Putting safeguards into action: 50-in-5 and DPI Safeguards Initiative launch accelerator for countries

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At this year's United Nations General Assembly, the 50-in-5 campaign is joining forces with the DPI Safeguards initiative to activate the DPI Safeguards Accelerator and a comprehensive DPI learning exchange for countries on their DPI journeys.

Today, countries seeking to leapfrog developmental outcomes are accelerating the adoption of digital public infrastructure (DPI). This ambition of UN Member States is reflected in the Global Digital Compact. From registering births in local villages to transferring social assistance to the elderly, digital systems have been transforming all aspects of life. These innovations are helping to solve public service delivery challenges, but to fully unlock society-wide benefits for all, safeguards must be woven into the design of these foundational DPI (digital identity, digital payments and data exchange systems) as a default—not as an afterthought. In the same way that bridges are constructed with measures focused on security, structural integrity, resilience, monitoring and maintenance, DPI must be built with safeguards-driven trust and inclusion to enable adoption, efficiency and innovation. This is a core principle of the 50-in-5 country-led campaign that is anchored in a safeguards-by-default approach and which recognizes that the success of DPI across countries starts with safety, trust and inclusion.

Embedding safeguards to empower countries on their DPI journey

Countries are at different stages of their DPI journeys: some are early adopters whilst others are just starting out and seek guidance. A key goal of the 50-in-5 campaign is to shorten countries' DPI adoption journeys through knowledge exchange and shared learnings. With more than 26 countries already committed, this knowledge exchange will include practical steps and learnings from real-world examples on how to embed safeguards upfront to ensure that DPI is safe and inclusive for everyone.

To unlock the potential of DPI while mitigating its risks, the Universal DPI Safeguards Framework was created through a multi-stakeholder process. It offers practical, rights-based guidance, addressing the governance, design, deployment and use of DPI by identifying risks and proposing safeguards across different stages of a DPI lifecycle. The DPI Safeguards initiative prioritizes meaningful engagement across the whole of society for effective design and implementation of DPI. It recognizes that DPI comprises technological systems and services that operate at the intersection of individuals, communities as well as public and private entities that hold significant social, political and economic influence.

Safeguards are not simply a compliance checklist: they are the guardrails that ensure DPI's potential is unlocked. By embedding safeguards from the start, countries avoid higher costs resulting from lacking adoption or retrofitting or repairing systems that were not built with inclusion and resilience in mind. The integration between the 50-in-5 campaign and the DPI Safeguards Initiative underscores the reality that safety and inclusion are the foundation for DPI uptake and innovation.

Strengthening the DPI ecosystem with safeguards for long-term prosperity

Fostering a safe and inclusive digital future is a continuous, ecosystem-wide process of building institutions that can adapt, creating conducive techno-policy environments and maintaining systems that remain relevant as technologies evolve. Implementers will need to transition from prototyping tools and processes to scaling them, staying abreast of changing technologies and filling gaps in implementation. This includes ensuring ongoing oversight and renewal beyond the initial adoption of safeguards.

This is the impetus driving the development of the following joint programmes of the 50-in-5 campaign and the DPI Safeguards initiative:

- **The DPI Safeguards Accelerator**
  The Accelerator is a platform for connecting the DPI Safeguards Initiative's global coordination with local action. Its purpose is to move countries from commitment to implementation of the safeguards framework. It will operate as a connective platform forknowledge, experts, tools and templates, forming a collective where stakeholders can learn from each other. Technical assistance provided through the Accelerator will include activation and training on safeguards, creating assessments (digital readiness, inclusion, technological and organizational interoperability and regulatory frameworks) that supports countries to embark on safeguards adoption pathways. The accelerator will also support the ecosystem development, such as the formation of multistakeholder coalitions, convenings and advisory boards to ensure that safeguards are prioritized for the long term. This structured approach will help countries scale DPI more efficiently and embed safeguards from the very beginning for greater long-term value and equitable prosperity.

- **Comprehensive and practical DPI learning exchange**
  Building on the series of 50-in-5 virtual and in-person learning events, 50-in-5 is continuing to host best practice exchanges that supply the knowledge and practical skills needed to design, implement and scale DPI responsibly. Topics will range from safeguards essentials, strengthening capability, whole-of-government thinking, institutional design, reuse of digital public goods (DPGs) and other open-source technologies, as well as building capacity. These sessions and their accompanying resources are not an end in itself but will serve as a comprehensive resource, compiling key knowledge components in one place to equip DPI implementers and trainers to advance safe and inclusive DPI.

Building a safe, inclusive and prosperous digital future together

The Global Digital Compact highlights the importance of DPI as an enabler of digital transformation, whilst underlining the role of safeguards in unlocking the societal and economic

value of DPI. Going from principles to practice calls for greater collaboration, cooperation and shared-value partnerships. This is because everyone has a stake in how DPI is designed, implemented and governed, and DPI's positive impact for people and planet hinges on a whole-of-society approach.

The emerging lessons and experiences of countries have made it clear that DPI built and implemented without appropriate safeguards risks furthering the digital divide and slowing progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. The integration of safeguards in the 50-in-5 campaign is a message and call to action to the wider DPI ecosystem — safeguards are non-negotiable and must be embedded from day one as a proactive driver essential for DPI to deliver on its promise of equitable prosperity.

Join us at the upcoming 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and the Global DPI Summit, where we will be showcasing countries' progress on DPI adoption and implementation with safeguards and inspiring collective action:

- 22 September 2025 - Digital Cooperation Day. Register your interest here.
- 22 September 2025 - DPI Cooperation in Motion 50-in-5 Milestone Event. Watch the live stream here.
- 4-6 November 2025 - Global DPI Summit. Learn more.

If you are a 50-in-5 participating country, private sector institution, civil society organization interested in DPI and safeguards, please write to the DPI Safeguards Secretariat dpi-safeguards@un.org or contact the 50-in-5 Campaign here.