Book title: Digitalisation for Transformation: new frontiers for Africa-Europe cooperation
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Background and rationale
Digitalisation is transforming business models, revolutionising societies, altering politics, and creating new revenue streams around the globe. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to better understand and harness the power of digital technologies to further the global common good and address the SDGs. As the digital revolution and digital technologies continue to transform people's way of life, they call for new policies and regulations touching on key areas, including competition, investments, capabilities and governance arrangements. Digital technologies and investments are also now a key component in geopolitical rivalries and tensions across the world.

Against, this backdrop, the proposed edited volume seeks to better understand challenges and opportunities for cooperation between Africa and Europe in the digital sphere. In Africa, digitalisation is transforming productive sectors, creating solutions to social problems and driving political mobilisation. Yet, many regions across Africa remain unconnected, with insufficient investments in infrastructure capabilities and skills. In addition, inadequate governance of digital technologies poses barriers to businesses and leaves citizens' data open to exploitation and abuse by a variety of actors. The European Union (EU) hopes to become a leader on digital governance, with a model centred on data protection and democratic values. To this end, a number of nascent projects and programmes aim to advance the EU's digital economy and improve its competitiveness by pooling resources and accelerating investments. The pace and scope of Africa's digitalisation offers the EU an opportunity to establish itself as a major player in a policy field where it thus far has only played a second-tier role. For the African Union (AU), Africa's data sovereignty is at stake. African governments aim to engage with the rest of the world, as equal partners, and in ways that foster innovation and development. To this end, the AU and EU have identified digitalisation as a major field for cooperation, building on the work of the AU-EU Digital Economy Task Force, which highlights a number of priority areas including infrastructure, capabilities and skills, regulation and e-services.

A review of literature on digitalisation and its link to people and society, policies and politics, in Africa and Europe, reveals that the topic has, so far, not received the appropriate level of attention. Current published works predominantly take a narrow (that is, sectoral) view, for example, focusing on digital technologies in relation to the agriculture sector, describing financial innovation, exploring advancements in the energy sector (such as the use of smart grids), or discussing China's digital cooperation with specific countries. Such publications fail to address the issue of digitalisation and its potential for transformation from a systemic perspective, ensuring that gains made in one sector are not undermined or jeopardised by gaps in other sectors. Furthermore, for transformation to be impactful, digitalisation, alongside research and innovation ecosystems, must take a challenge-led, innovation and systems approach. This challenge-led and systems approach underpins the SDGs and the nature of transformation that addresses economic growth, social and environmental concerns.

By taking a systemic perspective, this volume seeks to bring sectoral discussions (for example, digital and finance, digital and energy) into conversation with macro-level policy discussions at the national, regional, continental and bi-continental levels. Further, ongoing geopolitical rivalries around digital

technologies and debates about digital governance are influencing international cooperation and need to be brought into conversation with the literature on digital for development.

Objectives

The proposed volume seeks to better our understanding of the challenges and opportunities for an Africa-Europe partnership in the digital sphere. We seek contributions that:

- a. Unpack digitalisation, covering issues pertinent to Africa/AU and Europe/EU, while also incorporating key global perspectives;
- b. Provide academic, practitioner and policy perspectives, on ways that digital technologies can contribute to economic growth, efforts geared towards achieving the SDGs, transformation and resilience; and
- c. Offer practical, politically and economically relevant recommendations to stakeholders.

Outline and Themes

The chapters in the book will be organised around three themes – people, policies and politics. We invite contributors to submit chapter proposals that discuss **digitalisation** under one of the themes listed below. Authors should establish a clear link between the objectives of their chapter and the theme(s) they seek to cover.

- **People** (Section 1): chapters under this theme should take a people/citizens/society-centred approach and unpack digital technology issues, for example, around data, capabilities, skills, education, gender, privacy and ethics, in relation to Africa-Europe cooperation.
- **Policies** (Section 2): chapters under this theme should cover African, European and joint African-European policies, regulations, governance, frameworks, or strategies as they relate to digitalisation, including digital/mobile technologies, ecosystems, entrepreneurship, infrastructure, finance and cooperation.
- **Politics** (Section 3): contributions under this theme should cover, for example, how geopolitical competition is shaping digital investment patterns and digital governance internationally; in addition to opportunities and challenges that this poses for Africa and Europe.

As a cross-cutting theme, all contributions should seek to address opportunities for Africa-Europe cooperation on digital.

Submission procedure and guideline

Proposals should be limited to about 500-1000 words, explaining how the proposed chapter aligns with the thematic areas and objectives of the book as outlined above. The editors will only consider proposals in electronic submissions in MS Word or PDF formats. Proposals must include, the name(s) and institutional affiliations of the author(s), a title, and the thematic area under which they wish to be considered. Proposals should be submitted to aueu.digital@gmail.com no later than **January 31, 2021**.

Key dates

January 31, 2021:	Deadline for submission of book chapter proposals
February 2021:	Notification of proposal acceptance or rejection
March 2021:	Authors workshop (virtual, date tbc)
June 30, 2021:	Submission of full chapters
July 31, 2021:	Review of all contributions
August 31, 2021:	Accept or reject notification of full chapters
September 30, 2021:	Submission of final draft chapter
February 2022:	Book publication (tentative, publisher to be confirmed)