

International Conference on Public Finance in the Digital Era

19-20 November 2024

Radisson Blu Hotel, Sandton, Johannesburg



MEDIA INVITATION

Around the world, optimism about how digitalisation can improve government performance is tempered by the disappointment of expensive technology failures. Nonetheless, the digital era has raised people's expectations of their governments, and the emergence of digital public infrastructure (DPI) on the global development agenda continues to fuel these expectations.

Meeting these expectations will take more than simply adopting the latest technologies. It will require new ways of thinking and working across government. Ministries of Finance have a key role to play, not just in bringing the management of public finances into the digital era, but also in supporting and responding to the broader digital transformation of government, the economy and society.

The [Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative](#) (CABRI) and [ODI Global](#) are co-hosting an **International Conference on Public Finance in the Digital Era** at **Radisson Blu Hotel, Sandton, Johannesburg, South Africa, on 19 and 20 November 2024**.

The international conference will gather over 100 delegates, including public finance officials from 30 African countries, as well as thought leaders on digital government, PFM and public service delivery and presents an opportunity for finance, digital, and development leaders to:

- (i) Share their experience and views on using digital tools to improve financial management and service delivery; and
- (ii) Consider the broader role of the finance ministry in the digital transformation of government, the economy, and society, and how they can play that role effectively at the national level, and through regional and global initiatives.

The International Conference on Public Finance in the Digital Era promises insightful sessions/discussions led by a rich speakers line-up and innovative engagement tools.

We are pleased to invite you to join us and capture exclusive content and interviews.

Please confirm your attendance by specifying the session(s) and interview requests **by latest Friday, 15 November 2024** to:

Ms Priya Beegun, Marketing and Communications Manager, CABRI

Email : priya.beegun@cabri-sbo.org

Tel: +27 (82) 882-3558

The International Conference on Public Finance in the Digital Era will also be available in **hybrid mode**. In the event that you cannot attend the conference in-person, we invite you to join the conversation virtually and [register here](#).

We sincerely hope to see you and look forward to your positive response.

Background

The [Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative \(CABRI\)](#) is an African [membership-based international organisation](#) based in South Africa, that fosters peer-learning and exchange among African ministries of finance, budget, and planning. Founded in 2004, CABRI's focal areas of work encompass achieving value for money in public spending, promoting budget transparency for greater accountability and participation, ensuring sustainable public debt management and building institutional capabilities for public financial management (PFM) reform. CABRI has extensive experience working across sectors such as education, agriculture, health, extractives, infrastructure, water & sanitation and hygiene.

In April 2024, CABRI recently launched a new area of work: Enhancing Digital Public Financial Management in Africa, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The introductory webinar saw participation from 15 African countries, and heard experiences from Rwanda, Benin and South Africa digitalising their PFM systems. The discussion highlighted key challenges faced by African countries attempting to strengthen these systems: managing, maintaining or retiring legacy systems; overspecification of system requirements; ill-suited and inflexible procurement policies; and stakeholder resistance.

[ODI Global](#) is a multidisciplinary and international organisation focused on inclusive growth, equity, social justice, and sustainability – challenges that affect rich and poor countries alike. Formerly known as Overseas Development Institute, and rebranded to ODI Global in October 2024, the organisation has set out to lay greater emphasis on how economic, foreign, security, social, climate and other policies impact on global challenges. In 2022, ODI Global launched its [Digital Public Finance Hub](#), a new learning and technical assistance initiative. The Hub aims to support governments in managing public resources for service delivery by leveraging digital infrastructure and digital ways of working.

The International Conference will gather over 100 delegates, including public finance officials from 30 African countries, as well as thought leaders on digital government, PFM and public service delivery and presents an opportunity for finance, digital, and development leaders to:

- (i) Share their experience and views on using digital tools to improve financial management and service delivery; and
- (ii) Consider the broader role of the finance ministry in the digital transformation of government, the economy, and society, and how they can play that role effectively at the national level, and through regional and global initiatives.

The conference's broader intention is to shape the future of PFM through digital innovation. By driving digital transformation, improving efficiency and enhancing transparency and accountability, the conference aims to create a more transparent, efficient and accountable PFM landscape regionally and globally, while noting that digital PFM is currently and will remain central to current Illicit Financial Flows tracking internationally, and that Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) development is key to this into the future.

The impact of the international conference lies in inspiring collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders, promoting continued knowledge exchange beyond the event and fostering a culture of innovation and digital capability building. Ultimately, the conference aims to equip participants with the necessary tools, strategies and inspiration to drive successful digital PFM reforms in their respective contexts, thereby contributing to a positive transformation of PFM practices worldwide. The Digital Era will continue unabated. CABRI PFM stakeholders out of innate/intrinsic necessity, must shape the direction of its evolution. CABRI will welcome over 100 delegates at the conference, comprising of senior government officials from CABRI member countries, some non-member countries.

AGENDA

Public Financial Management in the Digital Era

Tuesday, 19 November 2024

The digital era is raising people's expectations for how governments raise and spend money – citizens and businesses expect better interactions with governments, politicians expect more timely information on how their policies and programs are being implemented, and civil servants expect better tools to do their jobs. The first day of the conference will take stock of where we are, and where we can do better.

08:30 – 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 09:30	Welcome and Opening Remarks Duncan Pieterse, Director General, Ministry of Finance, South Africa <i>*Pre-recorded message</i>
09:30 – 11:00	<p>Session 1: Digital Tools for Managing Public Finances: how well tooled are we?</p> <p>Financial management is an area where governments have and continue to invest a lot in digital tools. Nevertheless, some parts of government are less well tooled than others, and some users feel frustrated with their tools. What are the common problems across different levels of governments? And how might finance ministries address them?</p> <p>Moderator: Dr Kay Brown, Executive Secretary, Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative (CABRI)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Andrew Blazey, Deputy Head of Public Management and Budgeting Division, OECD - Dr Ruth Nigatu, Chief of Staff, Ministry of Health, Ethiopia - Oluseun Onigbinde, Global Director, BudgIT - Zinzi Mphahele, Manager: Budget and Reporting, Polokwane, South Africa
11:30 – 13:00	<p>Session 2: The Digital Public Finance Bazaar</p> <p>The Bazaar will provide opportunities for peer learning on ongoing digital initiatives to improve financial management as well opportunities to join discussions on common financial management problems governments are trying to solve through digital initiatives.</p> <p>Circuit 1: 11h30 – 12h15 & Circuit 2: 12h15-13h00</p>
14:00 – 14:40	<p>Session 2: The Digital Public Finance Bazaar</p> <p>Circuit 3: 14h00 – 14h40</p>
15:00 – 17:00	<p>Session 3: Bringing Public Finance into the Digital Era</p> <p>How can innovation in public finance keep pace with other areas of government and the private sector? How can finance ministries make good technology choices on behalf of the rest of government, and how can they empower the rest of government to do the same? What changes in approach and ways of working are required? And what are the challenges to making these changes and how can we overcome them?</p> <p>Moderator: Frederique Dahan - Director of Program – ODI Global</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mike Bracken, Founder, Public Digital - Edwin Muhumuza, Head of Africa, Open Contracting Partnership - Steven Davenport, Global Lead for Anticorruption, Openness, and Transparency, World Bank - Dr John Sausi, Director of Financial Information System and IT Services, Tanzania

The Roles of the Ministry of Finance in the Digital Era

Wednesday, 20 November 2024

The second day of the conference will focus on the role of the finance ministry in the broader digital transformation of government, the economy and society, and if and how finance ministries in Africa should take a bigger role in digital transformation at the national level and through regional and global initiatives.

08:45 – 09:00	Welcome Back and Reflections from Day I Cathal Long, Senior Research Fellow, ODI Global
09:00 – 10:30	Session 4: What is digital public infrastructure (DPI), and why is it relevant for finance ministries? Digital public infrastructure (DPI) refers to foundational technologies as well as an approach to solving societal scale problems. What is DPI and what is it not? How it is similar and different to other approaches to digital transformation? And why and how should finance ministries support the DPI agenda? Moderator: James Stewart, Partner, Public Digital Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>David Eaves, Co-Deputy Director and Associate Professor in Digital Government / UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP)</i>- <i>Ayanda Hlatshwayo, Acting Chief Data Analytics Officer, National Treasury, South Africa</i>- <i>Rodrigue Chaou, Director General of Budget, Ministry of Finance, Benin</i>- <i>Lorena Rivero del Paso, Technical Assistance Advisor, Fiscal Affairs Department, International Monetary Fund</i>
11:00 – 12:30	Session 5: DPI for what? African Perspectives What are the 'use cases' that are likely to drive the adoption of DPI approaches and principles in African contexts? What are the safeguards that need to be put in place to make these investments inclusive and sustainable? And why and how should finance ministries support these investments? Moderator: Lauren Kahn, Director of Strategy and Research, Public Digital Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Luke Mate, Director Systems Development and Support, Smart Zambia</i>- <i>Fabrizio Santoro, Research Fellow, International Centre for Tax and Development</i>- <i>Keith Brekenwich, Standard Bank Chair in African Trust Infrastructures, WITS</i>- <i>Moipone Shabalala, Senior Manager: Business Solutions, South African Social Security Agency (SASSA)</i>

13:30 – 15:00	<p>Session 6: The role of finance ministries in supporting DPI What is the role of the finance ministry in the digital transformation of government, the economy and society?</p> <p>Workshop: The role of finance ministries in supporting DPI Open to government representatives. [Plenary room] Moderator: Beatriz Vasconcellos De Araujo, Research Fellow, UCL A team from University College London and Cambridge University will run an interactive workshop with participants working in small teams to discuss the economic case for investing in DPI.</p>	<p>Roundtable: The role of finance ministries in supporting DPI [Online Panel] Moderator: Dr Rekgotsofetse Chikane, Lecturer, WITS Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharon Umanyana, Technical Project Manager, Rwanda Information Society Authority - Luanna Roncaratti, Deputy Secretary, Ministério da Gestão e da Inovação em Serviços Públicos, Brazil - Hilda Barasa, Senior Policy Advisor, Tony Blair Institute - Kanya Chandra, Chief Strategy Officer, Center for Digital Public Infrastructure - Alice Munyua, Senior Director, Mozilla
15:45 – 17:15	<p>Session 7: Shaping the Global and Regional Agenda on DPI - 2025 and Beyond How can South Africa's upcoming G-20 Presidency in 2025 build on the DPI agenda established by India and advanced by Brazil? And how can it be leveraged to take forward a DPI agenda for Africa?</p> <p>Moderator: Hans Peter Lankes, Managing Director, ODI Global Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Khule Duma, Director, Project Management Office, Vulindlela Presidency of South Africa - Allison Gilwald, Executive Director, Research ICT Africa - Beatriz Vasconcellos, Research Fellow, UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose 	
17:15 – 17:30	<p>Closing Remarks Dr Kay Brown, Executive Secretary, CABRI</p>	

Useful resources:

CABRI Blogs

[Digital PFM in Africa : It's a wrap!](#)

[Enhancing Digital Public Financial Management \(PFM\) in Africa: Unpacking common challenges and approaches](#)

CABRI Webinars

[Unlocking Potential : Launch of CABRI's New Programme to Enhance Digital PFM in Africa](#)

[Enhancing Digital Public Financial Management in Africa : country experiences](#)

ODI Global Working Papers and Case Study Blog

[Digital public financial management: An emerging paradigm](#)

[Making public finance digital: Challenges to the emerging digital public financial management paradigm](#)

[Towards interoperability: Uganda's digital tool for managing intergovernmental fiscal transfers](#)




CONNECT • SHARE • REFORM


Southdowns Ridge Office Park
Corner of John Vorster Drive & Nellmapius Drive
Centurion, 0062
South Africa

Email: info@cabri-sbo.org

PFM Knowledge Hub: www.cabri-sbo.org

 @cabri.sbo

 @CABRI_SBO

 CABRI – Collaborative Africa Budget
Reform Initiative

