

# Digital technology

ACTIVITY REPORT

2024



**I**n 2024, digital technology was a driving force in major economic, social, environmental, and democratic transitions. It provides powerful responses to the climate crisis, rising inequality, the transformation of work, and new geopolitical vulnerabilities. It can improve access to education, modernize healthcare, strengthen institutional transparency, facilitate employment, and optimize natural resource management. Digital technology is also a driver of empowerment, local innovation, and resilience.

The rapid development of artificial intelligence has added new momentum to these dynamics, dramatically changing economic models and the practices of institutions, businesses and people. But this transformation comes with major risks: persistent digital divides, technological hegemony, mounting threats to rights and cybersecurity, and rising environmental costs. Today, 2.6 billion people remain offline, mainly in the least-developed countries. Inequalities in access persist depending on gender, geography, and level of education. Generative AI, meanwhile, illustrates the tensions between energy consumption, priority uses, and digital sovereignty – now a major geopolitical issue.

For these reasons, AFD Group took strong action in 2024 to promote digital infrastructure, services and an economy that work for everyone, while respecting individual freedoms and national sovereignty. With a unified and coherent offer and a roadmap for 2025-2028, AFD Group has stepped up its commitments in connectivity, e-governance, responsible innovation, cybersecurity, and the development of digital skills. Our goal is to use digital technology as a driver of inclusive, sustainable, and balanced transformation.



# AFD Group's digital transition strategy



## Provide universal access to the internet and its services

- Physical infrastructure for connectivity
- Information systems & software infrastructure for access to digital services
- Design of online services accessible to all
- Securing the digital space



## Support the digital transformation of services essential to the SDGs

- Digitalization of organizations
- E-education, training & employment
- E-health & social protection
- E-governance
- Smart infrastructure
- E-agriculture & agritech
- Digital financial services



## Harness entrepreneurship and the creation of innovative jobs for development

- Support and financing for entrepreneurship in the digital sector
- Entrepreneurial ecosystems and innovation in the sector
- Democratization of successful digital innovations
- Digital skills
- Development of skills and jobs related to the digital transition

## The 3 levers:



### 1 Reconcile climate, nature and digital development



### 2 Promote equality and inclusion in access to digital technology and its uses



### 3 Put citizens and their rights at the center of the governance of digital spaces



## AFD Group's areas of activity in the digital sector

- Infrastructure for internet connectivity and access
- Government information systems and e-governance
- Cybersecurity and cyber-resilience
- Support for the private and entrepreneurial digital sector
- Innovation, research, and artificial intelligence
- Satellite and geospatial data
- Inclusion, gender equality and digital rights
- Development of digital skills and jobs
- Climate and digital technology
- Support for sector-based digital transformations



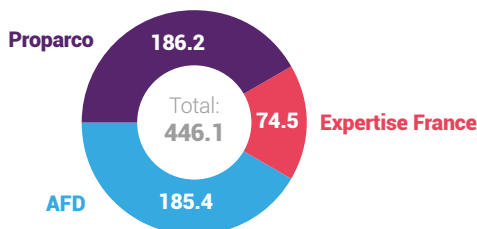
# AFD Group commitments in the digital sector **in 2024**

**€446 M**

in commitments  
in this sector

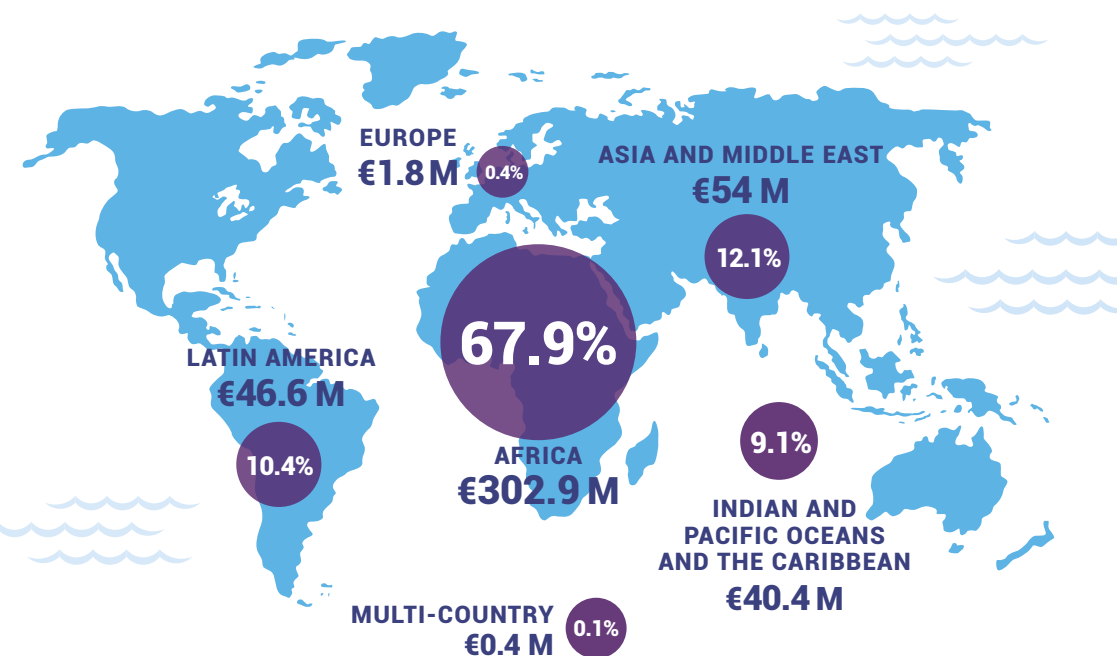


**Volume of  
AFD Group  
commitments  
in the digital sector\***  
(in €M)



*\*Including €500,000 financed by AFD and implemented by Expertise France, not double-counted in this total, but recorded in the commitments of both entities when reported on a non-consolidated basis.*

## **Breakdown of activity in the digital sector by region**

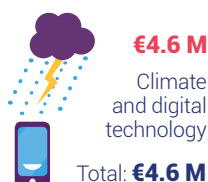
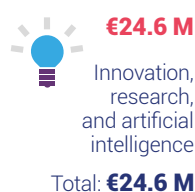
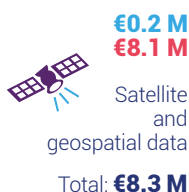
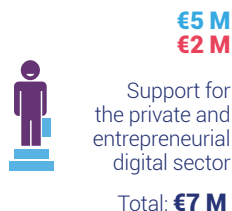
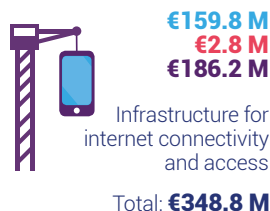


## Breakdown of activity by type of action

AFD

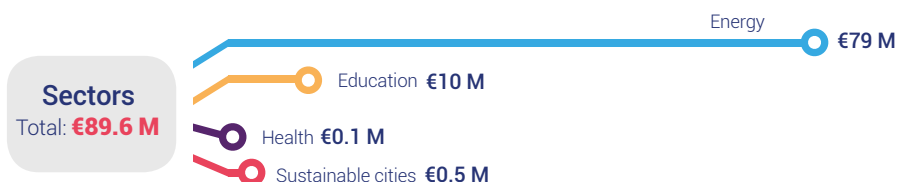
Expertise France

Proparco



**€89.6 M** were also allocated in 2024 to projects explicitly aimed at the digital transformation of the sectors of activity in which AFD operates (health, education, energy, urban development and local authorities).

## Support for the digital transformation of AFD's other sectors of activity (in €M)



# Our contribution to the achievement of the SDGs and **our results**

**78%**

of the financial volumes committed by AFD Group between 2021 and 2023 targeted internet access and services, in line with SDG target 9.C.



## Access to information and communication technologies

Significantly increase access to information and communication technologies and ensure that all people in the least developed countries have access to affordable internet by 2020, in line with the SDG target.

### Outcome indicators:



**8,341**  
telecom towers

and **11,689**  
relay antennas

will be built through  
the projects initiated  
in 2024



**13,609 km**  
of fiber-optic cables will be installed



**44.8 million people**

**will have new or improved access to the internet**

Beyond internet access, digital technology is proving to be a transformative technology that is crucial for accelerating the achievement of all 17 SDGs, with no exception. Our strategy and our impacts fall within this vision of making digital technology a key driver for accelerating development trajectories in our partner countries.

**625**  
organizations  
and institutions



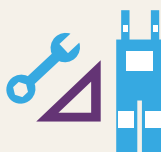
will be supported by AFD Group  
in the use of digital technology  
and the digital transition

**2,618**  
staff in  
organizations



will be trained in digital skills

**In 2024**, the projects launched  
will help **create 771 jobs**  
and **maintain 119,222 jobs**





# Connectivity **infrastructure**

AFD Group supports the dissemination of digital technology by financing the deployment of broadband internet connectivity infrastructure at three complementary levels:

- 1 International interconnections**, by financing or participating in undersea and terrestrial projects to provide a connection to international data flows.
- 2 National fiber-optic networks**, structured to connect major urban centers and the relay antennas of **4G/5G** mobile networks, and help ramp up the capacity of countries for digital use and data access.
- 3 Last-mile connectivity**, which is essential for ensuring effective access to digital services for citizens (with a focus on rural and suburban areas).

## IHS Towers Supporting digital infrastructure in fragile contexts



**Proparco project**

**Bond issue – Proparco | €18.5 M**



Proparco has subscribed to a **\$1.2 billion** bond issue launched by IHS Towers, one of the world's largest independent telecom tower operators, operating in ten countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. Listed on the New York Stock Exchange since 2021, the company manages more than 40,000 towers, connecting about 750 million people.

With a \$20 million commitment, Proparco was an anchor investor, alongside IFC and the EAAIF fund. It has thereby played an instrumental role in building confidence among private players and ensuring the success of this operation, a first for Proparco for this type of investment.



**This project** illustrates Proparco's commitment to digital infrastructure, especially in fragile contexts, by mobilizing the private sector for inclusive and sustainable development. The investment will provide 30 million people with access to improved digital services. It will also help maintain 2,988 jobs and create 382 jobs.



# An integrated approach to the digital sector: developing multi-vertical and coordinated programming

## Digital transformation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

AFD project

Sovereign loan – AFD | €100 M



Co-financed by the World Bank and AFD, this flagship project aims to reduce the digital divide and strengthen the technological sovereignty of the DRC. Led by the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Digital Technology (MPTN), it is mobilizing public financing for several components:

- **Infrastructure:** almost 10,000 km of fiber-optic cables and extension of mobile coverage to rural areas to provide affordable and high-quality internet to 30 million people, in particular for women.
- **Training, skills development and digital jobs:** organization of training for national talent, with a focus on advanced digital skills and youth employability.
- **Support to the private sector and digital entrepreneurship:** assistance to local start-ups, access to financing, strengthening innovation ecosystems.
- **Modernization of government information systems and e-government:** development of digital public infrastructure, improvement in the quality of public services and support for digital governance.

➡ **This flagship project** will greatly contribute to reducing the digital divide, strengthening the technological sovereignty of the DRC, and using digital technology as a driver of economic and social development.







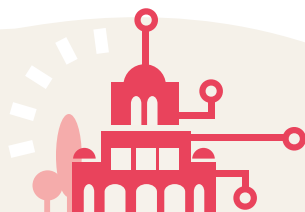
Digital technology is playing an increasingly important role in development trajectories by transforming public services, the economy and governance. **AFD Group's** digital strategy takes an integrated approach, linking infrastructure, skills, innovation and support for public policies. This comprehensive vision, combining the institutional, technological, human and economic dimensions, aims to provide a response to the many needs of partner countries and use digital technology as a driver of inclusive development.

## Central Asia Digital Connectivity - Team Europe Initiative



**Expertise France project**

**Grant – Expertise France (EU program) | €20 M**



As part of its Global Gateway strategy, the European Union is financing a **€20 million** program implemented by Expertise France with AFD and the EIB. The objective is to strengthen digital connectivity in five Central Asian countries.

The project is helping public authorities define inclusive digital policies and develop resilient local ecosystems. It is based on three complementary lines of action:

- **Support for the strategic management of the digital transformation:** institutional capacity building, data governance and development of appropriate regulatory frameworks.
- **Support for digital public services and e-government:** solutions for the administration, the health sector, the civil registry and social protection.
- **Development of skills and local innovation:** training of officials, awareness-raising on cybersecurity and digital sovereignty, support to start-ups.



**This program** is based on an approach to align with national priorities, while promoting intergovernmental exchanges, European expertise and local partnerships.



# Support for sectoral digital transformations

AFD Group supports digital transformation in all its sectors of activity and the associated sustainable development solutions. Its objective is to improve efficiency, inclusivity, infrastructure resilience, and public services.

## Support to vocational training for a digital economy in Kenya

Grant – AFD | €10 M

The project aims to adapt Kenya's TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) system to the needs of the digital economy, by addressing the mismatch between training provision and labor market needs. It will be financed under the JEFIC (Joint European Financiers for International Cooperation) agreement, with KfW and AFD.

The project will be based on three lines of action:

- **Improving** the quality of provision and teaching conditions (including equipment) in institutes.
- **Adapting** institutional capacity and the national qualifications framework to enable TVET institutions to undertake digital transformation.
- **Increasing** youth participation in digital technology training and the digital transformation of the training provision of the institutes.



## Contributing to improving cybersecurity and the fight against cybercrime



AFD Group, through Expertise France, takes action to strengthen the cyberspace security of its partner countries. Its projects aim to protect individuals, organizations and critical infrastructure from increasingly complex cyberthreats. Its approach is based on support for public policies (strategic, legal and regulatory frameworks) and operational action: protection of critical infrastructure, awareness-raising, training, countering foreign influence and hybrid threats.

Aligned with France's ambitions for international cooperation on cybersecurity, Expertise France focuses its efforts on vulnerable countries in order to strengthen their resilience. To this end, it draws on French public- and private-sector expertise.

In 2024, Expertise France launched five new projects, including one in Ukraine, supported by the French State, for the protection of sensitive data and critical infrastructure. It also launched the second phase of the ESIWA program, which aims to enhance dialogue between Europe and several Asian countries.

# Portfolio of projects under implementation



**134 projects**

under implementation involve the digital sector, including:

**87** Expertise France projects significantly or mainly targeting digital transformation

**22** AFD projects

**25** Proparco projects targeting the sector

## Volume of commitments under implementation by AFD Group:



**€196.9 M** in commitments by AFD under implementation



**€418 M** in commitments by Proparco under implementation



**€140 M** in turnover under implementation for Expertise France

## A global footprint

**13**  
countries where  
AFD operates



**65**  
countries where  
Expertise France  
operates

**15**  
countries where  
Proparco operates

---

## For a world in common

---

AFD Group finances and drives the transition to a fairer, safer and more resilient world, working with its partners to support communities all over the world. Drawing on the complementary strengths of its entities – Agence Française de Développement for public financing, Proparco for responsible private investment, and Expertise France for technical expertise – the Group is ideally positioned to meet all sustainable development challenges.

Working in over 160 countries, including France's Overseas Territories and Departments, the Group adapts its operations to the realities on the ground, actively supporting local initiatives. With over 4,000 projects, whose objectives are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), AFD Group works on behalf of the French people, together with all stakeholders committed to economic development and the preservation of common goods: climate, biodiversity, peace, gender equality and global health. Working by your side, toward a world in common.



[www.afd.fr/en](http://www.afd.fr/en) - X: @AFD\_en - Facebook: AFDOfficiel  
Instagram: afd\_en - LinkedIn: Agence Française de Développement  
5, rue Roland-Barthes - 75598 Paris Cedex 12 - France  
Tel : +33 1 53 44 31 31