

Special economic zones as a catalyst for global digital transformation

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Abstract. The article concerns with the global trends of high geographical concentration and uneven cross-sectoral growth of digital investment flows. The research considers the methodological features of the processes of technological development assessing and forecasting. They form the basis for policy-making in digitalisation. The differentiation concerns with time horizon, target orientation, areas of scientific knowledge, methods, data and technological forecasting models, results, etc. The article reveals different digitalisation policy components. According to the research, investment incentive component includes mechanisms of national economies digital openness, facilitation of the inflow, and promotion of digital foreign direct investment. Indeed, investment impact enhancement component deals with the measures to develop digital content regulation, relevant tax instruments, environmental issues, digital competencies, and linkages. According to the research, there are two keys approaches to develop digital strategies. Indeed, geographically oriented approach involves the development of macro-regional, sub-regional, and national strategies; sector-oriented approach involves the development of technological and industry-specific strategies. The analysis highlights the investment context for the implementation of digital strategies in key macro-regions and sectors of the digital economy. Moreover, the research considers special economic zones in terms of foreign direct investment in the areas of data processing and e-commerce. Based on expert data, the article highlights best practices for regulating and supporting digital foreign direct investment within special economic zones globally and in various macro-regions. As a result, the research formulates the principles to strength the investment potential of digital strategies, taking into account the growing role of special economic zones.

Keywords: digital economy; digital strategy; geographically-oriented approach; sector-oriented approach; investment context; special economic zones

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Introduction

Rapid expanding and widening of opportunities for faster growth and structural shifts of the digital economy ensure national productivity growth, innovation, and sustainable development. Indeed, digital investment flows are highly concentrated in a relatively small number of economies. For example, in 2024, 80% of new digital projects of foreign direct investment (hereinafter – FDI) accounted for only 10 developing economies, mainly Asian. At the same time, they show uneven intersectoral growth. For example, in 2024 in developing countries the digital services and basic information and communication infrastructure sectors accounted for \$ 37 USD bn and \$ 9 USD bn in global FDI, respectively¹.

To correct these negative trends, it is necessary to develop the tools for theoretical basis, comprehensively stimulating investments, integrate support measures into geographically oriented (macro-regional, sub-regional, and national), and sector-oriented (technological and sectoral) digital strategies.

Digitalisation policy: theoretical and methodological base

The formation of digitalisation policy and implementation of digital strategies and the development of measures to support digital investments are based on two interrelated and complementary processes: assessment of technological development (hereinafter – TA). TA is the process of studying the economic, social, environmental, ethical, legal, and cultural consequences of digital technologies implementation [10;

¹ World Investment Report 2025: International Investment in the Digital Economy. UNCTAD. Source: https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/wir2025_en.pdf. (accessed on 17.11.2025)

12; 14; 19]. Moreover, it includes technological forecasting (hereinafter – TF). TF is the process of studying longterm trends in innovation, sociotechnical context, and scenarios of economic and political conditions corresponding to technological changes [9; 15-17].

The features of TA methodology are as follows:

- TA time horizon covers the short /medium term period;
- TA aimed at specific technologies implementation;
- TA is interdisciplinary and includes technical, economic, and socio-political research;
- TA methods are design research, public opinion polls, interviews with stakeholders, analysis of technological trends and factors, design and visualisation tools;
- TA focuses on the spread and consequences of technologies adoption, usage of new products;
- TA results in the development of scientific and technological policy on the introduction of new technologies.

The features of TF methodology are as follows:

- TF covers a long-term time period;
- TF explores science-technology-innovation sector relevant to the national innovation system;
- TF uses an interdisciplinary approach based on innovation, design, and management research;
- TF methods are scenario analysis, expert assessment method, SWOT analysis;
- TF focuses on the development of new technological solutions, their commercialisation, and the life cycle of new products;
- TF results in the development of strategic directions of scientific and technological policy.

The policy of digitalisation based on TA and TF should include a component of investment incentives and a component of strengthening investment influence [4].

In term of digital policy, the investment incentive component is the adaptation of best practices of digital openness of national economies, the use of mechanisms to promote digital FDI [1-2].

However, digital openness has two approaches to regulate the admission of digital FDI. Developed countries impose minor restrictions on the share of foreign participation in the equity of national companies. Moreover, they introduce mechanisms for verifying investments for threats to national economic security and technological sovereignty [5]. Indeed, within the scope of inspections are investments aimed at the introduction of AI and other advanced technologies. Developing countries regulate the admission of digital FDI by imposing bans or thresholds on the participation of foreign capital, requirements for the creation of joint ventures, applying general licensing, and permitting rules for the investors. In terms of FDI in digital economy, development requires a balance between restrictive and liberal practices and their transparent implementation.

Nevertheless, digital FDI promotion includes stimulating investment flows by simplifying procedures for starting and running a business. It also involves licenses for the construction of digital infrastructure, visas for foreign IT specialists, reducing the administrative burden for digital start-ups, expanding support measures for specific sectors, such as data centres and semiconductors. The technological parks are extra initiatives of digital FDI promotion. They form an advanced innovation ecosystem within their borders. It allows companies to test new products in a controlled environment, minimising the associated risks [20].

Moreover, digital FDI promotion covers the activities of national development institutions in terms of investments [8]. It stimulates the reinvestment process, expands access to public-private partnership projects, promotes the country's competitive advantages through effective international information and marketing campaigns. Additionally, the key role of development institutions is to improve approaches to regulate and support digital investments, ensure consistency of these processes with national and sectoral strategies.

The component of strengthening investment influence implies the development of digital content regulation, specialised tax instruments, environmental issues, digital competencies, etc. [3; 6-7].

Digital content regulation provides safer on-line environment by establishing content moderation mechanisms. They includes liability for digital platforms, cyber crime prevention, digital advertising control, AI usage transparency, etc. They also include establishing of regulatory authorities to control digital content

producers, and attracting FDI in the localisation of content produced by companies in the digital economy, requirements on investments a share of local revenues in the national sector, quotas for local content, licensing of broadcasters in terms of their content localisation indicators, etc. To ensure availability of digital content, fulfillment of international obligations under World Trade Organisation agreements, and the strengthening of investment influence, countries should be guided by flexible requirements for digital content, consistent with digital strategies, adapted to national conditions, market size, and production capabilities [13]. Large markets can use quotas and reinvestment commitments; small ones can offer incentives related to tax breaks and support for co-production.

The development of specialised tax instruments concerns with the search for the optimal combination of regulatory and supportive mechanisms in digital economy. This regulation is caused by the intangible nature of digital services. However, it is difficult to forecast value added and operations control. The absence of specific rules regarding revenue from the provision of digital services leads to a distortion of competition between digital and non-digital companies. Indeed, it causes the widespread use of transfer pricing mechanisms by multinational corporations. The goal of increasing tax collection determines the need to introduce taxes on digital services, establish special rules for digital companies, including those related to calculating the tax base for income tax purposes. Moreover, it provides the tax registration of foreign digital companies for calculating value added tax. The supporting mechanism is the main one in attracting of digital FDI, and includes tax deductions, loans and exemptions, accelerated depreciation, targeted benefits for business angels investors financing digital start-ups. The relative simplicity of implementing a supportive mechanism, the effectiveness of its implementation depend on the elaboration of benefits and their consequences [11]. In this regard, the strengthening of investment influence in the digital economy sector is possible in terms of concept of a balance between tax regulation and tax support. The concept is targeted, limited in time and volume, and subjected to regular effectiveness assessment.

The environmental issue of digital policy is concerns with an idea that digital devices become an electronic waste accelerating every year. FDI in digital and green transformation can be complementary tools to form synergies for sustainable development. Achieving this effect will be facilitated by a regular assessment of the environmental risks of digital FDI, including analysis of energy consumption, water consumption, emissions, and environmental footprint [14]. Investment criteria should include industry-specific benchmarks (i.e. energy efficiency targets, water consumption limits, and emission thresholds). Moreover, support measures should apply the following sustainable practices: renewable energy, efficient cooling technologies, and integration of circular economy principles.

Digital competencies ensure the growth of national digital potential through knowledge transfer. Moreover, communications contribute to increasing the competitiveness of national digital service providers. They both play an important role in attracting digital FDI. Digital competencies are formed through simplification of the visa regime, partnerships with foreign educational institutions, internship and training programs in AI, etc. [18]. The strengthening of production tides is provided through the development of cooperative platforms, access to industry databases of suppliers, attracting investment agencies, implementing digital projects at the sites of techno parks and SEZ.

Main part

Geographically-oriented digital strategies: key features and investment context

Macro-regional and sub-regional digital strategies are crucial tools for promoting cross-border coherence of national digital policies and developing cooperation in terms of digital infrastructure (Table 1). By facilitating the unification of standards, harmonisation of regulation, and stimulating the development and joint implementation of national policies, digital strategies can enhance the attractiveness of the macro/sub-region in terms of FDI. However, national digital strategies are key instruments of state policy in digital transformation management. Moreover, they form favourable conditions for the development of digitalisation and attracting investments in digital infrastructure and services (Table 2). The strategies outline general priorities and specific mechanisms for implementing the directions of digital economy development: public

administration, infrastructure provision, digitalisation of the private sector, expansion of the scope of digital technologies, etc.

Table 1 – Macro-regional and sub-regional digital strategies

Macroregion	Key features	Investment context
Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - focus on the establishment of digital infrastructure, development of digital competencies, the harmonisation of sub-regional and national policies, formation of a single digital market (DTSA); - focus on digital connectivity and inclusivity (sub-regional digital strategies of EAC, ECOWAS, and SADC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - targeted support tools for innovation-oriented investment projects (DTSA)²; - attracting investments into infrastructure mapping (digital modelling of infrastructure facilities) (DTSA; EAC, ECOWAS, and SADC strategies); - development of innovative (high-risk) and mixed public-private financing tools involving foreign capital (DTSA; EAC, ECOWAS, and SADC strategies); - formation a single payment zone and the Digital Sovereignty Fund (DTSA); - investment incentives for integration into the global e-commerce sector (EAC, ECOWAS, and SADC strategies).
Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formation of a common digital space considering the resolution of problems of cross-country compatibility (CAREC DS; DEFA); - focus on digital development management, cybersecurity, accumulation of knowledge and competencies in terms of digital solutions, e-commerce, digital payments, and innovative entrepreneurship (CAREC DS; ADM; DEFA). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of the public-private partnership tools (CAREC DS); - formation of a portfolio of priority investment projects supporting digital development in various fields and industries (CAREC DS); - harmonisation of investment regulatory tools (ADM); - establishing rules for investors in the field of digital commerce, payments, working with data flows, privacy, Artificial Intelligence (hereinafter – AI), and cybersecurity (DEFA).
Latin America and the Caribbean (ELAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recommendations on the formation and access to advanced digital infrastructure, innovation management, AI, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of tools for mixed financing of investment projects and joint use of new infrastructure facilities; - formation of a set of measures to improve the quality of the investment climate.
Western Europe (DC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - focus on the development of digital competencies and infrastructure in the private and public sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - planning of large-scale public/private investment programs; - implementation of cross-border investment and infrastructural projects.

Source: Author

² DTSA – Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030); EAC – East African Community; ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States; SADC – Southern African Development Community; CAREC DS – Digital Strategy for Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation until 2030; ADM – Digital Master Plan Association of Southeast Asian Nations on the period up to 2025; DEFA – the ACEAN Framework Agreement on the Digital Economy; ELAC – The Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean for the period up to 2026; DC – Digital Compass-2030.

Table 2 – Certain aspects of national digital strategies

Aspect	Characteristic
Digital inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provision on digital inclusivity exists in 97% of developed countries strategies, and in 88 % of developing countries strategies; - directions of digital inclusivity cover: the expansion of digital infrastructure (especially in peripheral areas) and the improvement of digital skills (especially among socially vulnerable groups of the population); - expansion of the digital infrastructure includes both the provision of basic access and construction of data centres and computing centres; - improving digital skills consists in the distribution of basic digital competencies among population groups and the development of advanced digital competencies to maintain the efficiency of innovative ecosystems.
Investment context: the focus on digital inclusion in strategies requires increased investment in high-tech sectors (AI, cybersecurity, and data science). However, it contributes to occurrence of a skilled and digitally literate workforce, and increases the overall national investment attractiveness	
Environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provision on environmental sustainability exists in 86% of developed countries strategies and in 55% of developing countries strategies; - environmental problems related to the development of the digital economy involve depletion of natural resources due to digital devices production, infrastructure development, high energy consumption, water consumption for cooling data centre servers and electronics production, electronic waste; - problem of energy consumption becomes a key one in the formation of digital infrastructure (data centres). Indeed, those energy issues have been developed in the digital strategies of China, Chile, Finland, Qatar, Singapore); - absence of specific indicators and industry-specific measures related to the environmental aspects of the digital economy in most digital strategies.
Investment context: focus on environmental sustainability determines synchronisation of investments in the digital economy with investments in renewable energy. Therefore, the digital transition plays a catalytic role in the energy transition	
Favourable investment environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provisions on regulation of investments in the digital economy in 2024 exist in 88% of national digital strategies. Moreover, there is 20% increase compared to 2017; - provisions on standards of attracting investments in the digital economy in 2024 exist in 77% of national digital strategies. Indeed, there is 61 % increase compared to 2017. These provisions are widespread in developed (89%) rather than in developing (71%) countries; - cybersecurity and data privacy are of the greatest importance in digital strategies.
Investment context: provisions on regulation and standards of investments in the digital economy are usually supplemented by provisions on the investments in specific industries and technologies	
Financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - national digital strategies contain parameters for using the following sources of financing: programs focused exclusively on the high-tech sector (2017 – 3%; 2024 – 37%), budgetary funds (2017 – 69%; 2024 – 92%), private funds (2017 – 55%; 2024 – 85%), public-private partnership (2017 – 35%; 2024 – 58 %), FDI (2017 – 44 %; 2024 – 48%); - absence of structured approach to stimulate investments in the digital economy due to the insufficient focus in digital strategies on investment promotion agencies (hereinafter – IPAs). However, IPAs are mentioned in 20% of strategies of developing countries and in 11% of strategies of developed countries;

Aspect	Characteristic
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - special attention in digital strategies is devoted to investment promotion measures (electronic company registration services; visa facilitation for highly qualified specialists; acceleration and training programs) (2017 – 37%; 2024 – 87%) infrastructural and cooperative measures (formation of clusters, parks, and special economic zones) (2017 – 32%; 2024 – 7%), and investment incentives (tax and non-tax benefits) (2017 – 56%; 2024 – 72%).
Investment context: digital strategies should define specific investment goals and include a calculation of financing required for their implementation	

Source: Author

Sectoral-oriented digital strategies: key features and investment context

The rapid development of advanced technologies determines the development of targeted strategies and policies in terms of AI, data processing, and semiconductors (Table 3). These strategies play a key role in the process of attracting investments, highlighting national priorities, ensuring regulatory certainty, and demonstrating a long-term commitment to the development of the digital economy sector.

Table 3 – Key areas of sector- and technology-oriented digital strategies

Aspect	Characteristic
Artificial intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - areas of AI's influence on economic development include: catalytic (positive – in the presence of a strategy and regulation) – stimulating innovation, increasing productivity and competitiveness of sectors; restrictive (negative – in the absence of a strategy and regulation) – digital inequality, concentration of market power, ethical and data privacy issues; - acceleration of adopting AI strategies. In 2024, 38% of states have adopted the strategy. There is 36% increase compared to 2017. However, according the geographical distribution, the strategy has been adopted in 76% of developed countries, 34% of developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, 24% Latin American and Caribbean countries, 17% of African countries; - countries' approaches to AI in terms of digital strategies include: an approach with an emphasis on economic competitiveness and technological leadership; an approach with an emphasis on public service provision, social inclusion and ethical safeguards; a balanced approach with an emphasis on sustainable development and international innovation cooperation.
Investment context: digital strategies in terms of AI define investment, research, and infrastructure priorities, establish ethical and regulatory frameworks to ensure responsible and transparent use of AI. It ensures public trust and provides favourable conditions for attracting targeted investments	
Data processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - areas of data centres influence on the digital economy include: catalytic (positive – in the presence of placement planning) – stimulating digital connectivity, industrial transformation, and increasing national technological and innovative potential; restrictive (negative – in the absence of placement planning) – excessive load on the energy grid, negative environmental impact, slowing down the digitalisation; - data centre strategies are primarily involved into cloud computing development policies covering the entire value chain from data management, standards, and digital interoperability to interconnections, process management, business practices, and cybersecurity. For example, in 2024 about 50 countries have adopted similar policies;

Aspect	Characteristic
	<p>- examples of successful implementation of data centre strategies include: a) transformation of Guizhou Province (China) into a national data hub, 2016-2024; b) implementation of national and regional strategies to attract sustainable investments in data centres in Canada (Alberta AI-Based Data Centre Development Strategy, 2024), Chile (National Data Centre Plan, 2024-2030) and Singapore (Green Data Centre Roadmap, 2024); an example of problematic implementation of data centre strategies is the situation in Ireland in 2021-2025 – the growth of the sector outstripped the capacity of the energy grid in Dublin.</p> <p>Investment context: digital data processing strategies should integrate investment incentives in data centre construction (simplification of licensing procedures, tax incentives and targeted marketing) with the competitive advantages of the territory, energy, and climate policy (availability of renewable energy sources, favourable climate), industrial strategy (reliable industrial infrastructure, level of development of industrial cooperation), and regulatory readiness (transparency of relevant norms and standards); data centre construction projects should consider investments in energy infrastructure modernisation at the planning stage</p>
Semiconductors	<p>- specialised strategies for semiconductor industry development combine financial incentives with investments in infrastructure, training programs, and targeted support for specific segments of the value chain;</p> <p>- focus on individual segments of the value chain – manufacturing, assembly, testing, design or materials. It helps to consolidate the country in a segment corresponding to its capabilities in the digital economy.</p> <p>Investment context: strategies for the development of the semiconductor industry should ensure national technological sovereignty, increase competitiveness, and diversify national industry in terms of the requirements of sustainable development</p>

Source: Author

Special economic zones are the cores of digital infrastructure development

An increase of geo-economic and geopolitical tensions, trade, and investment relations transformed under the influence of digitalisation made special economic zones (hereinafter – FEZs) a kind of investors regulator. Worldwide, the numbers of FEZ exceeds 6,300 units³. FEZs provide a structured, predictable, and preferential business environment to facilitate the implementation and maintenance of the most effective international business practices.

However, both positive and negative results of zonal functioning within an ecosystem including thousands of FEZs, zonal policy is being transformed. One part of the FEZ follows a model focused on new forms of growing investments, such as digital infrastructure. The other part is a model aligns infrastructural development with the quality of life, offers investors conditions including residential and social infrastructure facilities for employees⁴.

Since 2022, the number of greenfield FDI projects in the FEZ in business services has exceeded the number of production projects. It reveals a trend towards the servicification of investments in the FEZ, especially the large-scale transition to intellectual, high-tech, digital investments (Table 4).

³ Irwin-Hunt, A. (2025). *Global Free Zones Evolve for Rerouted Globalisation*. Source: <https://www.fdiintelligence.com/content/1e3968cf-4e1e-4be5-87f9-f1a10747ee16>. (accessed on 17.11.2025)

⁴ *Global Free Zones of the Year 2025*. fDi Intelligence. Source: <https://www.fdiintelligence.com/special-report/523230cd-5d1e-46bd-9162-60594cbfd97>. (accessed on 17.11.2025)

Table 4 – Number of "greenfield" FDI projects in the FEZ by scope

Project scope	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Business services	3	21	32	20	21	26	45	41	65	209	245
Production	44	76	79	48	66	127	238	228	122	130	179

Source: Author

Traditional sectors such as renewable energy, chemical industry, and metallurgy still attract the largest amounts of FDI into the FEZ. However, the communications sector includes data centres. It becomes the one of the top ten sectors in terms of announced FDI in 2023 and attracting record investments in 2024 (Table 5). In 2022, the information technology software and services sector also was ranked high.

Table 5 – Top 10 sectors accepting FDI in FEZs

Sector	2022	Sector	2024
	\$ USD, bn The USA		\$ USD, bn The USA
Renewable energy	64.33	Renewable energy	19.58
Electronic components	8.84	Chemistry	6.74
Metals	2.47	Metals	5.34
Chemistry	1.74	Electronic components	3.89
Transportation and warehousing	1.59	Semiconductors	2.92
Automotive industry	1.38	Transportation and warehousing	2.64
Software and information technology services	1.32	Communications	2.48
Financial services	0.86	Industrial machinery	2.14
Ceramics and glass	0.74	Pharmaceuticals	1.35
Semiconductors	0.60	Food and drinks	1.17

Source: Author

FEZs have the most significant advantages of localising investments in data processing (Saudi Arabia – a virtual FEZ for cloud computing; Great Britain – specialised territories for data centres near free ports; Singapore – the cross-border Johor FEZ), and electronic commerce (the US Foreign Trade Zones program)⁵. Indeed, they are as follows:

- revocation of custom obligations and import duties on expensive data centre equipment reduce the cost of investment projects related to training and application of AI models;
- existing energy infrastructure provides capacity redundancy and allows energy and water-intensive data centres to support operation;
- FEZs are logistics and infrastructure hubs. They help the companies to achieve the required level of efficiency, scalability, and customer orientation in the e-commerce.

Based on the Global Free Zones of the Year 2025 rating, we will⁶ highlight the best practices for regulating and supporting digital FDI within the FEZ at the global and at the macro-regional levels.

Global level (Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC), UAE; Cayman Enterprise City (CEC), UK (Cayman Islands)). The DMCC operates an artificial intelligence center, a sustainable development hub, a

⁵ *The Investment Dimension of Digital Strategies*. (2025). UNCTAD. Source: https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diaepcbinf2025d3_en.pdf (accessed on 17.11.2025)

⁶ *Global Free Zones of the Year 2025*. fDi Intelligence. Source: <https://www.fdiintelligence.com/special-report/523230cd-5d1e-46bd-9162-60594cbfd97>. (accessed on 17.11.2025)

cryptocenter, and a corporate dispute resolution center. DMCC develops initiatives to strengthen corporate governance, transparency, and investment incentives. They include income tax benefits, subsidised support packages for company registration, leasing for start-ups and small and medium-sized businesses in technology, AI, game industry, and blockchain. In CEC, investors are guaranteed complete neutrality with respect to taxes on profits, income, and capital gains. CEC offers resident companies consulting and marketing support, internship programs, and advanced digital infrastructure.

The macro-regional level.

Middle East Macroregion (DMCC; Dubai Commerce (DCC), UAE). Nowadays DCC automated and digitalised its business processes to simplify and accelerate logistics for residents. DCC provides the investors with flexible work and warehouse spaces, information technology infrastructure, and digital marketing services, including real-time analytical data on residents' products.

European Macroregion (Zona Especial Canaria (ZEC), Spain; Consorcio de la Zona Franca de Cádiz (CZFC), Spain). A special feature of ZEC strategy is cooperation with scientific and educational institutions. It allows FEZ to form and develop a talent pool adapted to the needs of residents. The rating experts also highlight credit programs and tax incentives specifically designed for digital industries. They include reduced corporate tax rate and tax deductions to cover part of companies' variable costs and R&D expenses. CZFC is the centre of the "blue economy" – the concept of sustainable use of oceans, seas, and coastal zones. CZFC develops technology start-ups in the shipbuilding and aerospace sectors in cooperation with the University of Cadiz and the institutes of the National Maritime Cluster.

African Macroregion (Eko Atlantic City (EAC), Nigeria). EAC implements the smart city concept, a range of special investor support measures, registration and protection of intellectual property rights, simplified processing of visas, and work permits for qualified professionals. According to the experts, EAC improves corporate governance and transparency standards through regular independent audits of the zone's impact on the environment and social sphere.

Asia-Pacific Macro Region (Port City Colombo (PCC), Sri Lanka; Tanjung Lesung SEZ (TLSEZ), Indonesia). A special feature of the PCC is a combination of incentives, including the following: a zero personal income tax rate for foreign resident employees, tax incentives for developers and investment companies, centre's services for resolving corporate disputes. TLSEZ actively collaborates with universities and research institutes to support talent development and R&D. TLSEZ operates an advanced digital permit and license system.

Macroregion of the Americas (CEC; Zonamerica (ZA), Uruguay). ZA operates as a technology park to form an ecosystem of companies by stimulating cooperation. ZA successfully implements strict sustainability standards in its business processes.

Conclusions

Therefore, we develop the principles to ensure the investment potential of digital strategies. They are as follows::

- firstly, the formation of a clear investment concept to identify the priority sectors, investor profiles, and strategic infrastructure needs for various purposes.
- secondly, the alignment of digital strategies with the goals of sustainable, investment, and industrial development to ensure the development of human capital, necessary regulatory reforms, and infrastructure planning.
- thirdly, integration of sustainability criteria into digital strategies to address the problem of the environmental footprint of investments into digital infrastructure.
- fourth, investment planning, including assessment of the infrastructure gap, forecasting demand, and determining the strategic location of data and innovation centres, etc.
- fifth, targeted implementation of measures to promote digital transformation and structural modernisation.
- sixth, strengthening the coordination of digital strategies at different levels to achieve economies of

scale, promote cross-border integration, and ensure regulatory consistency.

– seventh, integration of digital development into the special economic zones to build a comprehensive preferential policy in the digital sector.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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