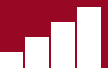


SCALING IMPACT: AI-DRIVEN DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AFRICAN CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Soheib Nunhuck

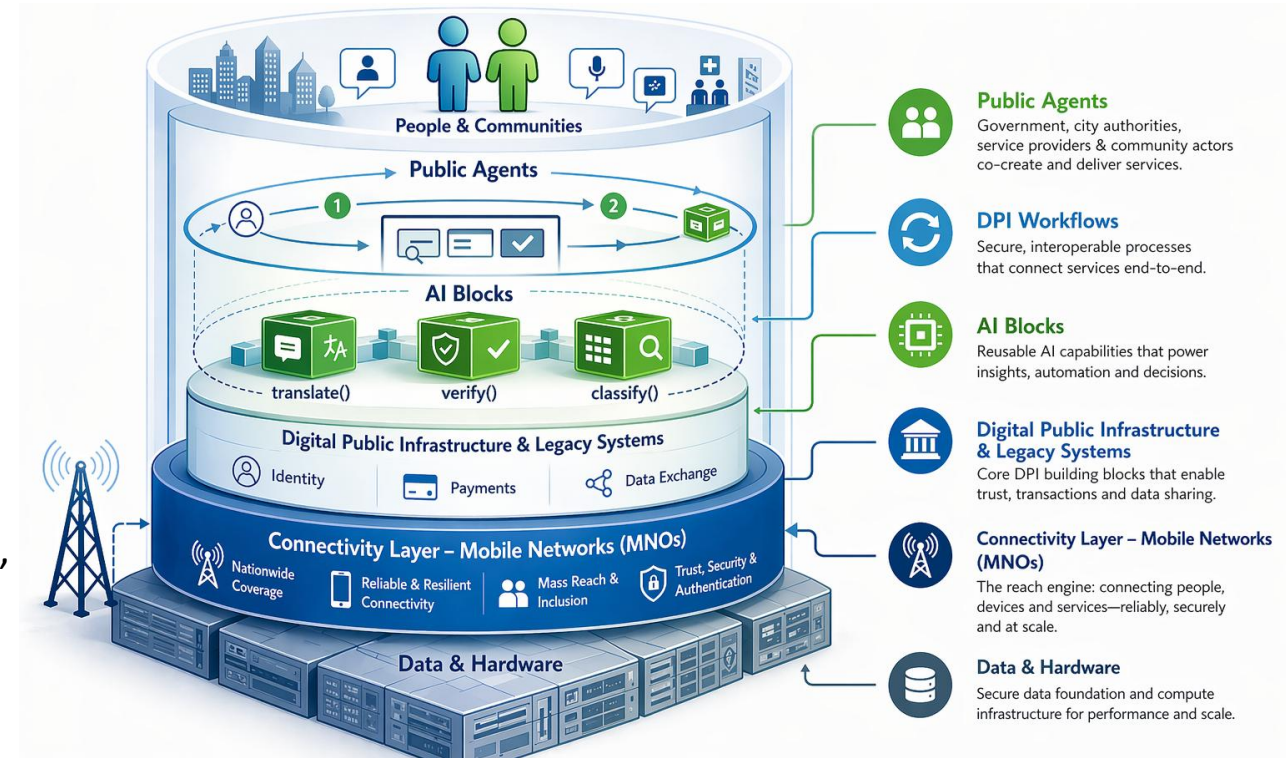
Senior DPI Policy Manager, Mobile for Development

April 27 2026



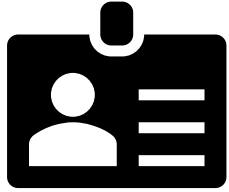
Why DPI is the scaling layer

- AI does not scale on its own
- DPI enabling scale through
 - Digital Identity: authentication, trust
 - Digital Payments: delivering real-time value
 - **Data Exchange**: interoperability, quality of the data, understanding data lifecycle and reuse
- **Mobile Networks: The Execution Layer**
 - Nationwide reach: **84% of adults in LMICs** own a mobile phone, 75% of those smartphones.
 - Real-time, reliable connectivity, despite a persisting **usage gap (3.4 bn remain unconnected)**
- **No interoperability? No connectivity? No DPI!**



Source: Adapted from CDPI Abadie, D. (2026). *DPI-AI Framework: Building AI-Ready Nations through Digital Public Infrastructure*. <https://digitalpublicinfrastructure.ai>

AI x DPI in Practice



Social Protection: From Identification to Inclusion

- COVID-19: G2P Payments
- AI supporting authentication & fraud reductions



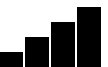
Payments: From Transactions to an Economic System

- Real-time payment infrastructure to enable instant, interoperable transactions
- AI enhancing fraud detection, credit scoring, and service personalisation



Public Health: From Prediction to Response

- AI modelling disease patterns
- DPI coordinating service delivery



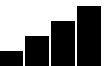
The Missing Piece: Sustainable Ecosystems

Why DPI can struggle to scale

- Built as public IT systems: legacy methodologies (e.g., procurement and financing models) and legacy policies
- Private sector brought in too late
- Unclear incentives & roles
- No sustainable cost-recovery model

DPI: new way of thinking, new way of doing

- How to incentivise private sector participation towards sustainable PPPs
- DPI as a market: enabling viable commercial models, formalising roles, accountability frameworks
- Include MNOs early (design, governance, standards)



Call to Action: Pre-requisites to scale AI-driven DPI

Design for scale and reuse from the start

- **DPI** is not a project. Investments and financing must be strategic.
- Think modular. Open standards to reduce fragmentation and silos.

Integrate AI and DPI together

- Start small, iterate, build confidence and resilience.

Enable public-private ecosystems

- Private sector comes in multiple shapes and forms.
- Mobile industry is uniquely well-placed within the ecosystem.
- Adaptive learning, open knowledge.

