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Responsible Digital KPI Framework

A common set of metrics for managing the impacts of digital technology

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EDITORIAL

For a long time, the main challenge of Responsible Digitalisation was to convince people. To convince them that digital technology was not intangible. To convince them that behind every digital service lie infrastructure, equipment, resource consumption and very real social and environmental impacts. Finally, to convince them that these issues needed to be integrated into organisational decision-making on a par with economic or operational criteria.

Today, we feel that the debate has moved on. In most large organisations, the question is no longer whether to act, but how to act effectively. Commitments are multiplying, initiatives are taking shape, and the expectations of staff, customers and regulators are intensifying. Yet one observation keeps cropping up in the discussions we have held within Cigref: it remains difficult to objectively assess the progress made, to compare approaches, to prioritise actions or to direct investment towards the most effective levers.

In other words, the main challenge is no longer one of persuasion. It is now one of steering. Yet steering requires shared, comprehensible and actionable indicators. For what cannot be measured is difficult to steer. And what cannot be steered rarely undergoes lasting transformation.

This is precisely the aim of this framework: to provide a common foundation for objectively assessing the impacts of digital transformation, informing decision-making and tracking progress over time. We set out to build a pragmatic tool that could be used directly by both operational teams and governance bodies, whilst allowing each organisation the freedom to adapt the indicators to its specific context and maturity level.

As our work progressed, one conviction became increasingly clear: measurement is not an end in itself. It is a lever for transformation. It enables ambitions to be aligned with the reality on the ground, fosters dialogue between different stakeholders, and makes visible progress that would otherwise often remain difficult to perceive.

This need is becoming even more pressing with the rise of artificial intelligence. The opportunities created by AI are considerable, but its energy, economic, social and ethical impacts also call for a greater capacity for observation and management. Here too, decisions will increasingly need to be based on objective data rather than on perceptions or intuitions.

We hope that this framework will help to foster a common language and shared management practices. For at a time when digital technology lies at the heart of organisational performance and transformation, measuring its impacts is no longer an option; it is an essential prerequisite for guiding action, informing choices and building a digital landscape that creates sustainable value.

Responsible Digital Transformation will reach a decisive milestone when it is no longer guided solely by convictions, but is fully driven by data.

This framework is the result of several months of collective work. We would like to sincerely thank all participants for their commitment, their expertise and their willingness to work together to build a common foundation for the benefit of the entire community.

Finally, we would like to pay special tribute to the work of Flora Fischer, Programme Director at Cigref. Her energy, perseverance, ability to drive discussions forward and the quality of the work she has produced have been exceptional.

Sandrine Racouchot, Director of Information Systems at Abeille Assurances, Board Member of Cigref

Yannick Puget, Director of Operations & Customer Experience at iMSA

PRESENTATION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Today, responsible digital initiatives have moved beyond the experimental stage in large organisations. However, sustaining and scaling up these strategies now requires a governance framework capable of measuring outcomes and ensuring their long-term monitoring. In addition, given the wide range of possible actions, it has become crucial to establish reliable benchmarks to focus efforts where there is a real impact.

It is to meet this need for performance measurement and informed governance that the 'Steering Metrics for Responsible Digital & AI' working group, led by Cigref, has embarked on a collaborative initiative to develop a **common reference framework comprising 64 concrete and actionable Responsible Digital KPIs**[1], incorporating environmental, social and governance dimensions.

The aim of this framework is to provide large organisations with a set of indicators – collectively deemed the most relevant – enabling them to effectively steer their Responsible Digital strategies. Each organisation is invited to adopt this tool by adapting it to its own context.

1.2 WHAT THIS FRAMEWORK CONTAINS

The attached Excel document constitutes the operational deliverable of this working group. It offers a structured set of KPIs covering three complementary dimensions of responsible digital technology:

1. **Environmental KPIs**, which enable the monitoring of the digital sector's environmental footprint throughout its life cycle: management of the user equipment fleet (lifespan, reuse, recycling), data centre performance (PUE, WUE, CUE, energy mix), network optimisation, eco-design of digital services, and management of the carbon impact of cloud infrastructure and services.

[1] *Key Performance Indicators*

2. **Social KPIs**, which assess the organisation's contribution to a more inclusive and ethical digital society: accessibility of services in accordance with the RGAA[2] and the WCAG[3], integration of ethical frameworks for AI projects, and social engagement (donations of equipment, digital literacy initiatives or initiatives to promote gender diversity in digital professions).
3. **Governance KPIs**, which reflect the maturity level of the organisation: the existence of a dedicated committee to monitor Responsible Digital policies; the proportion of the IT budget allocated to responsible initiatives; staff training and awareness rates (particularly regarding eco-design, accessibility and frugal AI); the inclusion of Responsible Digital criteria in calls for tenders; etc.

Environmental issues are now increasingly well understood and documented, despite the persistence of certain methodological challenges. This is why the category of environmental KPIs has been deliberately designed to cover a broad spectrum of indicators. To navigate this, prioritisation is necessary: it is recommended either to follow the priorities suggested by the tool or to select the indicators deemed most strategic according to each organisation's context. However, this focus must not overshadow social, ethical and governance dimensions, which are still too often neglected. Taking all these aspects into account together is essential for developing a credible responsible digital strategy.

To provide operational support for management, KPIs are categorised according to whether they measure an impact, assess performance or track a transformation:

- **Impact KPIs** answer the question 'where are we now?': they measure, at a given point in time 't', the impacts of the organisation's digital activities on the environment, society or users (carbon footprint, accessibility, recycling, etc.).
- **Performance KPIs** answer the question 'are we doing things right?': they assess the effectiveness of a system or policy in terms of usage, resource optimisation or technical operation (utilisation rate, lifespan, energy efficiency, etc.).
- **Transformation KPIs** answer the question 'are we making progress?': they track the progress of the actions implemented and the change process, whether in relation to governance, practices, skills or the integration of responsible digital technology into processes (training, governance, integration into procurement, etc.).

[2] France's General Framework for Improving Accessibility
[3] *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines*

Each organisation will therefore be able to adapt these indicators by deciding what level of oversight is required (operational, management, executive committee, etc.) depending on their nature.

1.3 HOW TO USE THIS FRAMEWORK?

Each indicator is documented with a detailed **description**, its **level of difficulty** in data collection (easy, intermediate, difficult) and a **priority level** proposed by the working group members. However, one column has been deliberately left blank to allow each organisation to reassess and establish its own prioritisation according to its specific context. This gradation enables each organisation to adopt a phased approach, starting with the most accessible indicators before progressing to more advanced ones.

To facilitate this implementation, the framework also includes a **section dedicated to 'management data'**, providing organisations with a structured framework to ensure the effective and regular monitoring of the KPIs they have selected.

However, when implementing this framework, it is important to bear in mind its current limitations: several of the framework's indicators are based on supplier data (particularly cloud data) or on methodologies that are still being refined (multi-criteria analysis, generative AI and agent-based AI, etc.). This limits the immediate usability of certain KPIs and sometimes necessitates working with orders of magnitude or assumptions. It may therefore be useful to distinguish between KPIs that can be directly controlled and those that depend on third parties.

Furthermore, the set of KPIs is not intended to be applied uniformly across all organisations: some indicators may fall outside the scope or be incompatible with certain management rules (such as BYOD[4], for example). These indicators may simply be marked as 'not applicable' (N/A) without affecting the overall approach.

This framework does not constitute a mandatory list of indicators to be followed in full, but rather a common foundation from which each organisation is invited to select the KPIs best suited to its maturity level, scope and strategic priorities. Far from being an additional constraint, it is intended as a management

[4] *Bring your own device*

tool to support continuous improvement and internal dialogue – particularly between the IT department, CSR, HR and business departments – to align the ambitions of responsible digitalisation with operational realities, inform investment decisions, continue to raise awareness amongst all stakeholders, and report on progress made.

Finally, this framework provides a basis for cross-organisational comparison amongst Cigref members, in a spirit of sharing best practice and long-term monitoring: the aim is to regularly consult members on the actual use of these indicators, to refine their relevance, capitalise on emerging practices and keep this framework dynamic in line with feedback from the field.

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Cigref is a network of major French companies and public administrations whose mission is to develop its members' ability to integrate and master digital technologies. Through the quality of its thinking and the representativeness of its members, Cigref is a unifying force in the digital society. Cigref was founded in 1970 under the French law of 1901, and does not engage in any profit-making activities.

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To achieve its mission, Cigref relies on three core businesses that make it unique.

Membership
Cigref embodies the collective voice of France's leading companies and government agencies on digital issues. Its members share their experience of technology use within working groups, to help identify best practices.

Intelligence
Cigref participates in collective reflection on the economic and societal challenges of information technologies. Founded more than 50 years ago, Cigref is one of the oldest digital associations in France, and draws its legitimacy from both its history and its mastery of technical subjects, the foundation of skills and know-how that underpin the digital world.

Influence
Cigref promotes and respects the legitimate interests of its member companies. As an independent forum for exchange and production between practitioners and players, it is a benchmark recognized by its entire ecosystem.