

Digital Infrastructure

Digital infrastructure catalyses technological innovation and bridges the digital divide for sustainable development.

Digital infrastructure encompassing telecommunications, fibre networks, ICT facilities, and digital technologies, forms the backbone for digital transformation, which has emerged as a transformative force for socio-economic development worldwide. *The Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025* identified ICT and digitalisation as priority areas for cooperation under science, technology, innovation, trade, and industrial development (BRICS Russia, 2020c; BRICS India, 2021; BRICS Russia, 2024b). This strategy further emphasises cooperation in promoting inclusive growth, strengthening connectivity, supporting industrial modernisation, and accelerating sustainable development across BRICS countries (BRICS Russia, 2020c; BRICS India, 2021; BRICS Russia, 2024b). Digitalisation contributes to socioeconomic development, digital inclusion, and development of knowledge societies through the expansion of universal access to digital communication and broadband infrastructure (BRICS India, 2021).

The BRICS Ministerial Track and Working Group on ICT Cooperation oversee the implementation of the ICT agenda and facilitate international engagement on digital issues (BRICS India, 2021). Key areas of cooperation include e-commerce, collaboration in national digital agendas, business-to-business (B2B) engagement, research and development, innovation, capacity building, e-governance, and ICT security, to strengthen the digital economy and consumer protection across participating countries (BRICS India, 2021). The framework also encourages cooperation among ministries, regulatory institutions, startups, and business associations to strengthen digital ecosystems and improve transparency and consumer trust. (BRICS India, 2021).

The institutional ecosystem and mechanisms of BRICS cooperation in digital infrastructure include *BRICS ICT Development Agenda and Action Plan*¹, *Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership*², *Framework for BRICS E-commerce Cooperation*³, *BRICS Digital Economy*

¹ BRICS China (2017)

² BRICS Russia (2024c)

³ BRICS Russia (2015)

*Working Group*⁴, *BRICS Rapid Information Security Channel*⁵, *BRICS Roadmap of Practical Cooperation on ICT Security*⁶, *BRICS Digital Task Force*⁷, *BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation Agreement*⁸, *BRICS Payments Task Force*⁹, *BRICS Cross-Border Payments Initiative*¹⁰, and *BRICS Fintech Innovation Hub*¹¹. These mechanisms cover a wide spectrum with an aim to promote coordination in cybersecurity, digital governance, satellite and communications technologies, digital financial systems, and cross-border digital cooperation.

Collectively, these initiatives aim to strengthen digital inclusion, innovation, connectivity, and sustainable digitalisation across BRICS countries.

Digital infrastructure is one of the key focus areas of NDB's operations under its General Strategy for 2022–2026. The Bank supports back-end digital infrastructure projects that improve internet access and digital services, such as overland and sub-sea cables, landing stations, and telecom towers, especially in underserved areas. These investments have the potential to enhance connectivity, accelerate access to services, and enable people and businesses to participate more sufficiently in the modern digital economy (NDB, 2022). By end-2025, NDB's active portfolio in digital infrastructure investment stood at USD 300 million (NDB, 2026a). The Bank also supports digital infrastructure indirectly, by channelling financing through financial intermediaries and by making selected equity investments.

NDB recognises that technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data can enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of infrastructure and public services. In the coming years, NDB aims to increase support for secure, affordable and inclusive digital infrastructure, helping member countries to improve everyday services and support sustainable growth (NDB, 2026b). NDB will step up its efforts to invest in digital infrastructure and related technological innovation, which are key enablers of transformative development and future growth.

⁴ BRICS South Africa (2023)

⁵ BRICS Russia (2020b)

⁶ BRICS South Africa (2018)

⁷ BRICS Brazil (2019)

⁸ BRICS Brazil (2019)

⁹ BRICS Brazil (2019)

¹⁰ BRICS Brazil (2025b)

¹¹ BRICS Brazil (2025b)

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