



Ministerial Declaration
G7 Digital and Technology Ministers' meeting
28 April 2021

We, the G7 Digital and Technology Ministers, met on 28 April 2021 under the chairmanship of the Rt. Hon Oliver Dowden, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, of the Government of the United Kingdom, to discuss the digital and technology agenda under the theme of 'building back better'.

Our collective recovery from COVID-19 must be rooted in a desire to build back a better, more productive and resilient global economy, with digital technology at its heart. This should support open societies in the digital and data-driven age, and be guided by our shared democratic values of open and competitive markets, strong safeguards including for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international cooperation which drives benefits for our citizens, economies and global well-being.

We have therefore decided to place the needs of open, democratic societies at the centre of the technology debate and to work together towards a trusted, values-driven digital ecosystem. We believe that such ecosystems must enhance prosperity in a way that is sustainable, inclusive and human-centric. We have also affirmed our opposition to measures which may undermine these democratic values, such as government-imposed Internet shutdowns and network restrictions.

This will be delivered through six important interventions at every level of the technology stack, from the physical infrastructure and digital technical standards that underpin it, to the data that fuels it, and the applications and content with which consumers and businesses interact on a daily basis in order to harness the opportunities that the digital economy presents. The interventions address:

- **Promoting Secure, Resilient, and Diverse Digital, Telecoms, and ICT Infrastructure Supply Chains**
- **A Framework for G7 Collaboration on Digital Technical Standards**
- **A G7 Roadmap for Cooperation on Data Free Flow with Trust**
- **G7 Internet Safety Principles**
- **Deepening Cooperation on Digital Competition**
- **A Framework for G7 Collaboration on Electronic Transferable Records**



Promoting Secure, Resilient, and Diverse Digital, Telecoms, and ICT Infrastructure Supply Chains

Digital and ICT infrastructure underpins modern societies and helps to deliver inclusive economic growth. The rapid pace of technological advancement is increasing dependence on such infrastructure, and therefore the need to assure its security, resilience, reliability and integrity. We are committed to working together, and with other international partners, to lead global efforts on this important agenda.

In our first discussion of this topic, we recognised the foundational role that telecommunications infrastructure, including 5G and future communication technologies, plays and will play in underpinning our wider digital and ICT infrastructure, and therefore the importance of assuring security and resilience in this critical technology layer in a long term and sustained manner.

To support this objective, we discussed options for promoting a more secure, resilient, diverse, competitive, transparent and sustainable digital and ICT infrastructure supply chain, particularly in global telecoms. We discussed that such infrastructures require a rigorous evaluation of equipment, consistent with existing measures such as those outlined in the Prague Proposals, and the EU's 5G toolbox. We also considered how to encourage innovation, and to actively explore the potential of emerging open and interoperable network architectures, alongside current technological offers. We noted that such approaches should maintain or enhance security, performance, energy efficiency and resilience, and could stimulate the emergence of new entrants to the market both now and in the future.

Our officials will continue this discussion later in the year, and will establish expert points of contact to advance long term collaboration, including with industry, civil society, multilateral fora and other relevant stakeholders, and to share best practices.

A Framework for G7 Collaboration on Digital Technical Standards

The industry-led digital technical standards ecosystem has been a catalyst for the growth and adoption of the Internet and digital technologies. We recognise the significant and positive role that digital technical standards have in supporting the global economy and society. We recognise that the way in which digital technical standards are developed and deployed has a real world impact on citizens and societies.



Therefore, building on the 2017 Italian G7 ICT and Industry Ministerial Declaration, we reiterate our strong support for industry-led, inclusive, multi-stakeholder approaches for the development of technical standards. It is essential that the development of digital technical standards continues to be underpinned by transparency, openness of process and participation, relevance and consensus-based decision-making in line with core principles for standards development.

We commit to international collaboration within the G7 and with like-minded partners in relevant fora to ensure that the development of digital technical standards supports our core values. We will work with stakeholders to ensure inclusive digital technical standards development processes for areas such as the Internet, telecommunications and emerging digital technologies. In particular, we will work with stakeholders towards the more inclusive development of Internet protocols that contribute to and protect the continuing evolution of an open, interoperable, reliable and secure internet, one that is unfragmented, supports freedom, innovation and trust, and empowers people. We firmly state our opposition to any government-imposed approaches that fundamentally seek to reshape the digital technical standards ecosystem.

To deliver this, we have endorsed a *Framework for Collaboration* (Annex 1) which sets out areas for G7 and like minded partners' collaboration on digital technical standards and offers a pathway for constructive engagement.

A G7 Roadmap for Cooperation on Data Free Flow with Trust

The ability to move data across borders is essential for economic growth and innovation. COVID-19 has demonstrated the need for data free flow with trust and its role in the global recovery.

We recognise the importance of unlocking the power of data in our economies and our societies, while continuing to address challenges related to privacy, data protection, intellectual property rights, and security.

We believe that it is vital we work together to better leverage the potential of valuable data-driven technologies, promote international cooperation to drive benefits for our economies and societies, and ensure personal data are appropriately protected, while recognising our varied approaches to data governance.

Building on the 2019 G20 Osaka Leaders' Declaration, the 2019 G20 Ministerial Statement on Trade and Digital Economy, and the 2020 G20 Leaders' Riyadh Declaration, we will draw



upon our shared values as like-minded, democratic, open and outward looking nations to support a plan of work which realises the benefits of data free flow with trust.

To deliver this, we endorse a *Roadmap for Cooperation on Data Free Flow with Trust* (Annex 2) which sets out our plan for delivering tangible progress on this agenda, building confidence for businesses and individuals to use technology, as well as driving economic and social value. As part of this Roadmap, we will work to accelerate the development of mutually acceptable data sharing practices for agreed priority sectors, and we will build evidence on the economic and societal impacts of data localisation measures. We will also champion progress of the OECD's work on 'Mapping commonalities in regulatory approaches to cross-border data transfers' and on trusted 'Government access to personal data held by the private sector'.

G7 Internet Safety Principles

We recognise that actions by governments, companies, academia, civil society and individuals are improving internet safety and we note the positive steps taken by companies to keep their users safe in a responsible and risk-based way. In line with our domestic approaches, we believe that further steps from governments, companies, academia, civil society and other interested stakeholders should be taken to improve internet safety, including to educate and empower people of all ages to increase access and knowledge, enabling users to make informed and safe choices online. These steps should also support our shared values as open and democratic societies, and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We note that despite some positive steps and technological improvement, harmful content and activity remains widespread online. This undermines our democratic values, risks the physical safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable user groups, reduces online participation and diminishes trust in the online environment.

We endorse the *G7 Internet Safety Principles* (Annex 3) which demonstrate our support for a set of underpinning principles to guide G7 approaches to improving online safety, and a set of operational principles where consensus exists for specific action.

Deepening Cooperation on Digital Competition

Competitive digital markets drive innovation across the global economy, enhance consumer choice and allow the sectors that rely on the digital economy to flourish. However, there is increasing international concern that participants with significant market power can abuse



that power to hold back digital markets and the wider economy. We recognise it is in our shared interest to coordinate and cooperate.

We will therefore build upon the 2019 French G7 Presidency's common understanding on 'Competition and the Digital Economy', recognising the expanding evidence base and policy initiatives that have been, and continue to be, developed. By working together, including in existing international and multilateral fora, we can find coherent and complementary ways to encourage competition and support innovation in digital markets. We note various approaches taken around the world to address these challenges, but recognise that we will be most effective if we find commonalities between them

To support existing workstreams on enforcement and policy related to digital competition, we will invite the UK's Competition and Markets Authority to convene a meeting of G7 competition authorities in 2021. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss long term coordination and cooperation to better understand enforcement approaches, market characteristics and policy initiatives related to competition in digital markets, including in existing international and multilateral fora.

The coordination and cooperation between competition authorities should be complemented by increased coordination between policymakers. The UK will therefore also host relevant officials in 2021 to discuss the importance of promoting competition through regulatory policies for digital markets, including through further coordination with competition authorities. Both meetings will draw on expertise and evidence from G7 policymakers, competition authorities and other relevant work including from the OECD, and should subsequently report to the G7, highlighting outcomes and next steps.

Framework for G7 Collaboration on Electronic Transferable Records

Paper-based transactions, which still dominate international trade are a source of cost, delay, inefficiency, fraud, error and environmental impact. It is our shared view that by enabling businesses to use electronic transferable records we will generate efficiencies and economic savings. This will strengthen the resilience of our global economic system and play a crucial role in trade recovery across the G7.

We endorse our *Framework for G7 collaboration on Electronic Transferable Records* (Annex 4), through which we will initiate a dialogue between experts to work to achieve compatible domestic reforms, and provide collective support to other international initiatives seeking to facilitate and enable the adoption of electronic transferable records.



This Framework will champion the work of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and promote the adoption of legal frameworks compatible with the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records 2017. It will also support international efforts to facilitate legal reforms as well as ongoing work by other international fora on interoperability and cooperation on relevant regulatory issues to promote the use of electronic transferable records. This will also enable the private sector to adopt these digital solutions for their transactions.

Towards the Cornwall Summit

Recognising that COVID-19 has underlined the importance of digital technologies to our economies and society, deepened their uptake and made the acceleration of digital transformation essential to our recoveries as we ‘build back better’, we recommend that Leaders consider these important topics at the Cornwall Summit.

Noting the importance of building a broad coalition to guide and shape the role and application of digital technologies in the future, we welcome the UK’s hosting of the ‘Future Tech Forum’ in September 2021, which will convene like-minded democratic partners to discuss the role of technology in supporting open societies and tackling global challenges, in collaboration with industry, academia, and other key stakeholders.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Framework for G7 Collaboration on Digital Technical Standards

Annex 2: A G7 Roadmap for Cooperation on Data Free Flow with Trust

Annex 3: G7 Internet Safety Principles

Annex 4: Framework for G7 Collaboration on Electronic Transferable Records



G7 Digital and Technology Track - Annex 1

FRAMEWORK FOR G7 COLLABORATION ON DIGITAL TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Building on the 2017 Italian G7 ICT and Industry Ministerial Declaration, the G7 reiterate the need for technical standards development to continue to be underpinned by transparency, openness of process and participation, relevance, and consensus-based decision-making in line with the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Code of Good Practice and the TBT Committee Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards. We have committed to stronger international cooperation within the G7 and with like-minded partners to support industry-led, inclusive multi-stakeholder approaches for the development of digital technical standards in line with our core values. This framework for G7 collaboration sets out specific areas for constructive G7 engagement on digital technical standards. We firmly state our opposition to any government-imposed approaches that fundamentally seek to reshape the digital technical standards ecosystem. To take this framework forward, we will designate G7 points of contact to improve information sharing and facilitate coordination between G7 members and with wider stakeholders.

G7 Framework for Collaboration

We will strengthen our international cooperation and work with stakeholder groups under the following framework:

- 1. Share and Coordinate:** We will identify shared interests in the development of digital technical standards and will promote national and international best practice for inclusive engagement in digital technical standards setting. Specifically, we will:
 - **FACILITATE** multi-stakeholder dialogue on important digital technical standards issues, building on the G7's multi-stakeholder side event - 'Digital Technical Standards, Strengthening the Multi-stakeholder System'.
 - **FACILITATE** the sharing of best practices that enable all relevant stakeholders to work together more effectively within the processes and fora used to develop standards.
 - **SUPPORT** multi-stakeholder efforts and strategic communications activity to raise awareness of the importance of engaging in technical standards development.



2. **Contribute:** At the 2021 G7 digital technical standards multi-stakeholder side event, stakeholders from civil society, industry, academia and Standards Developing Organisations (SDOs) reiterated the view that governments play an important role in supporting standardisation that bolsters open societies and democratic values in specific areas of digital technical standards development.

We will **CONTRIBUTE** to specific areas of digital technical standards development as part of the multi-stakeholder community where there are significant real-world implications that could affect our citizens, our shared values as open and democratic societies, or our shared economic prosperity. Specific areas of interest for G7 governments to focus on include technical standards for the Internet, telecommunication and emerging digital technologies. Specifically, we will:

- **WORK** with stakeholders towards more inclusive development and deployment of Internet protocols that contribute to and protect the continuing evolution of an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet, one that is unfragmented, supports freedom, innovation and trust, and empowers people.
- **COLLABORATE** with stakeholders to track emerging digital technical standards proposals that may have a wider societal impact.

3. **Enable and Empower:** We will **SUPPORT** stakeholders and SDOs to strengthen and uphold integrity in the development of digital technical standards. This includes ensuring that applicable technical standards consider existing internationally recognised digital technology norms and principles, such as: the OECD Principles on Artificial Intelligence; the OECD Principles for Internet Policy Making; the WTO Agreement on TBT Code of Good Practice; and the TBT Committee Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards. These efforts would seek to add value through international alignment. Specifically, we will:

- **SUPPORT** capacity building among civil society and other experts to increase participation in digital technical standards development.
- **HELP** under-represented stakeholders to engage in relevant standards discussions to overcome barriers to entry, for example through including civil society representation in national delegations at key international fora.
- **SUPPORT** liaison and coordination between SDOs to avoid unnecessary duplication and maintain adherence to the WTO Agreement on TBT Code of



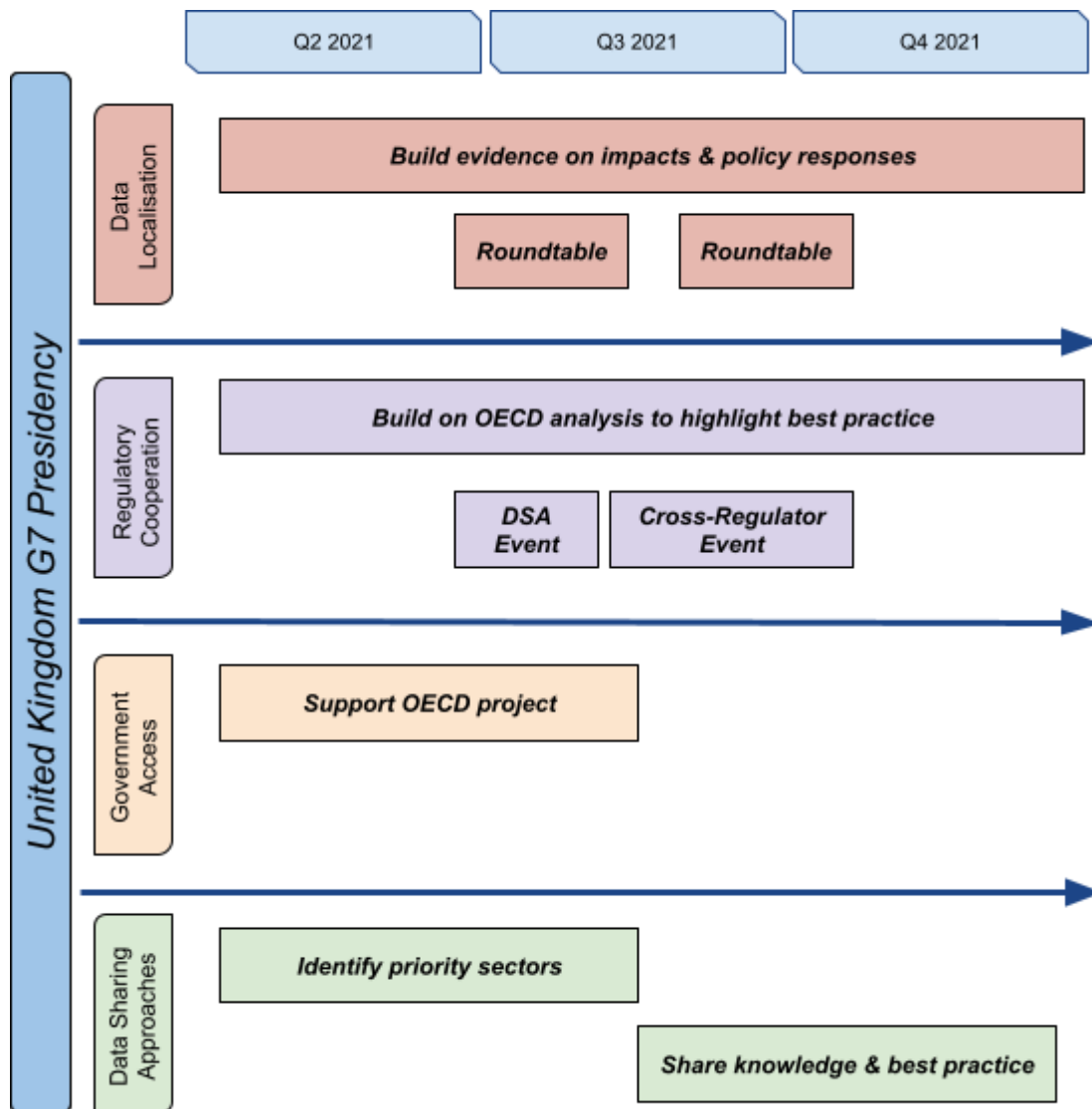
Good Practice and the TBT Committee Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards.

- **SUPPORT**, where appropriate, existing internationally accepted principles for digital technologies being embedded in the development process for technical standards.

G7 ROADMAP FOR COOPERATION ON DATA FREE FLOW WITH TRUST

Building on the 2019 G20 Osaka Leaders’ Declaration, the 2019 G20 Ministerial Statement on Trade and Digital Economy, and the 2020 G20 Leaders’ Riyadh Declaration, the G7 Digital and Tech Ministers have identified four areas for cooperation to facilitate data free flow with trust and drive benefits for our people, our businesses and our economies. We will do this while continuing to address challenges related to privacy, data protection, intellectual property rights, and security. We set out a Roadmap to deliver tangible progress on this agenda.

Roadmap





Key areas of cooperation

This Roadmap sets out the plan for joint action between the G7 in four cross-cutting areas:

- 1. Data Localisation:** The ability to move and protect data across borders is essential for economic growth and innovation. Data localisation can impact data flows, with possible consequences for businesses, particularly micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). We need further evidence and robust analysis of the economic and societal impact of data localisation measures across a globally distributed data ecosystem. To gather this, we will:
 - **BUILD** an evidence base on the impact of data localisation measures and alternative policy responses to these approaches (recognising consistency with the Trade Ministerial Track). This will bring together evidence from national authorities and external stakeholders, such as academia and business groups, with information from other fora to help inform future multilateral and plurilateral discussions. These will include the G20 Digital Economy Task Force, the Working Party on Data Governance and Privacy in the Digital Economy of the OECD Committee on Digital Economy Policy, and the Working Party of the OECD Trade Committee, as well as the Internet and Jurisdiction Policy Network.

- 2. Regulatory cooperation:** Differences in domestic approaches can impact cross-border data flows, creating uncertainty (including legal uncertainty) for governments, businesses and individuals. The G7 Digital and Tech officials will promote work to identify commonalities in regulatory approaches to cross-border data transfers, as well as good regulatory practices and cooperation between nations. We will:
 - **BUILD** on OECD analysis including 'Going Digital III - horizontal project on data governance for growth and well-being' and 'Mapping commonalities in regulatory approaches to cross-border data transfers'. We will highlight best practice case studies, enhance cooperation on data governance and data protection, identify opportunities to overcome differences, explore commonalities in regulatory approaches and promote interoperability between members.
 - **ORGANISE** an event comprising, and developed in collaboration with, all G7 Data Supervisory Authorities and/or other competent authorities for data, led



by the UK's Information Commissioner's Office. The event, to take place in 2021, will consider regulatory cooperation with a potential focus on innovative approaches, enforcement of regulation and regulation enabling cross-border data flows.

- **ORGANISE** a separate cross-sectoral regulators' event in 2021, that will bring together Data Supervisory Authorities and/or other competent authorities for data, and other regulators from across the digital sphere to share best practice and support international cooperation.
- 3. Government Access to Data:** There is a clear link between robust data protection, privacy and lawful access regimes, and the valid need for governments to access personal data in the private sector. We are committed to maintaining domestic data protection and privacy standards, reasonable principles underpinning lawful access regimes, as well as legal powers and arrangements that facilitate access across borders. We will engage with like-minded initiatives and groups on this, including to:
- **SUPPORT** the aims and objectives of the OECD's drafting group working on trusted 'Government access to personal data held by the private sector'.
- 4.** The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the value and need for like-minded states to find consensus on approaches to data sharing in priority sectors such as healthcare. The G7 is collaborating on interoperability and standards for health data as part of the Health Ministerial Track. We will work to meaningfully accelerate the development of mutually acceptable data sharing practices for a broader set of priority sectors. We will:
- **COLLABORATE** via a series of focused workshops between policy-makers to identify the priority areas where data sharing has the most potential for delivering societal benefits for G7 members. This may include: transport; net zero emissions ambition; innovation, science and research; education; and natural disaster mitigation.
 - **SHARE** knowledge and, where developed, best practice on those factors which can aid or hinder data sharing and innovation. We will do this via an expert-led forum, with evidence shared in advance. This may include approaches to data intermediaries, data foundations, ensuring trust, and considering the adoption of Privacy Enhancing Technologies (PETs).



G7 Digital and Technology Track - Annex 3

G7 INTERNET SAFETY PRINCIPLES

The COVID-19 pandemic has driven a steep increase in the use of the internet and different services provided online, such as social media, and has clearly demonstrated the importance of improving internet safety. Online content that is illegal, and content that is harmful, can have a major impact on people, especially women and children, and on our societies. In the principles set out below:

- The G7 **RECOGNISES** that international cooperation is vital to address the shared global challenge of internet safety. This cooperation should be multi-stakeholder in nature and include governments, companies, academia, civil society and other interested stakeholders.
- We **RECOGNISE** and seek to complement the important work in existing fora towards enhancing a safe online environment, including the Christchurch Call to Action, the upcoming OECD Recommendation on the Protection of Children in the Digital Environment, the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism, the work of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, the WeProtect Global Alliance, the Technology Coalition Fighting Child Sexual Abuse, and current and previous G7 initiatives.

Underpinning Principles

1. Fostering Human Rights Online

- We **COMMIT** to promoting and protecting the exercise of all human rights online, including, but not limited to, freedom of opinion and expression (including the right to seek, receive or impart information), as well as the right to privacy as set out in Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and we will help more people to enjoy their right to freedom of expression by enabling them to participate in online activities and engage in robust debate online.



2. Multi-Stakeholder Approach

- We will **CONTINUE** our support for a multi-stakeholder approach to policy-making, working with companies, civil society, academics and representative groups, in particular those who are especially impacted (including, but not limited to, women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, children, minority ethnic and religious groups), to reflect their experiences and voices in decision-making about improving internet safety and reducing harmful online content and activity.

3. Corporate Responsibility

- We **BELIEVE** that, including as part of their corporate social responsibility, companies should have the systems and processes in place, including safety by design principles, to take appropriate action with relevant stakeholders, including civil society and academia, to improve internet safety and reduce illegal and harmful content and activity in the online environments that they create, while respecting human rights online.

4. Transparency and Accountability

- We **BELIEVE** that companies should be transparent, including with consumers, about the presence of known illegal and harmful activity on their services, and the decisions and measures taken to improve internet safety, as well as be accountable for the decisions made to counter illegal and harmful content in line with their terms and conditions at global, national, and regional levels.

Operational Principles

5. Research and Best Practice in Safety Technology

- We **COMMIT** to sharing information, research and best practice for the development and adoption of safety technology, and to supporting innovation that drives digital growth and **URGE** providers of consumer services online to ground their internet safety policies and practices in research and evidence.



6. Protecting Children

- We **BELIEVE** that companies designing, providing or using services for children, or online spaces that may be used by children, should prioritise the protection of children on their services and provide safety measures to ensure children are protected from both illegal and harmful content and activity, in line with the upcoming OECD Recommendation on the Protection of Children in the Digital Environment.

7. Online Media Literacy

- We **BELIEVE** that governments, companies, civil society, academia and other interested stakeholders need to educate and empower people of all ages with the skills, digital competence, access and knowledge they need to make informed and safe choices online; and evaluate and develop domestic approaches to keep pace with new technologies and their applications.

8. Youth Participation

- We **BELIEVE** young people can be active agents for change and we have the responsibility to empower young people to shape conversations and play a positive and active role in promoting and improving internet safety.



G7 Digital and Technology Track - Annex 4

FRAMEWORK FOR G7 COLLABORATION ON ELECTRONIC TRANSFERABLE RECORDS

Legal barriers, and regulatory and technical issues, impede the adoption of electronic transferable records. Given that network effects underpin the benefits of electronic transferable records, a multilateral approach is needed to coordinate reforms to address these impediments.

It is our shared view that by enabling businesses to use electronic transferable records we will generate efficiencies such as in time, security or data processing, as well as economic savings. This will strengthen the resilience of our global economic system and play a crucial role in trade recovery across the G7.

To this end, the G7 will initiate a dialogue between experts to work to achieve compatible domestic reforms, and provide collective support to other international initiatives seeking to facilitate the adoption of electronic transferable records, with an aim of enabling commercial operators to adopt these digital solutions for the shipment of goods and trade finance.

As part of this we will engage in domestic scoping exercises until October 2021 to:

- **MAP** domestic legal barriers to the use of electronic transferable records and establish actions to address these barriers.
- **CONSIDER** any further legal issues that may require international cooperation.
- **CONSULT** with stakeholders on private sector requirements in respect of electronic transferable records.
- **REVIEW** cross-cutting regulatory issues which may impede private sector adoption of electronic transferable records, and establish actions for cooperation.
- **IDENTIFY** best practice in existing national and sub-national legislation.
- **ASSIGN** a lead department to take forward the necessary reforms.

The G7 experts will convene in October 2021 to discuss returns of our domestic scoping exercises, and to establish a comprehensive framework for G7 collaboration on electronic transferable records. According to the results of this exercise, we will take the following steps:



1. Address Domestic Legal Barriers

- We will work to **PROMOTE** the adoption of legal frameworks compatible with the principles of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records 2017. This will be done with the acknowledgement that different domestic systems will require different legal solutions. Laws enabling electronic transferable records should be technology neutral, future proof and applicable to all transferable records¹.

2. Promote and Support Legal Reform Internationally

- To support wider global adoption, we will **PROMOTE** international efforts that facilitate the use of electronic transferable records within the private sector - both bilaterally and in relevant international fora, such as UNCITRAL.
- We will also **PROMOTE** work by development agencies to meet on the ground challenges for developing countries in implementing legal reforms.

3. Bridge Technical and Interoperability Issues

- We will **SUPPORT** ongoing work in relevant international fora on interoperability and the development of international standards for the use of new technologies in trade processes. In addition, we will **SUPPORT** ongoing work on trade data models by the International Maritime Organisation, the World Customs Organisation and United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business.

4. Cooperate on Cross-cutting Regulatory Issues

- We **RECOGNISE** that there are a number of cross-cutting regulatory issues relevant to the use of electronic transferable records, including data protection regulations, capital requirements regulations, know-your-customer and anti-money laundering regulations, and regulations concerning electronic signatures and electronic trust services. We will **WORK** collectively to identify and cooperate on regulatory issues which impede private sector adoption of electronic transferable records, while ensuring a high level of integrity, security and trust.

¹ For greater certainty, "all transferable records" is not intended to apply to securities and other investment instruments.