Regional Interventions to Strengthen Digital Readiness and Resilience in Pacific Island Countries

Some thoughts on gaps and prioritisation

Discussion Document for Digital X Pacific Blue Conference
ADB/PRIF

October 24th, 2024

Data from 2002-17, shows investment in ICT infrastructure and usage has a positive and significant impact on GDP growth in PICs.
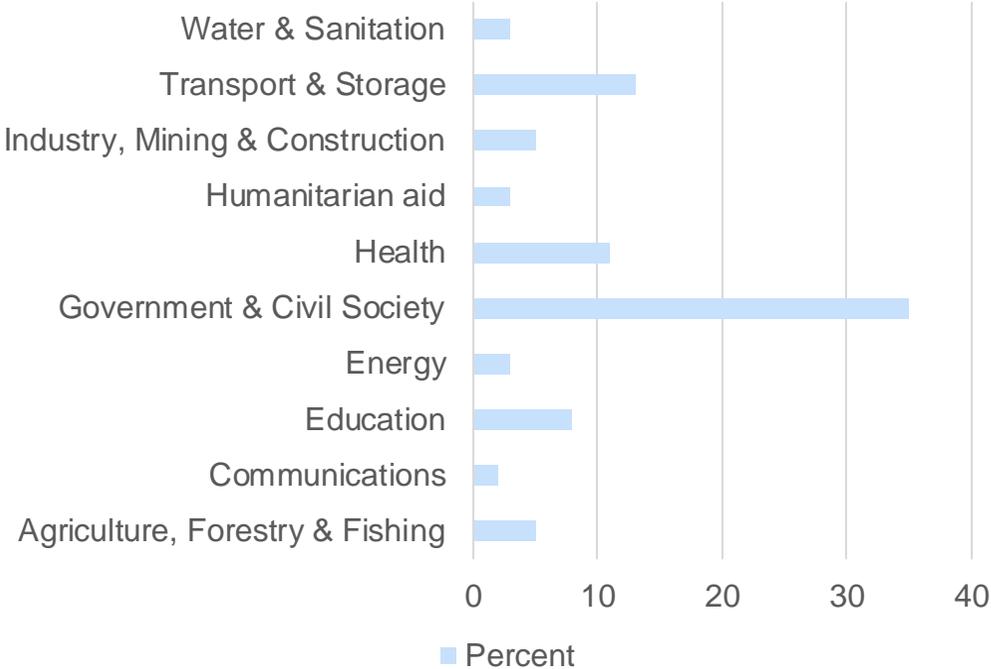
'The empirical findings reveal that ICT-related indicators have a positive and significant impact on the economic growth process, along with the fundamental variable of capital stock. The effect of control variables such as foreign direct investment and exports have a positive effect on the real gross domestic product per capita, whereas inflation has a negative effect. The sensitivity evaluation of ICT indicators with different control variables produces consistent evidence of ICT's effect on economic growth. Policymakers as well as ICT stakeholders should enhance investments for improving ICT-related infrastructure and promoting technology to boost economic growth in Pacific Island countries.'

Makun, Keshmeer Kanewar and Jayaraman, T K (2020) "SPREAD OF ICT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES: A PANEL STUDY," Bulletin of Monetary Economics and Banking: Vol. 23: No. 0, Article 3.

How do we see ICT investment as a proportion of development finance in the Pacific?

Pacific Island Official Development Finance, per sector

% of total ODF spent, constant 2021 US$

Vs

"In 2023, 47% of new ADB projects included a digital technology component."

- Peter Nicholls

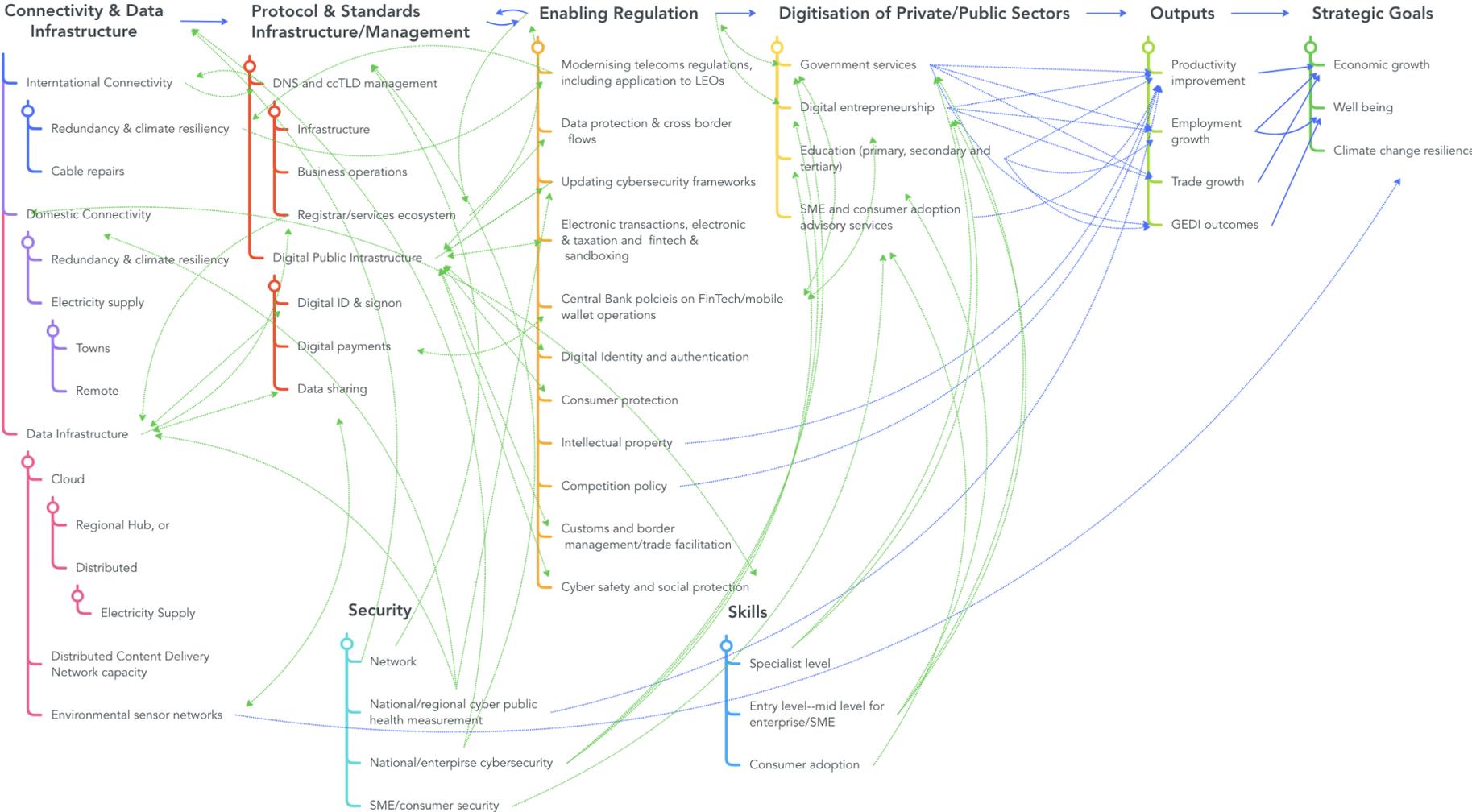Source: Lowy Institute: Pacific Aid Map 2023

Review process to date

- Report on Wellington Forum, 2024

- Presentations by participants at Wellington Forum

- Presentations by participants at PRIF week

- Published reports by: ADB, World Bank, UNESCO, UNDP, USAID, ITU, UN ESCAP, Commonwealth Secretariat, Lowy Institute, AI Asia Pacific Institute, Access Partnership

- Survey of present and proposed ODA projects in Pacific Island Countries compiled by regional Internet Community

Modern ICT is an ecosystem of interconnected capabilities linking the economy and underpinning improved economic growth, well being and climate change resilience

Connectivity & Data Infrastructure → Protocol & Standards Infrastructure/Management ⇄ Enabling Regulation → Digitisation of Private/Public Sectors → Outputs → Strategic Goals

- Interntational Connectivity
- Domestic Connectivity
- Data Infrastructure

Security

Skills

It is all interconnected!

Help us understand your priorities

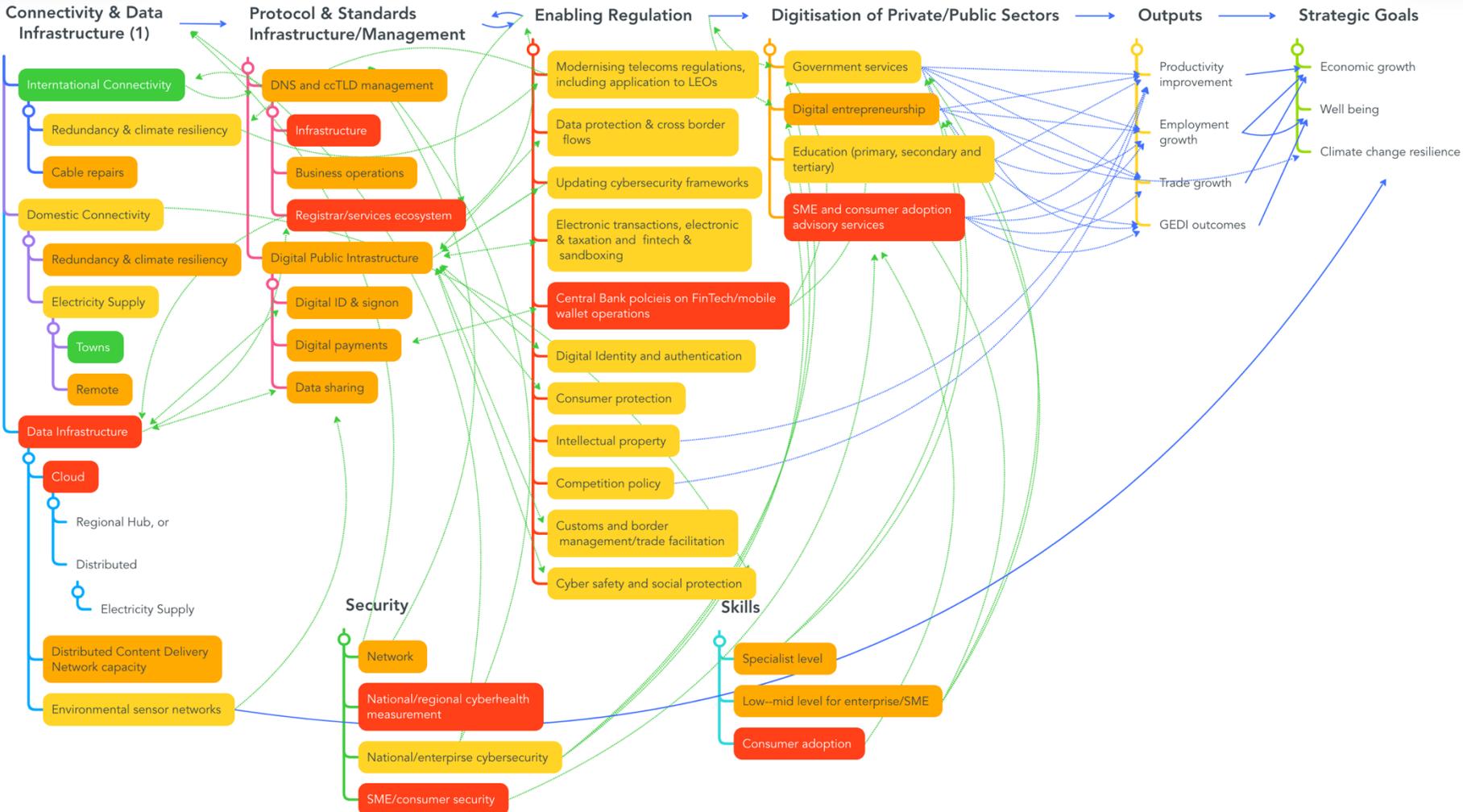One-off survey in this conference with data only available to you and PRIF/consultant

Not compulsory to share your name and email (make up something for the fields) – but if you do it will help me to follow up with you about potential projects

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H5GBNTS

paul.twomey@argopacific.com

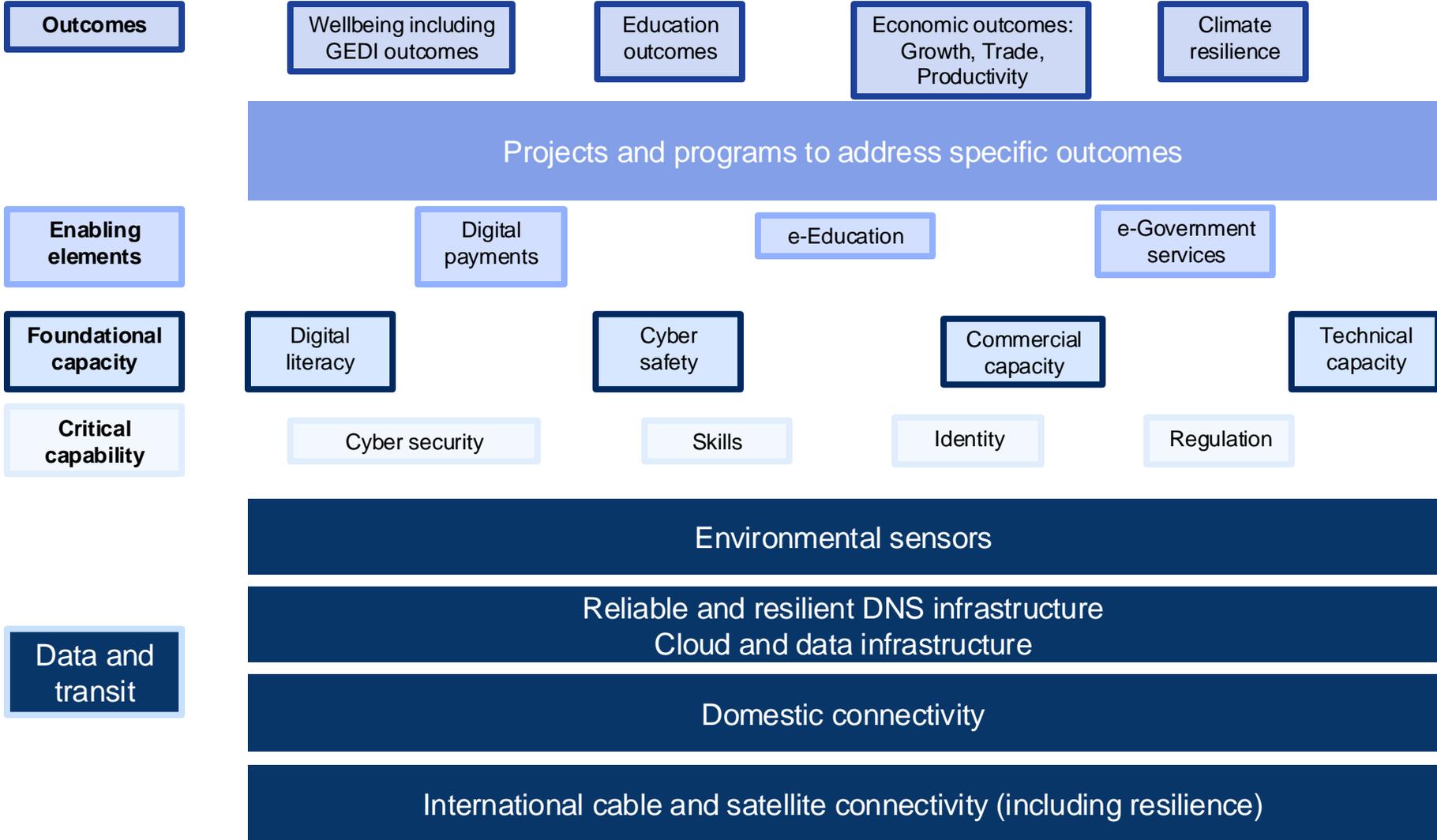# How far along the track are we? (Red = Not Good; Green = Pretty Good)

Prioritisation needs to be based on a theory of change

Prioritising projects for Regional Interventions to Strengthen Digital Readiness and Resilience in Pacific Island Countries needs to be based on a theory of change. Specifically, what elements need to be in place before other projects become viable. For example, projects to develop digital education offerings are not possible without the requisite data and transit infrastructure, and would be unlikely to be sustainable without cyber security capability and local technical capacity.

Prioritisation therefore needs to consider two dimensions:
- What elements (eg infrastructure, regulation, capacity) need to be in place for projects addressing final outcomes and impact to become viable?
- What final outcomes and impact are most important?

Strengthening Digital Readiness & Resilience: a possible theory of change

Outcomes

| Wellbeing including GEDI outcomes | Education outcomes | Economic outcomes: Growth, Trade, Productivity | Climate resilience |

Projects and programs to address specific outcomes

Enabling elements

Digital payments   e-Education   e-Government services

Foundational capacity

| Digital literacy | Cyber safety | Commercial capacity | Technical capacity |

Critical capability

Cyber security   Skills   Identity   Regulation

Environmental sensors

Reliable and resilient DNS infrastructure
Cloud and data infrastructure

Data and transit

Domestic connectivity

International cable and satellite connectivity (including resilience)

THANK YOU

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