DIGITAL
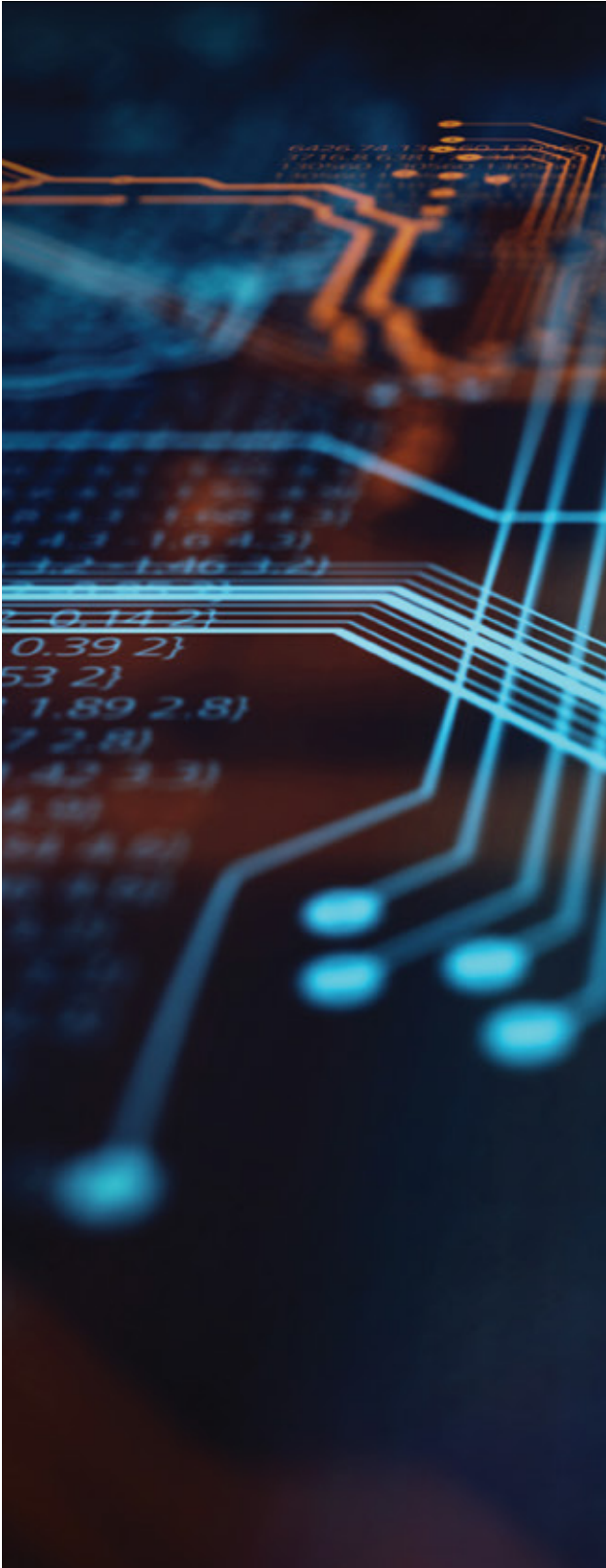## CYPRUS | 2025

DEPUTY MINISTRY OF
**RESEARCH, INNOVATION
AND DIGITAL POLICY**
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In today's globalized world, defined by transformational challenges and untapped opportunities, the competitiveness of any economy is deeply rooted in its resilience, readiness to adapt, and ability to compete and excel in a new norm. Governments nowadays are faced with an unprecedented challenge: to move forward and fast, to digitally transform themselves, while laying the foundations for society and the economy to do the same if they are to emerge stronger for the future.

Cyprus is currently in an unprecedented conjuncture - it has the opportunity to tackle the challenges that have kept it behind, and boost its digital performance and capabilities as part of its broader resilience and recovery reforms - with the established *Deputy Ministry of Innovation, Research and Digital Policy* spearheading the effort via the National Digital Strategy presented here.

VISION
- Fit-for-the-future society
- Knowledge-based economy
- Competitive regional player

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
1. Technology that works for people
2. A vibrant sustainable and resilient economy
3. An open democratic and inclusive society
4. A green digital transition for Cyprus

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
- User-centered
- Digital by default
- Secure by design
- Innovative by principle

STRATEGIC PORTFOLIOS
A. Digital Government
B. Digital infrastructure
C. Digital Economy
D. Digital Society

GOVERNMENT AS A PLATFORM

IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

The National Digital Strategy sets forth the aspirational vision for Cyprus to become a fit-for-the-future society and knowledge-based economy enabled by digital technologies. Realising this vision, relies on achieving four strategic objectives that call for technology that works for people; a vibrant, sustainable and resilient digital economy; an open, democratic and inclusive digital society; and a green, digital transition for Cyprus. Crucially, it also relies on embracing a principles-based approach to guide the government's thinking in the digital era - ensuring our digital transition is among other things user-centered, digital by default, secure by design and innovative by principle.

Targeted and concerted action towards digitalising Cyprus across each one of the three dimensions: government - society - economy - is at the heart of this strategy. Four strategic portfolios encompass all initiatives that will be undertaken to deliver the Digital Cyprus of the future. The Digital Government Portfolio includes initiatives relevant to the transformation of the government itself whilst the Digital Infrastructure, Economy and Society Portfolios include initiatives relevant to the transformation of the national infrastructure, economy and society more widely.

A new operating model that of "Government as a Platform" shall be the mechanism through which both the digitalisation governance required to orchestrate Cyprus' national digital transition and the digitalisation competency needed to enable and support it on the basis of these portfolios, are realised. Operating "as a Platform" shall enable the government to foster a vibrant digital ecosystem where industry, academia, citizens and residents all play a part in digitally transforming Cyprus.

Realising the vision for a Digital Cyprus, on the basis of the above, enjoys both national and EU backing and sponsorship and is supported by both national and EU funds (including but not restricted to the Resilience and Recovery Facility). This makes us confident that Cyprus has all it takes to foster a digital, modern, sustainable and resilient economy and society that will enable it to thrive in the years to come.

DEPUTY MINISTRY OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND DIGITAL POLICY

FROM CHALLENGE
TO OPPORTUNITY

In today's globalized world, defined by transformational challenges and untapped opportunities, the competitiveness of any economy is deeply rooted in its resilience, readiness to adapt, and ability to compete and excel in a new norm. The shifting geopolitics and socio-demographic changes, the pervasiveness of digital technologies in people's lives, but also the increased political and economic uncertainty - all highlighted and amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic - require today's governments to rise to the challenge and transform themselves, while laying the foundations for society and economy to do the same, if they are to emerge stronger for the future.

In the past year, the world has shown both how strong and how fragile it is. Despite its adverse impact, testing the resilience of our societies, economies, healthcare and welfare systems, COVID-19 has also shown that **rapid change is possible**, as millions of people quickly adapted to new ways of working, learning and socializing. Today, as the world looks ahead, it is faced with the inescapable truth:

it is time to **move away from fragility towards a new vitality**, and make change happen by design, moving forward and moving fast. **Effective digital transformation** is at the heart of this transition. It is key to driving resilience and agility in the new norm and a necessity for governments seeking **to transcend the challenges of our era** as it supports a recovery that leads to greener, more inclusive, sustainable economies, and stronger, more resilient societies.

To confidently recover and grow, governments need to **move towards more collaborative and more efficient service delivery models that capitalise on powerful ecosystems built around the concept of a "marketplace"**. Looking around the world we can see this paradigm shift emerging everywhere: governments have shifted away from the "vending machine" approach to government where citizens pay taxes and in return receive a number of predefined services designed around the government's (vending machine's) abilities rather than their needs - towards an approach where the government becomes the manager of a

DEPUTY MINISTRY OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND DIGITAL POLICY

vibrant "marketplace". In this paradigm, the government recognises that for the marketplace to be successful the offerings need to be designed around customer-needs and it should be easy for the customer (the citizen in the case of governments) to get those met every time and more crucially over time regardless if those change.

The shift to these collaborative models is true to the ethos **of the digital era**. So how is Cyprus progressing in its digital transition and its embrace of these new concepts?

To date, Cyprus' progress towards its digital transformation has been slow in comparison to its peers, yet quite notable. The country's improvement in scores against indices measuring innovation performance and digital readiness at European and global level is a testament to that. In particular, the **2020 Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)** highlighted the improvement of Cyprus' scores on all dimensions, and also praised the effort and the efficiency of digital solutions introduced to deal with COVID-19-induced needs. At the same time, the **IMD World Digital Competitiveness Ranking: Knowledge, Technology, and Future Readiness** notes that Cyprus' was the **largest increase** in digital competitiveness rankings for 2020, with the country climbing from the 54th to the 40th position. In addition to the above, Cyprus is one step prior to entering the "Strong Innovators" category in the **European Innovation Scoreboard 2021**.

A great opportunity lies ahead for Cyprus and its digital transformation. **Capitalising on the momentum** accumulated thus far as well as the recent acceleration demanded by the COVID-19 pandemic, puts the country in a better position to **tackle the challenges** that have kept it behind, and **boost its digital performance and capabilities** as part of broader resilience and recovery reforms. To do this, Cyprus needs to steer clear of the mere digitisation of existing, paper-based and bureaucratic processes, the siloed-attempts to digitalisation, vendor lock-in, and long delivery times that have characterised its journey thus far. Cyprus should instead embrace more agile and collaborative approaches to delivering digital outcomes and build on the ecosystem and marketplace paradigms observable

globally. To do this, Cyprus needs to focus on **developing a strong digitalisation competency within the government first**, to ensure it can successfully spearhead and orchestrate the national digital transformation endeavours in the other broader public sector, businesses, academia and society.

This is the challenge Cyprus' **Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy** has been tasked with and is tackling since its establishment in March 2020: transcending the impediments of the past, to fundamentally transform the Cypriot society and economy through digital technology and a strong research and innovation ecosystem. The establishment of the Deputy Ministry, is an important sign of strong political sponsorship and determination to support the fostering of a new, diversified economic model for Cyprus, driven by research, innovation and technological advancement that will enable it to stay ahead of the game for years to come. This National Digital Strategy sets forth the vision, objectives and actions the government will implement over the next five years to realise the country's digital transformation potential.

THE WAY FORWARD

Cyprus' National Digital Strategy is grounded in a clear **vision for change** that serves as the "north star" over the period of its effective duration. It answers the questions: What does Cyprus want to become? What is the ideal target-state for the future?

The vision statement for the Cyprus National Digital Strategy is as follows:

*"Cyprus to become **a fit-for-the-future society** and **knowledge-based economy** enabled by digital and emerging technologies that will drive sustainable economic growth, social prosperity and international competitiveness."*

Realising this vision, relies on achieving **four strategic objectives**. These objectives answer the questions: What must we achieve in order to make the vision a reality? What aims must we set to get there?

The four defined strategic objectives are as follows:

A VIBRANT, SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ECONOMY

Creating a vibrant, sustainable and resilient digital economy i.e. developing an economy where companies of all sizes, in any sector can compete on equal terms, while boosting business productivity, and competitiveness; and contributing to a more sustainable, resource-efficient economy. This in part, has to do with the development, marketing and use of digital technologies, products and services. It also has to do with the development of an economy where consumers can be confident that their rights are being respected.

AN OPEN, DEMOCRATIC, AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

Creating an open, democratic and inclusive digital society i.e. developing a trustworthy society in which citizens and residents are empowered in how they act, interact, and provide data both online and offline, while building confidence that Cyprus' Digital Transformation journey is deeply rooted in democratic values and respects the fundamental rights of all.

TECHNOLOGY THAT WORKS FOR PEOPLE

Making technology that works for people i.e. designing technology with people in mind (user-centered) rather than expecting people to adapt to it. This is about ensuring technology makes a real difference to people's daily lives, delivering end-to-end quality services to citizens and businesses and optimising systems, structures and processes.
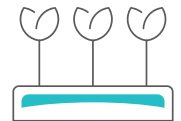
A GREEN, DIGITAL TRANSITION FOR CYPRUS

Enabling a green, digital transition for Cyprus, i.e. enabling Cyprus to transform through digital, into a modern, resource-efficient, competitive economy by investing in environmentally-friendly technologies that will accelerate our transition towards clean energy and sustainable mobility, support the circular and bio-economy and enable us to achieve climate neutrality.

DEPUTY MINISTRY OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND DIGITAL POLICY
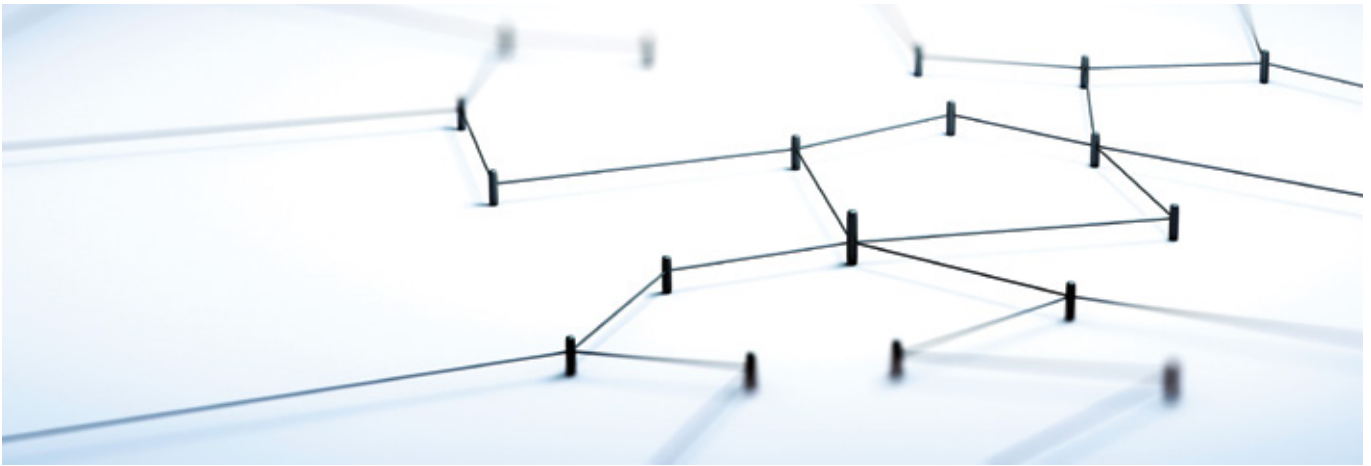
Adopting a **principles-based approach** towards digital transformation is key to the successful fulfilment of these strategic objectives and the realisation of the vision for Digital Cyprus. The guiding principles below act both as our starting point and our guideposts throughout this journey to develop Cyprus' digital maturity and achieve its aspirational vision statement.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

USER-CENTERED	**INCLUSIVE & UNIVERSAL**	**IMPACT-DRIVEN & OUTCOMES-BASED**
AGILE & SPEEDY EXECUTION	**DIGITAL-BY-DEFAULT**	**DATA-DRIVEN**
INNOVATIVE BY PRINCIPLE	**OPEN & TRANSPARENT**	**SECURE BY DESIGN**

◢ being user-centered, placing user needs at the heart of every effort to deliver a digital service or outcome;

◢ being inclusive and universal, creating a digital society that is for everybody;

◢ being impact-driven and outcomes-based, prioritising and continuously monitoring work on the basis of expected and realised benefits in the society and economy;

◢ being agile and speedy in execution delivering iteratively in small incremental improvements, failing fast and operating under a continuous improvement mindset;

◢ being digital-by-default, making the delivery of services digitally, via multiple channels the default choice and embracing a cloud-first, once-only approach to service design;

◢ being data-driven, unlocking the full potential of data to improve decision-making and realise concrete benefits for the society and economy;

◢ being open and transparent, strengthening accountability and transparency and fostering participation in public affairs through digital;

◢ being secure by design, building and maintaining confidence in the resilience and security of our digital assets, managing the risks in the opportunities of the digital age;

◢ being innovative by principle, rethinking what is possible and constantly generating new (renewed or novel) ideas and implementing them to deliver value to the society.

DEPUTY MINISTRY OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND DIGITAL POLICY

NEW OPERATING MODEL: GOVERNMENT AS A PLATFORM

Embracing and acting on the guiding principles above, is the first step to reorganising the way government operates in the digital era, enabling it to **think** in a way that is true to the ethos of the digital era. The second step is of course, enabling the government to **act** in that way. To this end, a new operating model – that of "Government as a Platform" is embraced, as a means of **delivering the mechanism (Platform)** through which all interactions required for the digitalisation of Cyprus, are delivered.

This new operating model aims to deliver both the digitalisation governance and digitalisation competency required to deliver Digital Cyprus and it is as much about **reorganising the way government operates** to ensure its digital transformation will enable society and the economy to do the same, as it is about **facilitating value-creating interactions among the vibrant ecosystem of stakeholders** of Cyprus' digital transformation (e.g. citizens, private sector, academia etc.). It calls for the adoption of a new way of working that enables the government to **deliver better services to all members of its ecosystem, more efficiently and agilely**. Crucially though, it requires it to **do so in a way that not only benefits the ecosystem, but also propels its digitalisation efforts**. To achieve this latter part, the government aims to build its transformation around secure components, processes, tools, authoritative datasets and open standards it can share with its ecosystem. In other words, it aims to operate as a Platform.

THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

In operating as a Platform, Cyprus' government is envisioned to create value by facilitating exchanges between the various stakeholders of the national digital ecosystem interacting with each other in one of three ways:

CONSUMPTION

whereby a service or shared component is made available for use by ecosystem stakeholders - entering its continuous maintenance and support cycle (until it is finally decommissioned).

ORCHESTRATION

whereby a governance structure and a set of standards and protocols that facilitate interactions at scale are established to underpin how producers and consumers operate within the ecosystem so that network effects can take place.

PRODUCTION

whereby a stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) designs, builds and tests services on top of the Platform's common foundations - or creates shared components for other stakeholders to use when creating their services.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY	PRIVATE SECTOR	GOVERNMENT	CITIZENS & RESIDENTS	NON-RESIDENTS	ACADEMIA

To facilitate interactions among ecosystem stakeholders, the government, as the orchestrator of the national digital ecosystem, shall foster and support **communities of ecosystem stakeholders**. These communities shall operate around a common core, to enable devolved execution of digital transformation work, thus accelerating the journey to a Digital Cyprus. The common core shall be built around the components (building blocks), processes, tools, authoritative datasets and open standards the government shall use to digitalise itself - via its very own **Digital Services Factory** - and enable other ecosystem stakeholders to do the same. Crucially, it will be supported by a solid, secure, integrated and modern government digital architecture, governance, interoperability frameworks, and a single government website portal Gov.CY designed around Single-Sign On and digital identity, where government services shall be made accessible to all. Adopting this new paradigm, will enable ecosystem stakeholders to work on different facets of Cyprus' digital transformation interoperably, thus speeding up the pace at which Cyprus achieves its digital transformation objectives.

STRATEGIC PORTFOLIOS

Realising the national digital vision and objectives, in a way that is true to the principles above, **requires targeted and concerted action** across each one of the dimensions of the national digital transformation: government - society – economy enabled and orchestrated via "Government as a Platform". **Four strategic portfolios** have thus been compiled to organise all the strategic initiatives that make up the country's digitalisation action plan until 2027. The first is the Digital Government portfolio in recognition of the **catalytic role the government - the largest stakeholder of the country's digital ecosystem** - has to play in diversifying economic growth and enhancing societal prosperity by transforming itself in a way that enables others to do the same. The remaining three are the Digital Infrastructure, Economy and Society portfolios that aim at implementing initiatives targeted more widely at the digitalisation of the society and economy.

THE DIGITAL GOVERNMENT PORTFOLIO

The Digital Government Portfolio aims to deliver a government that is digital to the core, uses its data effectively, adopts new and develops existing technologies, and drives broader efforts to build a digital economy and society.

This portfolio encompasses initiatives designed to achieve digitally transforming the government such as the:

1. Rebuilt of the government's digital infrastructure including the:

◢ development of a solid, integrated and modern **digital architecture blueprint and standards** (to underpin how government entities operate and interact); the integration of various public sector.

◢ **integration of the various public sector information systems** and databases to ensure adherence to the once-only principle and to provide efficient and secure digital public services that will make citizens and businesses lives easier,

◢ redesign of the **single government website portal**,

◢ establishment of a **government cloud** to consolidate systems and data scattered across government IT systems and implement a "cloud first" migration strategy, and

◢ adoption of an **Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) and Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) model** across government to ensure that the public sector can refresh their IT systems more quickly and upgrade to new technologies more easily.

2. Creation of a Digital Services Factory that will:

◢ promote the use of user-centered design and agile development practices

◢ contribute to the wide reuse of interoperable building-blocks (e.g. eSignature, eID, eInvoicing) and micro-services,

◢ enable the quick development and delivery of services that meet citizens' needs.

The Digital Services Factory shall be one of the key interfaces of the national digital ecosystem to "Government as a Platform".

3. Improvement of the management and delivery of large-scale digitalisation projects in Cyprus including the redesign of the lengthy procurement processes currently in place (reduction in project life cycle from 7-10 years to 2-3 years).

4. Reorganisation of institutional structures, redesign of operating models, enterprise architecture and processes, definition of new roles and responsibilities; and upskilling and reskilling initiatives to increase the public sector's digitalisation competency.

◢ This shall take place using a combination of services acquisition from the private sector and in-house skills development with the support of organisations such as eGovernment Academy of Estonia, the Government Digital Service (GDS) of the United Kingdom, the German Public Consultancy firm PD, as well as other programs in cooperation with the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration in various disciplines (cybersecurity and project management, change management etc.)

5. Special emphasis shall be given to ensuring resilience and robustness of critical government infrastructures and IT systems.

This portfolio has the ultimate goal of creating an end-to-end, high quality citizen-and business-experience throughout all interactions and 'touch-points' with the public sector, to drive cost efficiencies, enhance reliability, security and resilience, and draw genuine trust in the system and the technologies themselves. The investments and reforms included in Cyprus' Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) Action Plan will kickstart the efforts of this portfolio, among others.

THE DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO

The Digital Infrastructure Portfolio aims to deliver the resilient, robust and secure infrastructure that will support Cyprus' digital transformation enabling it to tap on the potential of frontier and emerging technologies.

Digital transformation can only be fully realised if high quality access to communication networks and services is made available at affordable prices for all people and firms, no matter who they are or where they live. This involves investing in significantly upgrading of digital infrastructures to address the increasing demand for data generated by the millions of devices coming online in the near future.

The **connectivity** investments and reforms included in Cyprus' Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) Action Plan are a critical driver in achieving the strategic objectives of accelerated deployment of very high capacity networks, universal and affordable access to and take up of Gigabit connectivity, which will address the digital divide, accelerate digitalization and facilitate further private investment.

The above considerations are addressed in the new Cyprus Broadband Plan which sets the following strategic objectives for 2025:

Gigabit connectivity for all main socio-economic drivers

All premises in organized communities (urban or rural) to have access to internet connectivity offering a download speed of at least 100Mbps, which can be readily upgradable to 1 Gbps

100% of the population living in organized communities (urban or rural), and all major terrestrial transport paths to have uninterrupted 5G coverage with a download speed of at least 100 Mbps

70% of households to have an internet connection (take-up) with a download speed of at least 100Mbps.

A number of existing challenges related to digital infrastructure, capacity and resilience of telecommunications networks, as well as environmental sustainability and intelligent management of natural resources and city facilities, are being addressed via the strategy for the development of smart cities, currently being designed at national level by the Deputy Ministry. Smart city solutions throughout the country will lead to a greener, more efficient, resilient and sustainable Cyprus, optimizing the use of resources and services, driving operational efficiencies and revenue maximization and, most importantly, improving the quality of life of our citizens, leveraging on digital technologies and innovation.

Last but not least, Cybersecurity, which is at the forefront of our efforts to build a resilient, green and digital economy. As threats grow in scope, sophistication, and extent, it is essential to develop policies and solutions to upgrade and maintain high levels of cybersecurity for all data, services and infrastructures in our country. To prevent, deter, respond to and counteract the cyberattacks of the future, while protecting critical information infrastructures and safeguarding the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information within an open and secure cyberspace. To this end, Cyprus has crafted a comprehensive strategy aimed at significantly raising the cybersecurity posture and competitiveness of the country, developed across four (4) main pillars: protection and resilience, response mechanisms and tools, capacity building, awareness and culture. Cross-border collaboration is also a key priority in areas such as confidence-building, developing cyber capabilities and designing international standards in cybersecurity, as well as ensuring coordinated and efficient response to large-scale cyber incidents and crises, and offering assistance in recovering from such attacks.

DEPUTY MINISTRY OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND DIGITAL POLICY

THE DIGITAL ECONOMY PORTFOLIO

The Digital Economy Portfolio aims to deliver a stronger digital economy that continually reinvents itself, a more vibrant ICT sector to support the digital transformation while diversifying the economy of Cyprus, and increasingly more digital and competitive industries that can capitalise on frontier and emerging technologies and position Cyprus as a testbed for digital innovation. Initiatives under this portfolio are aligned with Cyprus' Vision 2035, the new long-term economic strategy for the country, but also the country's Recovery and Resilience Action Plan.

This portfolio encompasses initiatives aimed at:

- **supporting the digitalisation of local businesses and business sectors** by providing upskilling, tools, support and guidance, to enable businesses regardless of type, sector and digital maturity level to make the most out of digital and build a more efficient and profitable way of delivering higher quality services/products.

- **boosting digital entrepreneurship** to enable the creation of new digital ventures and adoption of digital technologies by existing entrepreneurs, make entrepreneurship more inclusive, and enable a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem to be fostered in the country (by e.g. building a more inclusive culture towards digital start-ups, supporting the development of digital and entrepreneurship skills, improving access to resources for the creation of digital businesses for the self-employed, improving access to finance for digital entrepreneurship etc.)

- **strengthening digital competitiveness** by increasing the capacity of businesses to adopt and explore digital technologies that can make them more competitive internationally. But also, by increasing the attractiveness of Cyprus as a destination for foreign ICT giants and investors.

- **driving up the adoption of frontier and emerging technologies** and establishing a vibrant core of expertise around them in Cyprus via the implementation of existing national strategies (national strategies exist AI and Blockchain already), the development of national testbeds and sandboxes available to the international community for innovation, experimentation and co-creation; and support for the commercialisation of applications built around them.

The initiatives under this portfolio shall enable the bolstering of digital competitiveness and capability of businesses regardless of their size, the creation of strategies for the digitalisation of entire industry sectors, the strengthening of digital entrepreneurship, the fostering of a stronger ICT sector for Cyprus, the promotion of frontier and emerging technology applications in real-life scenarios etc. The realisation of these initiatives shall be further supported by initiatives of the Digital Government and Infrastructure portfolios that along with Government as a Platform set the foundations for a stronger national digital economy.
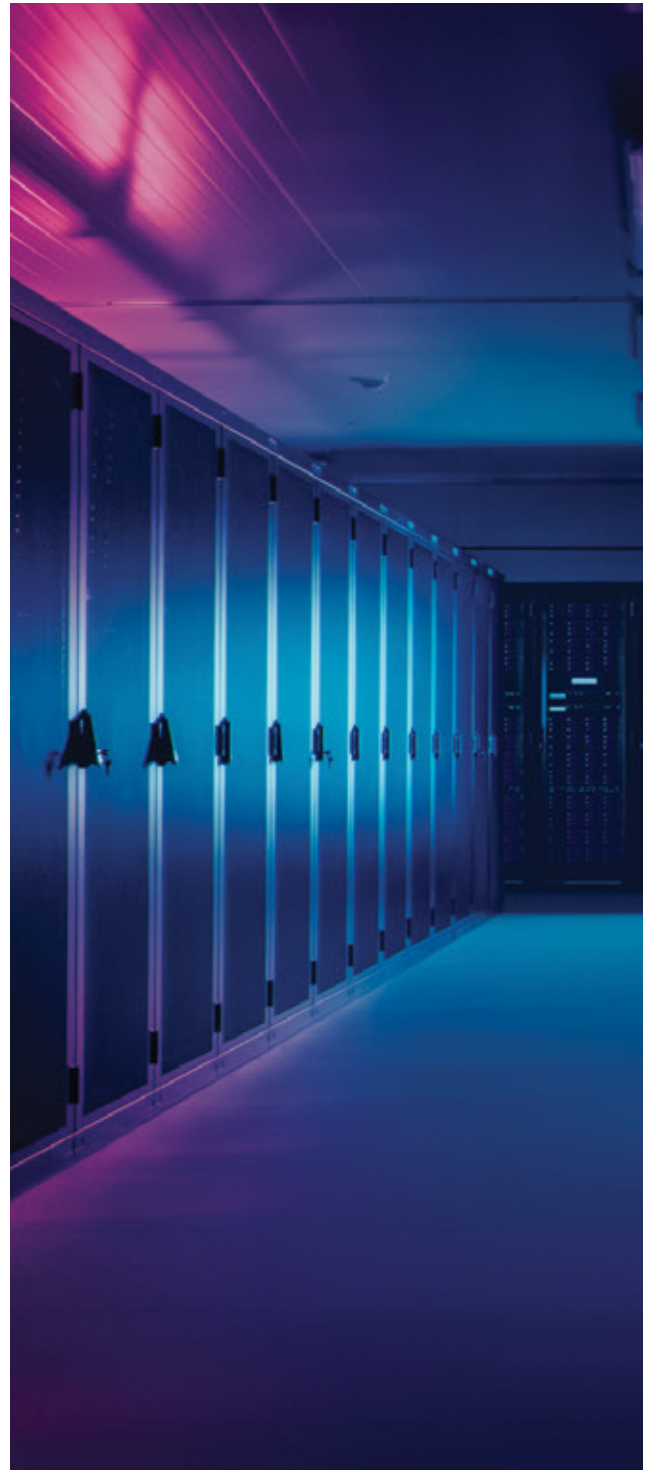
THE DIGITAL SOCIETY PORTFOLIO

The Digital Society Portfolio aims to deliver a user-centered, accessible and inclusive digital society that raises people's digital literacy and encourages them to more actively participate in digital communities, offering them everything they need to transact in the digital era including devices, connectivity, digital identities and access to infrastructures enabling them to carry e-Payments etc. Ensuring that society has the skills and the motivation to embrace the national digital transformation is of paramount importance both for making people's lives better through digital and fostering a more capable and productive workforce for Cyprus.

The pervasiveness of digital is changing the structure of the labour market, creating new jobs, and new requirements. It leads to a growing need for more skilled ICT professionals in all sectors of the economy, as well as a need for digital skills for nearly all jobs where ICT complements existing tasks. Same applies to the public sector, in need of advanced digital skills, knowledge and competencies so as to transform public services in areas such as Agile, DevSecOps, Risk Management, Cloud Management, Data Management, User-Centered Design, Cybersecurity, Change Management etc.

Basic digital skills are necessary at all levels of society, representing a key enabler for the holistic digital transformation of societies and economies. Digital transformation is, therefore, a multidimensional endeavour, to develop and provide digital solutions while at the same time empowering the people to want and be able to use them, ensuring access to necessary infrastructure, building digital capacity and trust in digital and its use.

To facilitate the enhancement of digital skills, the Ministry opts to create a citizens' Digital Academy, with educational material addressing all above needs and objectives, accessible to all target groups. The main objective is to create a dynamic, easy to use and well-accessible e-learning platform, containing a self-assessment tool, index of all available programmes, and content material on digital skills and cross-sectoral competences such as project management.

**DEPUTY MINISTRY OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND DIGITAL POLICY**

THE DIGITAL SOCIETY PORTFOLIO ENCOMPASSES INITIATIVES AIMED AT:

The development of **basic and lifelong digital skills** to equip every resident with the skills required to confidently interact with the digital government, manage their information and communications (receive email, use chats etc.), transact digitally (shopping and paying things online) and stay safe online (through basic IT literacy and cybersecurity skills);

The development of the **Next STEM Generation** to increase the number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics graduates from Cypriot universities (local and international students) and strengthen the concentration and retention rates of such specialists in Cyprus' workforce;
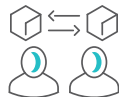
The design of **reskilling and upskilling interventions** aimed at the private sector workforce but also aimed at unemployed persons – so as to increase their competitive edge in the labour market.

The promotion of a culture of digital innovation and entrepreneurship at all levels of society

The **opening up of data to society** as a means of engaging society further in the national digital transformation effort. This could take the form of opening to the public data produced as part of scientific research, digitalising national archives, cultural works and holding cultural events digitally, opening up data gathered as part of smart city and smart mobility initiatives (e.g. timetables, routes, live updates) etc.

The **utilisation of virtual experience technologies** to deliver virtual/augmented/mixed reality educational and cultural experiences that promote our history and cultural heritage, but also enable the delivery of safer, realistic immersive training to public servants whose jobs may require that (e.g. policemen, fire men, search and rescue crews etc.)
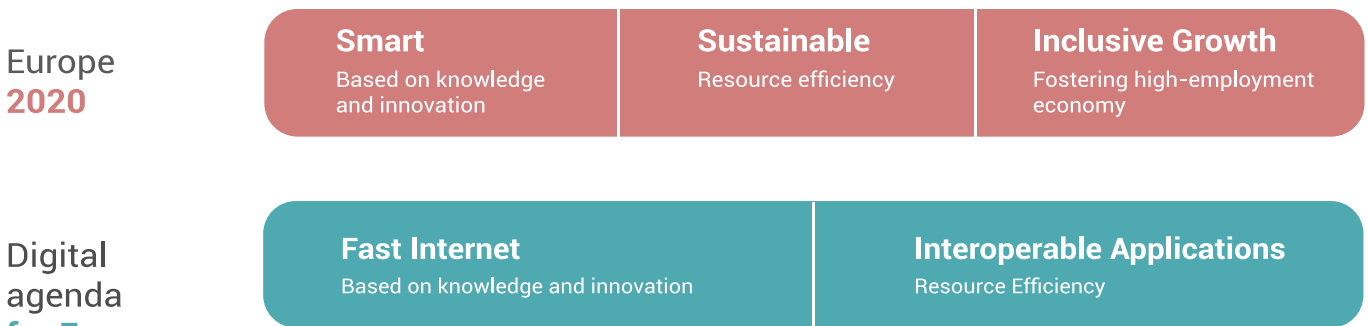
EU PRIORITIES AND FUNDING TOOLS

The **European Union** sets forth guidance, strong digital agendas and priorities to support **attaining** the standards for digital transformation. Cyprus, just like all member-states, has the benefit and obligation to **leverage the European digital agenda** and the **vast resource pool** provided by the EU, in support of its digitalisation journey.
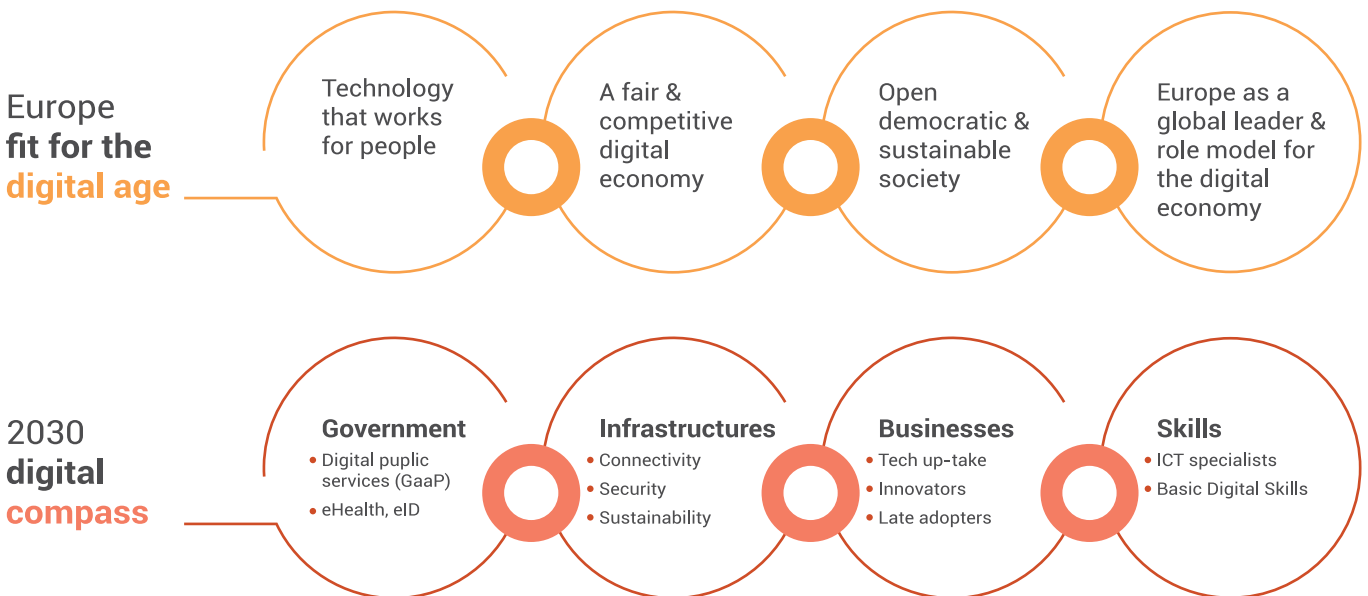
The below diagram summarizes key themes from European-level strategic documents that have served as guidance, direction and inspiration in creating the National Digital Strategy.

STRATEGIC GUIDANCE

KEY THEMES

Europe **2020**

Smart	Sustainable	Inclusive Growth
Based on knowledge and innovation	Resource efficiency	Fostering high-employment economy

Digital agenda **for Europe**

Fast Internet	Interoperable Applications
Based on knowledge and innovation	Resource Efficiency

To serve the primary aim of delivering sustainable economic and social benefits.

Europe **fit for the digital age**

Technology that works for people

A fair & competitive digital economy

Open democratic & sustainable society

Europe as a global leader & role model for the digital economy

2030 **digital compass**

Government
- Digital puplic services (GaaP)
- eHealth, eID

Infrastructures
- Connectivity
- Security
- Sustainability

Businesses
- Tech up-take
- Innovators
- Late adopters

Skills
- ICT specialists
- Basic Digital Skills

In implementing the National Digital Vision, Cyprus can capitalise on available sources of funding both at the national and at the EU level. The most important funding tools available are:

▲ **The EU Recovery and Resilience Fund (RRF)** is the key instrument at the heart of the **NextGenerationEU** - EU's plan for emerging stronger from the COVID19-pandemic. In its national Resilience and Recovery Plan (RRP), Cyprus has included reforms and investments of around €282 million, devoting 23% of the total cost to digital objectives, included primarily under the Policy Axis 4: Towards a digital era, as well as within different components of all other Policy Axes. Actions included within the RRP include, among others, more than €170m for the promotion of egovernment, €53 million for ultra-fast connectivity, €24 million for the enhancement of digital skills across government, industry, academia and society, and €35 for the development of smart cities throughout Cyprus.

▲ **Other EU Funds and programmes** such as funds stemming from the **Digital Europe** Program, **Connecting Europe Facility, Horizon Europe**, European territorial cooperation (**ETC**), EU 4Health but also **EU Structural and Investment Funds**.

▲ **National Digitalisation Funds** allotted via the national budget.

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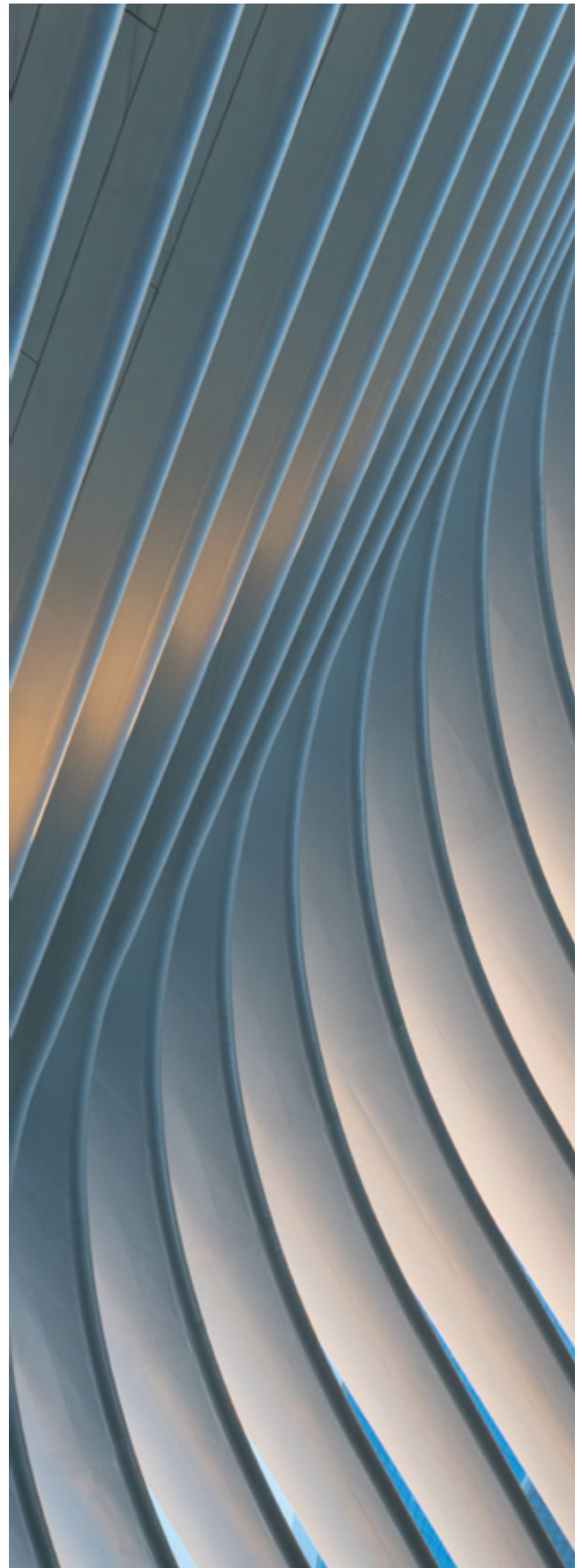
CONCLUSION

The proposed National Digital Strategy sets forth our aspiration for Cyprus to transcend the challenges that have held it back for so long and move towards its digital future with confidence and determination. Through the proposed strategy Cyprus shall foster the modern, sustainable and resilient knowledge-based digital economy and fair and democratic digital society that will enable it to thrive in the years to come.

Setting and keeping in motion a digital transformation journey of this scale is demanding - but Cyprus' digital ecosystem stakeholders are up for the challenge, and the current institutional and political conjuncture is unparalleled. This goes beyond the establishment of the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy to also touch upon EU priorities and commitment to support and enable the recovery of member states, among them Cyprus, and enable them to work toward becoming more resilient via a green and digital transition. This enablement manifests both in terms of financial support via mechanisms such as RRF, policy guidance, EU building blocks etc.

Our goal is for this strategy to prove to be a useful guide throughout the country's digital transformation journey, enabling key stakeholders and especially the government, to move boldly towards the successful implementation of the ambitious vision it sets forth, setting the foundations for the country's digital future.

Most, importantly, we aim at creating an environment with high living standards and meaningful employment and entrepreneurial prospects, empowering our society and our youth to see beyond limitations and challenges, access real opportunities and engage meaningfully in their societies. The true value of innovation lies in incubating as many new ideas as possible to deliver far-reaching benefits and impacts to the communities and people all over the world. Through innovations and novel solutions, we can all together build a better future for the next generations.

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."

Albert Einstein

DEPUTY MINISTRY OF
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