders. This is especially true for non-governmental stakeholders like civil society because it can help them better connect with other stakeholders. Although the hybrid format may enable more stakeholders to participate, given the budgetary constraints of inviting many participants, the on-site format is preferred for the sustainable development of the multistakeholder initiative.

7.6 Kenya

The German-Kenyan Digital Dialogue, initiated in 2023, has proven beneficial, offering valuable insights and opportunities for collaboration in key areas of interest, such as business process outsourcing (BPO) or digital labor, for both nations.

Economic Growth and Investment: Germany's keen interest in enhancing economic ties with Kenya underscores the potential for fostering investment and enhancing economic relations between the two countries. Discussions on BPO exemplify a shared commitment to sustainable growth and job creation. This collaboration not only strengthens bilateral relations but also contributes to the development goals of both economies, facilitating knowledge exchange and fostering innovation in various sectors.

Private Sector Collaboration: Collaboration between the private sectors of Germany and Kenya, particularly in digital technologies, presents promising avenues for innovation and economic development. By fostering partnerships focused on knowledge sharing and technology transfer, both countries can harness the transformative potential of the digital economy. Joint ventures and initiatives between German and Kenyan companies can lead to developing new products, services, and business models, fostering entrepreneurship, job creation, and enhancing global competitiveness.

Government Services and Digitalization: Kenya's strides in digitalizing government services provide valuable lessons for Germany, showcasing innovative approaches to enhancing efficiency and accessibility in public service delivery. While Germany may only adopt Kenya's strategies partially, there exists an opportunity for fruitful knowledge exchange and collaboration. For instance, Kenya's experience with digital identity systems, mobile payment, and e-government platforms can inform Germany's efforts in modernizing public service delivery, ultimately benefiting citizens in both countries.

Digital Rights and Civil Society Engagement: Kenya's vibrant civil society, outstanding compared to the other partner countries, actively participates in discussions concerning digital rights and labor conditions, advocating for inclusive policymaking processes and upholding fundamental rights. Civil society organizations such as KICTANet are crucial in shedding light on digital labor and exploitation issues. The revelation of OpenAI paying Kenyan workers less than \$2 per hour to identify harmful content emphasizes the importance of this advocacy (Perrigo, 2023). KICTANet, for instance, advocates for fair labor practices and drives critical conversations, contributing to policy formulation efforts and promoting transparency, accountability, and social justice in digital spaces.

Development Cooperation: The bilateral dialogue has a background in development cooperation between Kenya and Germany. Through targeted initiatives and projects, organizations involved in international cooperation, like the GIZ, already provide technical support to the Kenyan government in different areas, such as data protection. This cooperation encompasses various sectors: education, healthcare, infrastructure, and technology transfer. These historical ties create dependencies, also seen in the Kenyan-German Dialogue, given the limited financial resources and focus on international digital policy on the Kenyan side. Hence, these power asymmetries are a continuity that takes time to overcome.

7.7 Mexico

The Mexican-German Digital Dialogue, initiated in 2018, has grown in relevance among participating ministries, focusing on establishing fair access, rulemaking, and security processes for the digital sphere. Key areas of interest include Internet access, professionalization of small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs), and product or investment opportunities with commercial partners.

Bilateral-to-Global Platform: At the ministerial level, Mexico has expanded coordination beyond the Mexican Ministry of the Economy, with the Ministry of Communications, Innovation, and Transport (SCIT) involved in matters related to infrastructure and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) related to AI Governance. Despite having undergone three economic minister changes in the past four years, the planning and execution of annual meetings are advancing and serve as an essential space to revise policy planning and programming. The in-person visit to KIO Networks in the Queretaro data cluster at the local level exemplifies how subnational stakeholders from diverse fields have a global platform to share best practices. In this sense, the IDDs help all actors in the ecosystem be more aware of the strategies first for bilateral collaboration and then at a larger scale.

Digital Inclusion and SMB Professionalization: Mexico is committed to improving productivity and, thus, impacting people's overall well-being. This agenda manifests in the gained relevance of digital inclusion since it means more Internet access, digital skills, and the resiliency and best practices that SMBs need to succeed in today's regulatory landscape. *"Where do SMBs join in the supply chain, and how can we prepare them to comply with minimum regulations and the upcoming changes?"* as stated by the Mexican Competitiveness Center (CCMX), an initiative led by 59 of the most important Mexican companies to support SMBs by transferring best practices and boosting their economic development. An example is the recent SMB workshop held in February 2024, in which both German and Mexican counterparts exchanged views about the risks and opportunities related to digital solutions.

Strengthening Representation: Given the different ways stakeholders may be engaged (e.g., meetings, workshops, case study presentations, etc.), the level of contributions can differ per topic. In the case of SMBs, a key challenge compared to other formats includes representation. The involvement of actors depends on how the invitation is made, at times through government partner databases or industry organizations. However, not all participants who can benefit know English, and in this sense, other formats provide live translation or Spanish content by default to engage participants. Additionally, briefing subnational governments with their own economic and digital strategies can drive the representation and create bridges for further engagement.

The Case of Experiential Learning: Expectations to further digitization depend on the capacity to gain information and see how the transformation works in practice. Regarding engagement, SMBs like to benchmark themselves in an applied setting to "see and taste" process changes, as stated by CCMX. For instance, the Japanese Bootcamp of Lean Manufacturing has brought Mexican SMBs to Japan to show how they can improve productivity, reduce waste, have more visibility of information, and integrate processes with new technology. Participants then return to Mexico and share the knowledge in a documented model. While not all workshop cases qualify for this format, identification of mutual interest areas (e.g., circular economy, cyber security, etc.) could be considered, and an application process for German companies to visit Mexico and vice versa could be arranged with sub-national stakeholders.

7.8 Challenges moving forward

Given the thematic division of challenges and lessons learned from each bilateral Digital Dialogues as well as consideration of other multilateral fora, a series of challenges have been identified and summarized in the following table:

Profitability

- Top-down selection of topics (transparency)
- Institutional uncertainty due to government changes
- Transferability – how to learn success factors and apply them to different dialogues given different contexts and cultures.

Representation

- Citizen participation
- Accountability (distinguish public/private interests) – who's interests are represented in the dialogue?

Engagement

- Workload (understaffed ministries + coordination challenges by ministries)
- Coordination "GIZ – ministries" + coordination "inside GIZ"
- Stakeholder engagement
- Complex policy implementation structure
- Technocratic cooperation

Regarding profitability, IDDs have as their primary challenge the decision-making process for selecting digital policy priority areas. These are set bilaterally at the ministerial level and are part of a broader cooperation agreement. Non-government stakeholders in different countries stress the need for a feedback mechanism that complements the selection of topics. Brazil is an exception, noting horizontality; however, it also notes the need to increase civil society engagement. Furthermore, the institutional uncertainty due to internal government changes and the profile aspects related to the stakeholders involved (e.g., history, language, cultural approach to business, etc.) can make the success factors related to a partner country's advancement more ambiguous.

In terms of representation, except for Kenya's civil society, all countries struggle with questions related to the reach and involvement of civil society — to which point it is important to stress how IDDs can and cannot address deeper issues related to civic participation. Nonetheless, there are opportunities for inclusion, as seen in the case of Mexico. Most stakeholders agree that an open call format could be explored even if not all voices are always represented due to funding or organizational constraints.

Lastly, engagement is a common challenge experienced across government actors, whether in Germany or partner countries' lack of staffing. This puts a coordination effort at the center of opportunities, given that individual efforts exist in different ministries, and awareness of IDDs takes time. However, suggestions to engage willing actors at the sub-national level or pool resources among ministries point to measures that can improve the format in the short- and long term.

8 Conclusion

Our study points out that IDDs are a thriving tool for horizontal engagement and developing the digital sector in involved countries. The current International Digital Dialogues (IDDs) model offers a valuable platform for international cooperation on digital governance. Several success stories have been described, and each country's perceived success factors are described in detail in Annex A.

In the three dimensions analyzed (profitability, engagement, and representation), good practices are being implemented in the IDDs. However, this study points out some changes that could be made to enhance the positive impact of IDDs even further. In these dimensions, the recommendations are separated into "incremental changes," focused on more feasible measures to be adopted in the short run, and "transformational changes," broader measures to be implemented in the long run. It is essential to highlight that the suggestions are generally non-mutually exclusive and could be implemented parallelly.

8.1 Improvements: incremental change

Incremental change recommendations

Profitability

- **Prioritize onsite events.** Instead of online events, onsite events allow greater stakeholder engagement and enhance horizontal connections between players.
- Underline the significance of increasing the availability of personnel involved with IDDs in governmental structures. The current limitation of personnel responsible for the IDDs in ministries both from Germany and from partner countries poses a significant challenge. By increasing public personnel involved with IDDs through allocating public servants or better coordinating different public entities, we can enhance the activities done in the partnership, bringing faster and better results.

Representation

- Reiterate the need to amplify funding, with a particular emphasis on supporting civil society. The current lack of financial resources for IDDs hampers our ability to effectively engage civil society, thereby undermining our efforts to address the goals outlined in Germany's Strategy for International Digital Policy. By increasing funding, we can ensure that all voices are heard and that our policy goals are met.
- Advocate for open calls in the stakeholder selection process. Instead of relying on email lists for invitations, we propose establishing a structured and transparent process for stakeholder selection. This approach mitigates potential biases and enhances the legitimacy of IDDs, fostering a sense of fairness and inclusivity among all stakeholders.

Engagement

- **Transparent and multi-actor agenda setting.** Instead of the involved ministries defining the topics for the IDDs and inviting stakeholders, the joint definition between different stakeholders from the involved countries can have better legitimacy and broader results.
- **Multi-level engagement.** Some IDDs are already profiting from the involvement of subnational governments (states and municipalities). Including local/state governmental and civil society representatives can bring new insights and allow the diffusion of state-of-the-art practices globally.

8.2 Improvements: transformational change

Transformational change recommendations

Profitability

- **Parliamentarian Track:** A stronger focus on the legislative aspects through a dedicated parliamentary track can lead to more concrete policy changes and regulations that benefit businesses and foster innovation in both countries.
- **Reduced Operational Costs:** Fewer mailing lists and a more strategic social media presence can streamline communication and reduce administrative costs.
- **Sub-national Collaboration:** Expanding the dialogue beyond the national level to include sub-national governments fosters collaboration on regional digital infrastructure projects, potentially attracting investments and creating new economic opportunities.

Representation:

- **Grassroots Engagement:** Inviting grassroots organizations from both countries ensures a broader range of voices are heard in the dialogue, leading to more inclusive policymaking that reflects the needs of all stakeholders.
- **Cross-Border Youth Engagement:** Initiatives fostering youth engagement across borders, such as exchange programs or online forums, can cultivate future leaders with a global perspective and a commitment to digital cooperation.
- **Open Call for Best Practices:** An open call for best practices on digital governance allows both countries to learn from successful initiatives at various levels, leading to more effective and equitable policies.

Engagement

- **Citizen Engagement:** Enhancing citizen engagement through various channels like social media discussions and town hall meetings fosters a sense of ownership and builds public support for the IDD's objectives. This can lead to increased interest from stakeholders and potential partners.
- **Branding and Identity:** A stronger brand identity for the IDD, including a more strategic social media presence, can raise awareness and attract a wider audience. This can increase public and private sector participation, improving the dialogue's impact.
- **Design Sprint:** A collaborative design sprint focused on the IDD can help identify innovative solutions to address current challenges and reimagine the dialogue's format for the digital age.
- **Widening the Narrative:** Moving beyond a purely technical focus to include discussions on climate change and the twin transition (digitalization and decarbonization) can attract broader stakeholders and make the IDD more relevant to the global conversation.

The Urgent Need for Civil Society in Digital Transformation Discussions

The digital revolution presents a double-edged sword. While technology fosters connection and innovation, it also creates opportunities for abuse. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are crucial for mitigating these risks and ensuring an inclusive digital future.

Digital Threats to Civic Space:

- **Silencing Dissent:** Digital tools are misused to suppress criticism and silence CSOs advocating social change.
- **Surveillance and Manipulation:** Mass surveillance and data manipulation can be used to control populations and stifle dissent.
- **Extremism and Hate Speech:** Online platforms amplify hate speech and extremist views, threatening social cohesion and safety.
- **Data Privacy Concerns:** Current business models raise concerns about data protection, algorithmic bias, and privacy infringement. These undermine trust and create an atmosphere of fear for online civic engagement.
- **Unequal Access:** The digital divide excludes marginalized communities, further marginalizing them in the digital age.

CSOs as Champions of a Responsible Digital World:

- **Protecting Privacy and Security:** CSOs advocate for strong data protection laws and promote responsible use of technology.
- **Combating Disinformation:** They can help identify and counter fake news and misinformation campaigns, ensuring informed online discourse.
- **Promoting Inclusive Access:** CSOs work towards bridging the digital divide, ensuring everyone benefits from the digital revolution.
- **Safeguarding Civic Space:** They advocate for policies protecting online freedom of expression and assembly, ensuring a vibrant digital civic space.
- **Ethical Considerations:** CSOs encourage ethical development and the use of technology, considering the impact on human rights and social justice (OECD, 2020).

The digital transformation requires a multi-stakeholder approach. By including CSOs in Digital Dialogues, we can harness the power of technology for good, fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and just digital world.

IDD and Context of Bilateral Cooperation

Four main approaches influence how countries cooperate on a bilateral level. These approaches are liberal, realistic, responsible, and solidary (Hassler, 2003). Germany's relationship with its partner countries in the International Digital Dialogues can be seen as a mix of liberal and solidarity contexts, depending on the specific partner and the issue.

Liberal Context:

Focus on Common Rules: Germany pushes for a liberal context, aiming for a standard set of rules governing digital issues like data protection and internet governance. This benefits all countries by creating a fair and predictable environment for digital interaction.

Benefits and Challenges: Countries with solid digital economies (like Germany) might see a tremendous advantage in the free trade of digital goods and services under a liberal framework. However, developing countries might need help to compete and require capacity-building support (solidarity context) to benefit fully.

Solidarity Context:

Addressing Capability Gaps: Germany might also engage in solidarity by offering support to partner countries with less developed digital infrastructure or expertise. This could involve knowledge sharing, technical assistance, or capacity-building programs.

Mutual Benefit: By helping developing countries bridge the digital divide, Germany fosters a more stable and secure digital environment for all. A more digitally integrated world also creates new markets and opportunities for German businesses.

Germany's Strengths: Germany's advanced digital infrastructure, robust data protection laws, and established tech sector make it well-positioned to contribute knowledge and expertise in solidarity.

Partner Diversity: Each partner country's specific needs and capabilities will determine the balance between liberal and solidarity approaches. Germany likely tailors its approach based on these factors.

Overall, Germany's engagement with partner countries in the International Digital Dialogues combines liberal and solidarity contexts, striving for a balance that benefits all parties while considering their capabilities.

8.3 What can be improved in the long run?

When considering a transformational scenario, concerns regarding accountability, transparency, and political influence necessitate improvements to ensure IDDs contribute to a more inclusive and democratic digital future. Here are critical recommendations for strengthening IDDs:

1. Enhanced Transparency and Stakeholder Selection:

- **Clear Selection Criteria:** Establish transparent and publicly available criteria for stakeholder selection in IDDs. This should ensure representation from a diverse range of stakeholders, including:
 - Civil society organizations (CSOs) with expertise in digital rights, privacy, and social justice issues.
 - Academia, including researchers and scholars focusing on internet governance and digital policy.
 - Technical experts representing a variety of sectors, such as cybersecurity professionals, software developers, and internet infrastructure providers.
 - Private sector representatives, including companies of different sizes and across various digital industries.
- **Open Nomination Process:** Implement an open nomination process allowing interested stakeholders to express their interest in participating in IDDs. This can be done through online platforms or dedicated contact points.

- **Diversity and Balance:** Strive for a balanced representation of stakeholders across different regions, ethnicities, and genders. Ensure participation from developing countries to foster a truly global conversation.

2. Increased Citizen Participation and Public Education:

- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about IDDs, their purpose, and how they can get involved. Utilize various communication channels, including social media, traditional media outlets, and community events.
- **Citizen Engagement Platforms:** Develop online platforms for citizen engagement, allowing for public submissions of ideas, comments, and questions related to IDD topics. Interactive forums and surveys can facilitate citizen input and gather public opinion.
- **Citizen Assemblies:** Consider incorporating citizen assemblies for deeper citizen participation. These temporary groups of randomly selected citizens can deliberate on specific digital policy issues and provide recommendations to be presented at IDDs.

3. Optimizing IDD Structure and Processes:

- **Multi-Level Engagement:** Promote engagement beyond the national level. Encourage participation from local and state representatives with expertise in digital governance issues relevant to their communities.
- **Pre-Dialogue and Post-Dialogue Processes:** Organize pre-dialogue workshops or online consultations to gather stakeholder input on dialogue topics. Following the dialogue, publish detailed reports summarizing discussions, outcomes, and action plans.
- **Independent Oversight Mechanism:** Establish an independent oversight mechanism to monitor IDD processes and ensure transparency. This body could be composed of representatives from civil society and academia.

4. Strengthening Accountability and Legitimacy:

- **Distinguishing Public and Private Sectors:** Differentiate between the roles of government (legislative and executive branches) and public participation in IDDs. Public participation should be distinct from government agendas and ensure a plurality of voices.
- **Focus on Public Interest:** Ensure that IDD outcomes prioritize the public interest and promote human rights principles online.
- **Corporate Accountability Mechanisms:** Explore mechanisms for increased corporate accountability within the framework of IDDs. This could require participating corporations to adhere to specific ethical guidelines or social responsibility standards.

5. Fostering Continuity and Long-Term Impact:

- **Robust Joint Declarations of Intent (JDIs):** Develop comprehensive JDIs that clearly outline dialogue goals, expected outcomes, and a work plan with specific milestones. This can help ensure continuity even if political leadership changes.
- **Long-Term Strategic Planning:** Implement long-term strategic planning for IDDs, outlining key priorities and areas of focus for future dialogues.
- **Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building:** Facilitate knowledge-sharing and capacity-building initiatives within the IDD framework. This can involve workshops and training programs that equip stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills to participate effectively in the dialogues.

6. Collaboration and Networking:

- **Technocratic and Bureaucratic Cooperation:** Encourage collaboration between government officials and technical experts. This can be achieved through joint working groups or dedicated technical advisory panels to ensure that sound technical understanding informs policy decisions.
- **Leveraging Existing Networks:** Utilize existing networks of organizations like NExT e.V. to facilitate networking and knowledge sharing among stakeholders involved in Digital Dialogues. These platforms can foster collaboration on shared challenges and best practices.
- **South-South Cooperation:** Promote knowledge exchange and collaboration between developing countries to ensure their voices are heard and their specific needs are addressed in IDD discussions.

Bibliography

- Brunetti, F., Matt, D. T., Bonfanti, A., De Longhi, A., Pedrini, G., & Orzes, G. (2020). *Digital transformation challenges: strategies emerging from a multi-stakeholder approach*. The TQM Journal, 32(4), 697–724. <https://doi.org/10.1108/tqm-12-2019-0309>
- Daniels, C., Erforth, B., & Teevan, C. (2022). Africa–Europe Cooperation and Digital Transformation [E-Book]. In Routledge eBooks. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003274322>
- Ellis-Petersen, H., & Hassan, A. (2023). 'A tool of political control': How India became the world leader in internet blackouts. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/25/a-tool-of-political-control-how-india-became-the-world-leader-in-internet-blackouts>
- Hassler, B. (2003). *Gains from bilateral cooperation: a tentative research agenda*. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:526011/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Hofmann, J. (2016). *Multi-stakeholderism in Internet governance: putting a fiction into practice*. Journal of Cyber Policy, 1(1), 29–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23738871.2016.1158303>
- Hudson, B., Hunter, D. J., & Peckham, S. (2019). *Policy failure and the policy-implementation gap: can policy support programs help?* Policy Design and Practice, 2(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2018.1540378>
- Kadiri, A. (2021). *Data and Afrofuturism: an emancipated subject?* Internet Policy Review, 10(4). <https://doi.org/10.14763/2021.4.1597>
- NETmundial. (2014). NETmundial Multistakeholder Statement [PDF]. <https://netmundial.br/2014/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/NETmundial-Multistakeholder-Document.pdf>
- Nothias, T. (2020). *Access granted: Facebook's free basics in Africa*. Media, Culture & Society, 42(3), 329–348. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443719890530>
- OECD (2020). *Digital Transformation and the Futures of Civic Space to 2030*, Development Policy Paper, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/Digital-Transformation-and-the-Futures-of-Civic-Space-to-2030.pdf>
- Perrigo, B. (2023, January 18). *Exclusive: OpenAI Used Kenyan Workers on Less Than \$2 Per Hour to Make ChatGPT Less Toxic*. TIME. <https://time.com/6247678/openai-chatgpt-kenya-workers/>
- Rana, K. S. (2020). *Bilateral diplomacy: a practitioner perspective*. DiploFoundation: Policy Papers and Briefs, pp. 15, 1–15.
- Taylor, L. (2017). *What is data justice? The case for connecting digital rights and freedoms globally*. Big Data & Society, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951717736335>

Attachment A – Comparative Table

Questions	Mexico	Brazil	Japan	India	
Profitability What does a successful dialogue look like?	A successful Digital Dialogue makes sure relevant actors are reached beyond single-interest topics and are committed to improving productivity and the well-being of people.	A successful Digital Dialogue is based on a horizontal discussion and should bring results for all involved countries.	Japan looks for three major outcomes from the Digital Dialogues: joint projects with Germany, alignment for multilateral talks, and the sharing of the best practices / what the two countries have learned from their domestic policies.	India leverages the platform to present its strengths in software and IT skills, potentially, leading to business opportunities like sending skilled workers or software solutions to Germany.	<p>Kommentiert [SL1]: Could you please fill this out @Nodoka Kudo?</p> <p>Kommentiert [NK2R1]: Thanks for point this out. It was under my radar. I filled it out!</p>
Engagement What has been the quality of engagement?	The scope of engagement has grown (e.g. Foreign Affairs now involved) and the value of bilateral relationships does not stay at a high level. Internal collaboration among regions is a point to improve.	The topics being discussed in the IDDs have grown broader. Engagement started in an industry-driven platform through companies' collectives (associations and organizations).	A diversity of stakeholders has participated in the past. However, given the nature of the topics that have been discussed, private tech sector companies are the most notable non-governmental stakeholders. The involvement of other stakeholders could be improved with on-site meetings and better feedback after the annual meetings.	An open email address allows stakeholders to express interest, fostering participation from relevant parties.	The quality of engagement in the dialogue between Kenya and Germany has been robust, characterized by active participation from stakeholders across various sectors. Civil society organizations have contributed valuable insights into digital rights and labor conditions, while discussions on economic growth and investment have showcased a shared commitment to fostering closer ties.
Representation Who gets invited?	Involving other stakeholders depends on the country partner, and at times, a request to invite a specific stakeholder or company can be made. Not 100% of the voices are heard but the dialogues are representative. Industry orgs. that represent small businesses recommend having accessible support for non-English speakers	In the first phases of the Digital Dialogue, companies were represented by their associations. The current Digital Dialogue phase presents challenges regarding the need to increase involvement of civil society and subnational governments.	The government contacts the relevant stakeholders depending on the topics that are decided upon. It may be beneficial to include the voices of non-governmental stakeholders in the topic selection and agenda setting as well.	Involving government ministries alongside private associations like NASSCOM ensures a comprehensive representation of Indian interests.	A diverse range of stakeholders representing various sectors, including government agencies, civil society organizations, private enterprises, academia, and research institutions. Marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and minority communities, may not always have equal opportunities to

	(e.g. Live translation) in sessions or trainings.				participate due to limited funding.
--	---	--	--	--	-------------------------------------

Attachment B – Script for Semi-Structured Interviews

The interviews were divided into sessions, with a specific session for GIZ interviewees. The rationale of each question is presented in the beginning, between parentheses. Some topics have follow-up questions to understand them better.

1. Introduction
 - 1.1. (Informational) Name, country, role/position
 - 1.2. (Informational) Since when is the person involved with IDD
 - 1.3. (Informational) Introductions and explanation of the semi-structured interview process
 - 1.4. (Informational) Can you tell me about the work that you do at _____?
2. Present bilateral Digital Dialogues ("The world as is")
 - 2.1. (Policy Process) We want to know more about how your country understands bilateral dialogues. What do you use bilateral dialogues for?
 - 2.1.1. (Follow-up) What are your priorities?
 - 2.2. (Policy Process) At what events do you discuss digital policy? Is there any you like?
 - 2.3. (Profitability) What does a successful bilateral dialogue/relationship look like? Who gets invited?
 - 2.3.1. (Follow-up) Could you provide examples?
3. Value added ("What Germany and partner countries gain?")
 - 3.1. (Profitability) Now, let us focus on International Digital Dialogue. When did the collaboration begin, and what do you want to achieve?
 - 3.2. (Profitability) How is it different from other dialogues you have? How is it the same?
 - 3.3. (Engagement) Suppose I belong to an NGO or run a business in your country. I want to participate in IDD. How would that work?
 - 3.3.1. (Representation) What happens if a sector is over / underrepresented?
 - 3.3.2. (Follow-up) How are sectors defined/determined? Who gets to decide (Representation)
4. Possible Futures ("What do the partner desires to see?")
 - 4.1. (Shaping) What exchange/case has Germany found most interesting from your country? Please describe.
 - 4.1.1. (Follow-up) How is this being used in Germany?
 - 4.2. (Shaping) What have you found essential from Germany's exchanges? Please describe.
 - 4.2.1. (Follow-up) How is this being used in your country?
 - 4.3. (Shaping) In terms of the format, could you describe your most and least favorite experiences?
 - 4.3.1. (Follow-up) What would you change?
 - 4.3.2. (Follow-up) What is the follow-up process in IDD? What are the parameters used to gauge the success ratio?
 - 4.4. (Engagement) Overall, what has been your experience with other stakeholders in IDD?



4.4.1. (Representation) Would you do something different to engage specific sectors? If so, which?

5. GIZ guiding questions
 - 5.1. What should political decision-makers pay attention to when involving stakeholders to make the process profitable for everyone?
 - 5.2. How can bilateral dialogues help the engaged countries shape governance processes and regulations?
 - 5.3. How can international bilateral Digital Dialogues help engage stakeholders from the perspective of German political decision-makers (BMDV/GIZ)?