



POLICY BRIEF: DIGITAL INCLUSION IN SERBIA

July 2025

Digital Inclusion Landscape

In Serbia, digital inclusion is recognised as a cross-sectoral priority. Although it is not uniformly defined in the strategic and legislative framework, it is conceptualised as a triad of access, skills, and motivation.

The digital inclusion indicators highlight that the barriers affecting vulnerable populations are not merely technological but linked to poverty, low education, geographic isolation, and discrimination.

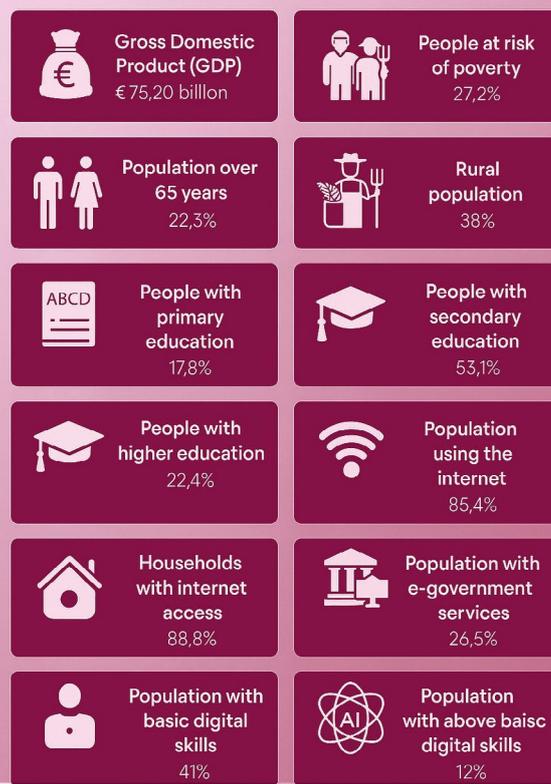
Strategic and Legislative Framework

Serbia has established a multi-layered strategic and legislative framework to support digital inclusion, combining long-term national strategies with legal provisions aligned with the EU regulations. For example, the **Strategy for the Development of the Information Society and Information Security (2021–2026)** emphasises the importance of equal access to information and communication technology, particularly for vulnerable groups, while recently expired **Strategy for the Development of Digital Skills (2020–2024)** highlighted digital inclusion as an empowering tool for all citizens, especially marginalised groups, to participate actively in society and contribute to the development of a knowledge-based economy within the context of lifelong learning.

Governance and Financing

Key institutions include the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications and the Office for IT and eGovernment. Funding is fragmented, with limited transparency and reliance on donor support for impactful initiatives.

Digital Inclusion in Serbia: Basic indicators



Sectoral Contributions



Digital services exist across education, health, finance, and administration sectors, but there are no publicly available data on general user satisfaction with services, nor satisfaction with their availability.



Civil Society Initiatives



Civil Society Organisations are actively engaged in enhancing digital literacy and improving access to technology for older people, women, persons with disabilities, youth, and rural populations through a range of projects, programmes, and initiatives, but these efforts often lack institutional sustainability.



Main Challenges and Recommendations

Challenges:

- There is no holistic approach to digital inclusion in national policy, and intersectional vulnerabilities are currently unaddressed in mainstream policies.
- Monitoring and evaluation of programmes and policies remain unavailable and/or limited.
- People with disabilities still face barriers in accessing digital infrastructure, technologies and platforms, and residents in rural or deprived regions encounter persistent difficulties with connectivity and affordability. Accessibility standards are partially aligned with the European Accessibility Act.
- Coordination between sectors is either weak, fragmented, or absent, particularly at the local level, and there is no unified data management among key institutions.

Recommendations

- Investing in digital infrastructure in deprived and rural areas and in long-term capacity-building programmes for these communities.
- Integration of digital skills training into all levels of formal, non-formal, and adult education.
- Establishment of a national digital training platform with affordable and advanced courses.

- Giving greater prominence to education on digital safety and wellbeing.
- Ensuring WCAG 2.1 compliance for all public and private digital services.
- Establishment of an inter-ministerial coordination body for digital inclusion oversight.

Recommendations relating to vulnerable groups at risk of digital exclusion

- Development of a **unified national definition and operational framework for digital inclusion**.
- Establishment of a **centralised monitoring system** with data disaggregated for vulnerable groups.
- Ensuring that **vulnerable groups are heard and their perspectives are integrated into decision-making processes**.
- Enabling and promoting **public-private partnerships for inclusive technology development**.
- Supporting **CSOs in driving targeted interventions**.

TARGETED MEASURES

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Older persons | Expanding digital literacy workshops and simplifying interfaces. |
| Persons with disabilities | Enforcing accessibility standards across all digital platforms, including private sector services; making available a fund for assistive technologies outside of medical referral systems ; establishing an incentives scheme for the development of Serbian-language assistive technologies (e.g., screen readers). |
| Rural population | Prioritising broadband expansion in rural and underserved areas; establishing local digital hubs . |
| Low-income and unemployed individuals | Introducing device subsidy schemes for low-income households, particularly for families with students; linking digital skills training within employment activation programmes. |
| Roma and ethnic minorities | Developing culturally sensitive digital materials ; establishing partnership arrangements with community organisations to deliver training and support that is not focused only on building basic skills but also more advanced digital competencies. |