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- [Home](#)
- topics
- [Digital Transformations](#)

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Digitalization for Sustainability

Our Work

- [About](#)
- [Digitalization for Sustainability](#)
- [Sustainable Digitalization](#)

Technology is reshaping our world in profound ways – and the choices we make today hold the power to influence the future of our planet. As we navigate the complex and rapidly evolving terrain of digital transformation, it is crucial to harness technology as a force for good, one that contributes to a healthier, safer and more sustainable environment. UNEP is working to ensure that technology is a driving force in building a greener and more equitable future.

> "Real-time insights and robust knowledge will inform better decisions to help us navigate risks and advance toward a more equal and sustainable world."
>
> Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General

Our vision: Harnessing Digital Technologies for a Sustainable Future

In the domain of sustainable digital transformation, two primary aspects are:

1. Digitalization for Sustainability emphasizes the proactive development and use of digital tools to achieve environmental targets, leveraging the potential of technology to foster positive outcomes for both the environment and its inhabitants.

2. Sustainable Digitalization involves encouraging the development and use of technologies with sustainability considerations in mind, i.e. sustainability by design. This ensures that technological advancements prioritize ethical considerations and environmental sustainability throughout their lifecycle.

In essence, digital advancements should be pursued with sustainability in mind, and our quest for environmental sustainability can be greatly augmented by embracing these advancements.

Why does it matter?

Digitalization is revolutionizing how we interact with the environment, from monitoring ecosystems to conserving resources to influencing markets and consumer behaviours. By leveraging digital technology responsibly, we can tackle several environmental challenges, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, and guarantee the well-being of our planet and future generations. Ultimately, we cannot achieve the speed and scale of behavioural change that is needed for global sustainability without harnessing digital technologies and opportunities.

What we do

Explore the innovative pilots and projects of UNEP that leverage digital technology for environmental sustainability. These initiatives are at the forefront of the organization's commitment to harness digitalization for the benefit of the planet.

- **World Environment Situation Room**
  - The World Environment Situation Room is an online platform developed and meticulously maintained by UNEP. It serves as a global hub for free and universal access to crucial environmental data, information and knowledge. Its primary goal is to keep a vigilant watch over the state of the world's environment.
- **Coalition for Digital Environmental Sustainability (CODES)**
  - UNEP proudly stands as one of the founding co-champions of CODES – the global movement for digital environmental sustainability. Launched in 2021, CODES is a dynamic multi-stakeholder coalition. It offers a wealth of resources and opportunities for our global contributors to set priorities, take concerted action and develop capacities for inclusive and sustainability-driven digital transformation.
- **EnvironmentGPT**
  - EnvironmentGPT is a groundbreaking application of Large Language Model technology for environmental purposes. Our vision is to create a trusted digital public good capable of distilling the world's vast environmental science into actionable insights. EnvironmentGPT is meticulously trained using authoritative data sources, carefully vetted by UNEP to ensure integrity, quality and trust.

Facts

- All Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be positively or negatively affected by digital technology. If we look across the 17 SDGs and 169 targets, not a single one is detached from digital technology.
- Some 103 out of 169 SDG targets can be directly influenced by a combination of seven digital technologies. These include digital access, fast internet, cloud, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, extended reality and blockchain.
- Digital policy context is vital. While digital technologies offer the promise to catalyze and accelerate SDG progress, they are only effective in a wider policy context. Setting the right enabling environment and incentives will be vital to set a direction towards greener ways of living and working, and to shape technology development towards positive outcomes for the planet.

Addressing environmental challenges requires swift, expansive and transformative action at every scale. Digital tools are our pathway out of business as usual, driving us towards the SDGs with unparalleled speed and scale. We must embrace digital technologies as ways to enable and achieve our environmental goals while also ensuring those technologies are green and sustainable. A twin transition is clearly needed.

Related

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UNEP Digital Transformation
Our Work

- About
- Digitalization for Sustainability
- Sustainable Digitalization

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- [Digital Transformations](#)

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