

SOUTH AFRICA in the DIGITAL AGE

Press statement

South Africa in the Digital Age (SADA) is an urgent, multi-sectoral, economic strategy development process to charter South African pathways for inclusive growth in the digital age.

The process is a joint venture by University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), Genesis Analytics and the Pathways for Prosperity Commission. South Africa was presented with the opportunity to be the first country globally to pilot this process by the international Pathways for Prosperity Commission, an initiative by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the University of Oxford.

In December 2018, the Commission approached South Africa to ask whether it could pilot this strategising process in South Africa as the first country globally to do so. After consultations with Trudi Makhaya, the economic adviser to the President, it was clear that this is a historic opportunity for the country to take a world-leading role in this key area.

Thus was launched **the South Africa in the Digital Age (SADA) initiative** to identify inclusive economic opportunities for job creation, and the enablers and actions required for these opportunities to scale significantly. It was decided to link the process to the already dynamic Public-Private Growth Initiative (PPGI) between the Presidency and the private sector. The PPGI is the primary means by which the government is turning growth proposals by the market and non-government players into policy. Guidance and assistance in this process include the DG responsible for implementing PPGI proposals, Mpumi Mpofo, as well as Mteto Nyati, who heads the ICT component of PPGI. This is the first PPGI initiative that is multi-sectoral and the first one that goes to medium-term planning rather than removal of obstacles.

Developing South Africa's readiness to seize these opportunities when they arise is a cornerstone of the country's economic strategy. Identifying what South Africa should be ready for to create these opportunities is not straightforward, especially as the pace of disruptive innovation increases. But since decisions made now will determine South Africa's economic future, it is important to identify

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the right combination of conditions that enable these opportunities, whatever they may be, to scale significantly.

To assist with the process Pathways for Prosperity at Oxford, Genesis Analytics and GIBS partnered to develop a diagnostic framework for discussion under the umbrella of an initiative, “South Africa in the Digital Age (SADA) convened by GIBS and the Pathways for Prosperity Commission.”

To start this initial phase, five workshops will take place from 21 June to the end of July at the Gordon Institute of Business Science in Johannesburg and will form the beginning of a longer process. The workshops will make use of a Digital Readiness Assessment, developed by Genesis Analytics, that diagnoses the state of South Africa’s readiness to take up inclusive economic opportunities in the digital age, as a springboard for the discussions.

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About SADA

South Africa in the Digital Age is being guided by an advisory board, chaired by Mteto Nyati (Altron CEO chair). Other members of the board are Maria Ramos, Mpumi Mpofu (DG of DPME in Presidency), Audrey Mothupi (CEO Systemic Logic), and Stefan Dercon and Benno Ndulu, who are both academic directors at the Pathways Commission. Other South African partners include the famed youth-employment facilitator Harambee to provide practical solution design.

The SADA initiative is primed to work constructively with other processes, such as the Department of Communications' Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the 4IRSA process run by three South African universities.

About the Pathways for Prosperity Commission

In 2018 the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Oxford University, led by Melinda Gates, formed a partnership to address one of the central questions of our time: “What are the pathways to prosperity for the world’s poor in the coming digital age?”

The partnership, named the Pathways for Prosperity Commission, is now hosted and managed by Oxford University’s Blavatnik School of Government.

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The Commission, which launched in January 2019, collaborates with international development partners, developing country governments, private-sector leaders, emerging entrepreneurs and civil society. It aims to catalyse new conversations and to encourage the co-design of country-level solutions aimed at making frontier technologies work for the benefit of the world's poorest and most marginalised people.

About the Genesis Analytics Report

Genesis Analytics has developed a Digital Readiness Assessment that diagnoses the state of South Africa's readiness to take up inclusive economic opportunities in the digital age. It does this by first considering what opportunities for rapid job creation may emerge over the next 10 years, as traditional income-generating opportunities start to close off. This informs the set of readiness conditions that are measured in South Africa to determine where the country is ready for the future economic opportunities that the digital age offers, and where gaps remain which need to be closed. While most readiness assessments provide top-down measures of readiness by considering the state of macro systems in the digital economy, this report takes a unique approach by anchoring the assessment in this opportunity assessment.

The report identifies three opportunity zones and a number of enabling conditions across five readiness categories: digital access, human capital, government support, innovative business, and constructing ecosystems. This will form part of an ongoing process that will make use of additional inputs through collaboration with the 4IRSA process run by Wits University, University of Johannesburg and Fort Hare University.

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