Joint Implementation Road Map for WSIS–GDC Coherence

(Submission for consideration by the CSTD, 29th Session, 20-24 April 2026)

1. Context and Mandate

This proposed Joint Implementation Road Map takes into account the following mandates:

- ECOSOC Resolution (E/RES/2025/18, para. 133) that *recommends further that, as an outcome of the World Summit 20-year review, the United Nations Group on the Information Society be tasked with developing a joint implementation road map, to be presented to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its twenty-ninth session, to integrate the Global Digital Compact commitments into the World Summit architecture, ensuring a unified approach to digital cooperation that avoids duplication and maximizes resource efficiency.*

- United Nations General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/80/173, para.122) that *noted the World Summit process and 2030 Agenda–Global Digital Compact matrix, prepared by the United Nations Group on the Information Society, which maps the objectives and commitments of the Global Digital Compact to existing World Summit structures, mechanisms and activities, providing a structured approach for effective follow-up and implementation. Building on this work and consistent with the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council, we request the United Nations Group on the Information Society, within existing mandates and resources, to prepare a joint implementation road map, to be presented for the consideration of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its twenty-ninth session, in 2026. The road map should aim to strengthen coherence between the World Summit and the Global Digital Compact, ensuring a unified, resource-efficient approach to digital cooperation that avoids duplication and maximizes synergies across the United Nations system*.

- Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1), especially its Annex I Global Digital Compact (GDC). GDC Paras (para 5): *We have strong foundations on which to build. Our digital cooperation rests on international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*; (para 17): *We remain committed to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society reflected in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action 18 and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society*; (para 19): *The United Nations provides a critical platform for the global digital cooperation we need, and we will harness existing processes to do so*.

2. Analytical Framework

The WSIS Framework comprehensively addresses all dimensions of the information and knowledge societies, encompassing an extensive range of topics and thematic areas. The WSIS Framework is the global blueprint for how the world advances inclusive, rights-based, development-oriented digital societies. Established in the Geneva Declaration of Principles (2003) and the Tunis Agenda (2005) and reinforced by the WSIS+10 and WSIS+20 reviews, it consists of:

- A shared vision for an inclusive Information Society
- A set of principles for digital development
- A structured implementation mechanism (WSIS Action Lines), WSIS Forum, and Internet Governance Forum (IGF)
- A follow-up and review system across the UN
- A multistakeholder model for digital cooperation

In parallel, GDC renews political commitment, referring to areas such as data governance and specific technologies, including artificial intelligence, that already constitute an integrated part of the implementation processes of the WSIS framework and mechanisms. The GDC comprises of the following objectives:

1. Close all digital divides and accelerate progress across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
2. Expand inclusion in and benefits from the digital economy for all;
3. Foster an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space that respects, protects and promote human rights;
4. Advance responsible, equitable and interoperable data governance approaches;
5. Enhance international governance of artificial intelligence for the benefit of humanity.

Furthermore, both the WSIS+10 Review and the WSIS+20 Review called for the close alignment and continued relevance of the WSIS Action Lines to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While the Pact for the Future (2024) at the UN General Assembly confirmed sustained efforts to address existing, new and emerging challenges to sustainable development by 2030 and beyond, the WSIS+20 Resolution calls for the WSIS Review in 2035 to further identify areas of continued focus.

The analytical framework of this road map builds on the extensive work already underway across the UN system, where each UN entity continues to implement WSIS and GDC objectives in accordance and within the limits of its respective mandates and governing body decisions. Accordingly, the road map aims at reinforcing coherence and strengthening collective impact across the UN system, ensuring continuity and avoiding duplication of efforts.

Within this context, this UNGIS road map seeks to reinforce cross functional dialogue and strategic exchange within the system, by sequencing interactions across the existing mechanisms, ensuring that each contributes its comparative advantage while benefiting from the inputs of others. In their Resolution, the UN General Assembly reaffirmed their commitment to the WSIS Action Lines, as the operational backbone of WSIS, serve as the principal thematic drivers for implementing the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda, while requesting Action Line facilitators, in coordination with the UNGIS, to develop targeted and result-oriented implementation road maps for their respective WSIS Action Lines, linking them with relevant SDGs targets and GDC commitments.

For doing so, Resolution A/RES/80/173 provides guidance for WSIS Action Lines facilitators to inform the implementation work of the WSIS Action Lines and SDG and GDC coherence (p.120), by leveraging the multistakeholder exchanges at the WSIS Forum (p.110), the technical discussions within the IGF (p.96), through the region-specific perspectives from the UN Regional Commissions (p.53), and by building on existing indicators and progress-assessment methodologies (p.113).

Through these integrated processes, the WSIS Action Lines become both a source and recipient of cross cutting expertise: for example, GDC work on data governance reinforces WSIS Action Line work on enabling environments; AI governance initiatives feed into WSIS Action Lines on infrastructure, security, ethics, and applications; and digital inclusion targets inform WSIS Action Line work on skills, education, cultural diversity, and ICT applications.

This iterative, multi-platform information flow ensures that WSIS Action Lines remain responsive to emerging global priorities while preserving the strengths of the WSIS architecture, anchoring WSIS-GDC coherence efforts in structures that already enjoy clear mandates, longstanding legitimacy, and recognized multistakeholder participation.

This includes the UNGIS for inter-agency coordination; the regional commissions for contextualizing implementation strategies; the WSIS Forum and IGF for multistakeholder engagement; the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) for follow up and review; and emerging platforms such as the Global Dialogue on AI Governance for expanding collaboration in areas of rapid technological change.

3. WSIS–GDC Coherence: Ongoing progress

The WSIS Process and 2030 Agenda–GDC matrix, developed by UNGIS serves as a central reference point for this road map. In December 2024, UNGIS mapped the objectives and commitments of the GDC to existing WSIS structures, mechanisms and activities, providing a structured approach for effective follow-up and implementation. The Matrix also served as a basis for the GDC Implementation Map that was submitted to the 28th CSTD session in 2025 and was noted.

The UNGIS matrix provides a structured approach for follow up and implementation, demonstrating that WSIS Action Lines provide a comprehensive operational structure for supporting the implementation of the GDC's objectives. In particular, the GDC has reemphasised on areas such as data governance and artificial intelligence governance, that already play a key role in the implementation processes of the WSIS framework.

The convergence of these tracks as shown through the matrix, generates a unique opportunity to enhance system wide coherence, for example (non-exhaustive list):

- Universal connectivity → WSIS Action Lines C2, C3, C6
- Digital inclusion and skills → WSIS Action Lines C4, C7, C8, C9
- Trust, safety, and security → WSIS Action Lines C5, C10
- Digital public goods and interoperability → WSIS Action Lines C1, C3, C7, C11
- Data governance → WSIS Action Lines C3, C6, C10
- AI governance, human rights, and ethics → WSIS Action Lines C2, C5, C6, C10, C11
- Digital economy → WSIS Action Lines C6, C7

Through the outcomes of the WSIS+20 review, Member States reaffirm that WSIS remains the primary global framework guiding digital cooperation, and that the WSIS Action Lines represent long-standing, multistakeholder processes with established mandates that must be preserved and strengthened. Likewise, in adopting the GDC, Member States affirmed that it builds on the WSIS framework and processes, ensuring coherence and complementarity, while working closely to existing WSIS mechanisms.

3.1. Ongoing actions and activities through existing mandates:

1. To provide a structured approach for follow-up and implementation, UNGIS continuously and proactively maps and aligns the objectives and commitments of the GDC with existing WSIS structures, mechanisms, and activities, updating this alignment to reflect emerging priorities and developments.

2. In line with paragraph 121 of resolution A/RES/80/173, Member States recognized the role of UNGIS in promoting policy coherence and coordination. Through this road map, UNGIS will continue to play a key role in enhancing the effectiveness of policy coherence and in avoiding duplication of efforts.

3. The WSIS Forum:
    a) is providing the appropriate multistakeholder platforms for dialogue on GDC discussions, case studies, and community-driven outputs that help inform GDC implementation by reflecting practical experiences from across diverse stakeholder groups.
    b) is featuring a dedicated special track on WSIS–GDC coherence at the WSIS Forum.
    c) is offering the WSIS stakeholders the opportunity to exchange, present, discuss and advance the progress enabled through WSIS.

4. In line with the WSIS+20 UNGA Resolution A/RES/80/173 (p.113), the WSIS Action Lines Facilitators are developing targeted and result-oriented implementation road maps for their respective WSIS Action Lines and the outcomes of the present resolution, linking the WSIS Action Lines with relevant SDGs targets and GDC commitments, including potential targets, indicators and metrics to facilitate monitoring and measurement. Action Line Facilitators are due to report on the outcomes of this work to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its thirtieth session in 2027. Coordination among the WSIS Action Lines facilitators continues through regular meetings.

5. The WSIS Stocktaking platform is capturing, mapping, and showcasing stakeholder initiatives aligned with WSIS Action Lines and relevant GDC commitments, thereby providing a transparent platform for tracking progress and identifying synergies.

6. The Internet Governance Forum is providing and facilitating a platform for multistakeholder discussions highlighting the GDC implementation. IGF National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs), which have emerged continuously since 2005, as community-driven platforms that facilitate digital dialogue at national, regional and sub-regional levels and contribute local perspectives to global digital cooperation processes.

7. The Working Group on Digital Technologies (WGDT):
    a) presented the GDC Implementation Map at the 2025 CSTD Session; built on the UNGIS WSIS–2030 Agenda–GDC matrix.
    b) through the activities of its members, provides updates to the annual WSIS Forum.

8. Global Dialogue on AI Governance in Geneva
   With the decision holding every other year the Global Dialogue on AI Governance in Geneva, back-to-back with the ITU-led AI for Good Global Summit – also convening in conjunction with the WSIS Forum – this process is creating and strengthening additional scope for synergies between the WSIS implementation and that of the GDC.

9. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development is serving as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up to the outcomes of the WSIS, pursuant to its ECOSOC mandate. ECOSOC Resolution (E/RES/2025/18) and the UNGA Resolution (A/RES/80/173) emphasize and reinforce the role of CSTD in the GDC follow-up and review process and the need to ensure the strongest possible convergences between the implementation of WSIS outcomes and the GDC to avoid duplication and enhance synergies, efficiencies and impact.

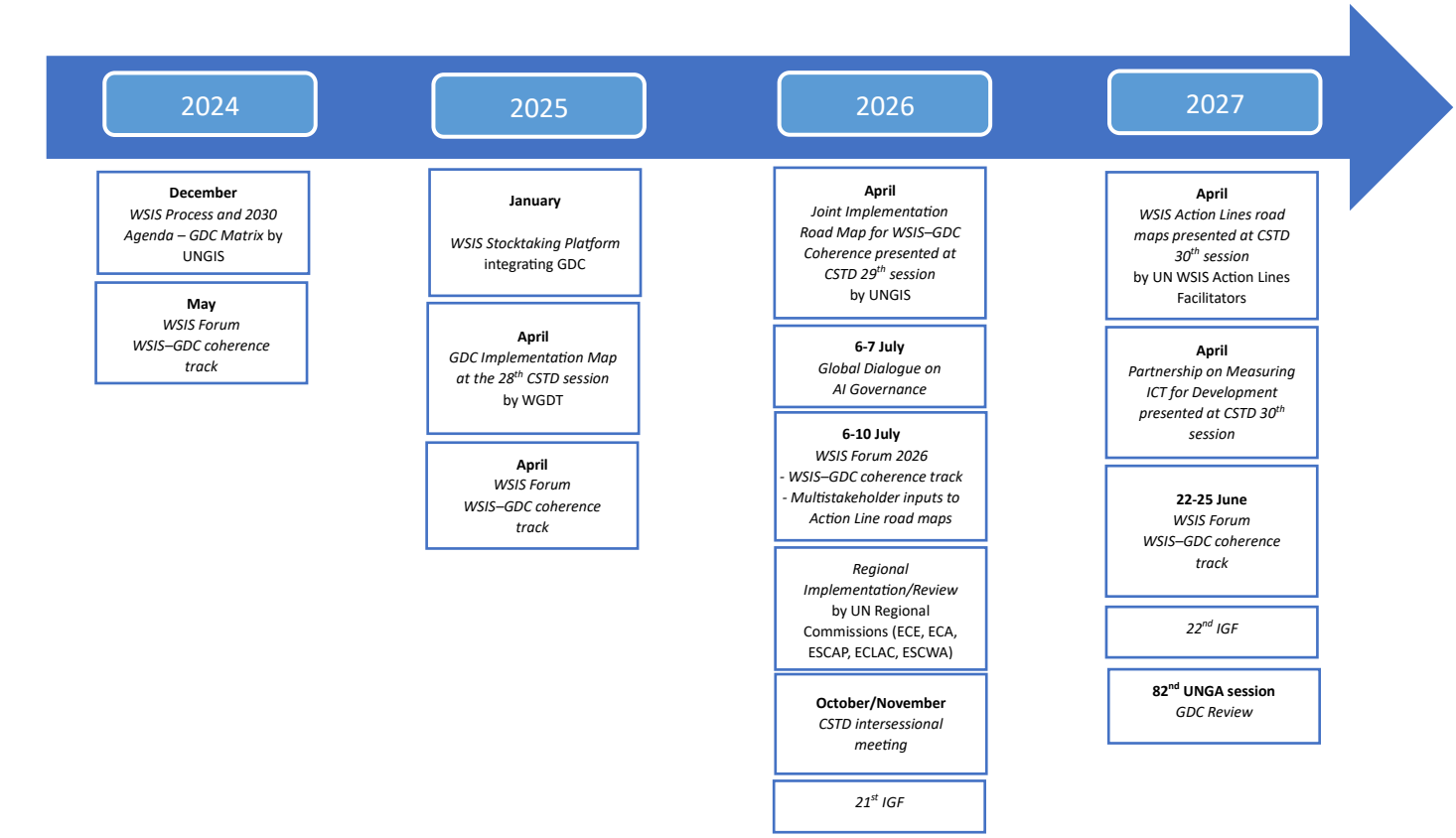
4. Advancing policy coherence and programme coordination

As the United Nations system's interagency mechanism for advancing policy coherence and programme coordination on digital matters, UNGIS is uniquely positioned to ensure continuous dialogue and alignment across all relevant processes. Alongside its ongoing work, UNGIS stands ready to provide its expertise and collective knowledge to the process towards the High-Level Review of the GDC at the 82nd UN General Assembly in 2027. The following table, together with the coherence timeline, provides an overview of how each existing entity and mechanism can contribute through its specific function to the broader effort of strengthening WSIS–GDC coherence.

Entity / Mechanism	Key Contributions to ensuring WSIS-GDC coherence
UNGIS	UN inter-agency mechanism on digital; maintain matrix, convene agencies
WSIS Action Lines Facilitation	Coordination and thematic implementation lead; produce WSIS Action Line level targeted and result-oriented implementation road maps; indicators link with SDGs and GDC commitments
WSIS Forum	Multistakeholder implementation platform; showcase progress on WSIS Action Line road maps, WSIS-GDC coherence special track; multistakeholder and multi-process dialogue;
WGDT	GDC implementation alignment; report milestones, coordinate with WSIS Action Lines
Regional Commissions	Regional implementation in collaboration with other regional players and actors, such as Regional Telecommunication Organizations; feed regional reviews into global coherence
IGF	Multistakeholder platform on internet governance; enhance multistakeholder discussions on internet governance and policy issues
UN Inter-agency working group on artificial intelligence (IAWG-AI) / Other UN AI processes	AI governance and mechanisms; integrate AI-related commitments; consult with WSIS Action Lines Facilitators to map existing United Nations system-wide capacity-building initiatives, identify potential gaps and address them (para 86)
Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development	Monitor the information society; review of existing indicators and methodologies (para 117)

Tools	Lead	Key Contributions
WSIS Process and 2030 Agenda–GDC matrix	UNGIS	Central reference point for this road map:
WSIS Stocktaking UN platform	ITU	Collects best WSIS implementation practices by all stakeholders
GDC UN Digital Cooperation Portal	ODET	Implementation, tracking, and coordination of GDC

5. Timeline and Milestones



This road map will be regularly updated by the UNGIS as necessary.

ANNEX

Existing mechanisms and activities for implementation and coordination

The road map builds upon existing mechanisms, databases, portals, and platforms for dialogue and/or joint implementation:

- **UNGIS** as the UN system-wide inter-agency coordination mechanism on digital cooperation, with rotational Chair and Vice-Chairs by ITU, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO and UN Regional Commissions (vice-chair), currently comprising 47 members and observers, with ITU serving as permanent secretariat, since 2006.
- **Coordination at the Regional level - UN Regional Commissions (UNRECs)** specific mandates, including ESCWA, ECA, ESCAP, ECLAC, ECE, as the regional implementation and follow-up mechanisms of WSIS, and other regional organizations ensuring regional perspectives inform global coherence efforts, since 2005.
- **WSIS Action Lines** as established in the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, covering 18 areas with assigned UN facilitators and co-facilitators, since 2003.
- **WSIS Forum** (and cluster of WSIS-related events) as the annual multistakeholder platform for sharing of information and best practice and for multi-stakeholder dialogue and collaboration, and for developing networks and coordinating initiatives to implement the World Summit vision, since 2005.
- **Internet Governance Forum** is the primary multistakeholder platform for discussion of Internet governance issues, including emerging issues, since 2005.
- **WSIS Stocktaking** as the UN platform for collecting best WSIS implementation practices by all stakeholders, since 2004.
- **WSIS Prizes** as the international recognition of best practices implementing digital for development, since 2012.
- **Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development**, an international, multistakeholder initiative that was launched in 2004 to improve the availability and quality of ICT data and indicators, particularly in developing countries.
- **GDC Working Group on Digital Technologies (WGDT),** as the coordinating group for the implementation of the five objectives of the GDC and Chapter 3 of the Pact for the Future, led by ITU and ODET, co-chaired by UNESCO and UNESCWA, since 2025.
- **GDC UN Digital Cooperation Portal**, since 2025.
- **Inter-agency working group on artificial intelligence (IAWG-AI), Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence, the Global Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence Governance, and UN AI Resource Hub**, since 2025.
- **eTrade for All initiative**: Recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution A/RES/77/150 as an effective model for e-commerce capacity-building within the multilateral system. The initiative supports developing countries in navigating technical assistance for building e-commerce readiness and enables donors to identify programmes they could fund.
- **Global Alliance on Artificial Intelligence for Industry and Manufacturing (AIM Global):** Targeted initiatives on digital transformation and artificial intelligence are actively advancing coherence between the WSIS framework and the GDC.
- **Entity-specific WSIS mandates and resolutions** in their respective governing bodies.
- **UNGA Plenary and Side sessions**, including the SDG digital days and Digital@UNGA, provide a platform which serves as a mechanism to play a catalytic role in supporting the global community to achieve the 2030 Agenda – the 17 SDGs, which were adopted by all Member States of the United Nations in 2015.