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Leveraging Digital Platforms for Public Benefit

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Agenda

↗ 01
Digital Platforms Defined

↗ 02
Platform Landscape in SEA-6

↗ 03
Unique Features of Digital Platforms

↗ 04
Illustrative Examples

↗ 05
Recommendations

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Digital Platforms

Digital platforms are services that facilitate interactions between two or more distinct but interdependent sets of users who interact through the platform online.

Typologies:

⬈ Function / Types of Services Offered

Transactions
Innovation and Development
Information Platforms

⬈ End Users

Business-to-Consumer
Business-to-Business
Peer-to-Peer
Government-to-Business
Government-to-Citizens

⬈ Operating Space
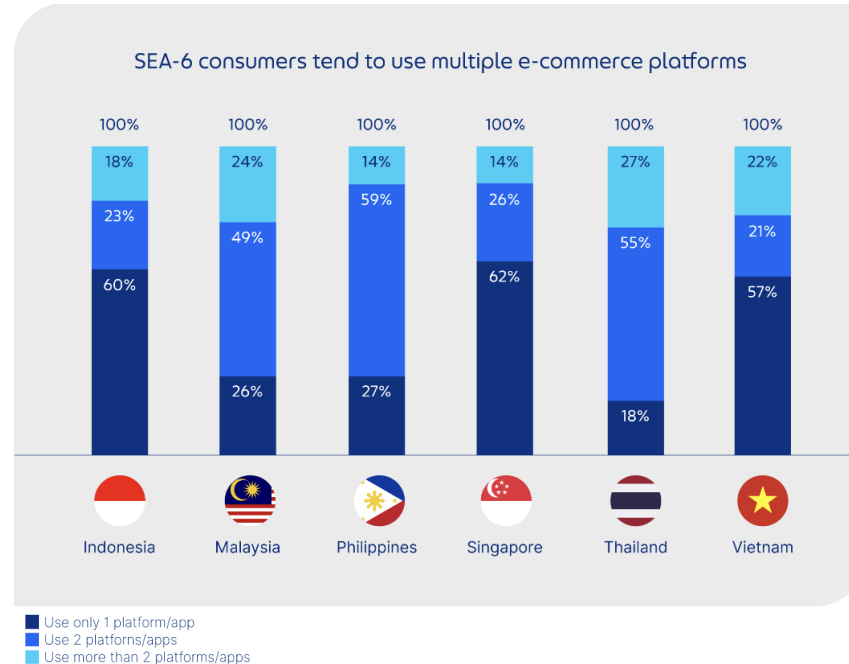
Online Only
Online-to-Offline

⬈ Business Structure

Vertically Focused
Horizontally Focused

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SEA-6 consumers are avid users of digital platforms

As relatively recent adopters of digital technology, users across SEA are increasingly mobile-first with online activity intermediated by digital platforms.

Figure 1. Adoption of digital platforms in Southeast Asia-6, 2021

SEA-6 consumers tend to use multiple e-commerce platforms

Country	100% top	middle	bottom
Indonesia	18%	23%	60%
Malaysia	24%	49%	26%
Philippines	14%	59%	27%
Singapore	14%	26%	62%
Thailand	27%	55%	18%
Vietnam	22%	21%	57%

■ Use only 1 platform/app
■ Use 2 platforms/apps
■ Use more than 2 platforms/apps

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Platforms are transforming key economic sectors in Southeast Asia

- ↗ E-Commerce
- ↗ Financial Services
- ↗ Food Delivery
- ↗ Transport
- ↗ Travel
- ↗ Education
- ↗ Healthcare
- ↗ Logistics

Source: Tech for Good Institute, 2024
Note: List not exhaustive

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Digital platforms have characteristics which can be leveraged to advance public benefit

EFFICIENCY

Capability to digitalise business processes and generate quick feedback loops

SCALE

Capability to create multi-sided marketplaces and leverage network effects

ACCESSIBILITY

Capability to lower barriers to entry and facilitate multi-homing across various platforms

AGILITY

Capability to innovate and develop new business models to adapt to social needs

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Digital platform features can advance public benefit

Promoting resiliency

Creating positive impact

Encouraging sustainable behaviors

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Agility, accessibility and scale for resilience

Digital platforms have demonstrated their capacity to support communities as powerful tools for crisis response and community empowerment in dynamic and time-sensitive situations.

During COVID-19, for example, digital platforms leveraged their distinct features to connect MSMEs directly with customers online, enabling them to operate and sustain their livelihoods.

The capabilities of digital financial services platforms were also tapped by governments to identify enterprises needing support and to distribute cash assistance to eligible social protection beneficiaries.

The accessibility and scale of digital platforms, running off on smartphones, enables them to meet escalating and changing needs and disseminate information quickly.

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Digital platforms can help create positive social and environmental impact
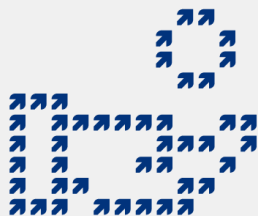
The efficiency and "always-on" nature of digital platforms have supported social initiatives such as facilitating charitable giving and community support initiatives. The scale and agility of some digital platforms facilitated accessible travel and mobility, while others have used their reach to hard-to-reach audiences for upskilling initiatives, such as MSMEs and driver-partners.
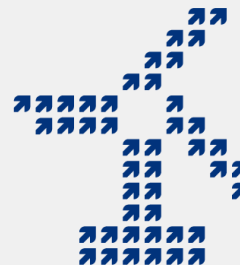
The scale and data-driven approach of digital platforms can also support user groups such as merchants in their own sustainability journeys. For example, digital platforms can support MSME sustainability reporting, waste reduction, recycling and sustainable packaging initiatives.

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Digital platforms can uniquely nudge users toward more sustainable practices
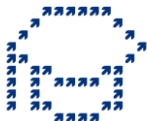
SIMPLIFYING CHOICES
Using their scale and accessibility, digital platforms can effectively raise awareness about sustainable practices among both merchants and consumers. They can also steer consumers toward environmentally-friendly choices by simplifying decision-making processes and promoting data-driven insights.

RAISING AWARENESS
As an intermediary, they are also able to develop value propositions for environmental practices by users, such as showcasing environmentally-friendly merchants to consumers or sharing data on the consumer trends and preferences to merchants.

INCENTIVISING PUBLIC BENEFIT ACTIVITIES
Digital platforms have also used the same techniques to encourage user loyalty, such as gamification or incentive systems, to encourage sustainable practices. For instance, digital platforms may offer reward points or discounts for making sustainable choices, effectively nudging users toward more environmentally conscious actions through positive reinforcement.

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Leveraging digital platforms for sustainable development

↗ The twin transitions of digital transformation and sustainable development are equally urgent and important.

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Policy considerations to leverage digital platforms for public good

For Governments:

↗ Consider a platform-first approach for public services

↗ Invest in both physical and digital infrastructure

↗ Foster trust in data-sharing between the public and private sector
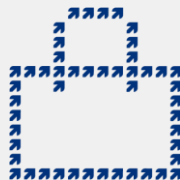
For Businesses:

↗ Proactively partner with governments to develop impactful public policy

↗ Support MSMEs in their own sustainability journey

↗ Align operations with national development goals

For Civil Society:

↗ Lend domain expertise to influence public benefit initiatives

↗ Work with digital platforms as partners to amplify impact

↗ Work together to foster trust in the digital ecosystem

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Thank you.

Get in touch:
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