

# Kenya ranked highest African nation in Network Readiness Index 2023, with digital change happening at faster pace across the continent than expected

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Kenya takes the top position from South Africa, and receives the highest ranking for an African nation in this year's Network Readiness Index (NRI) (<https://networkreadinessindex.org/>). Rising to 70th place globally, up from 77th last year, Kenya pushes South Africa (74th) into second place, with Mauritius (76th) ranking third for the continent.

The Network Readiness Index highlights Africa's digital rise, with 20 nations exceeding expectations in digital readiness as compared to their level of development and making significant gains, notably Rwanda, up from 101st to 98th this year. It was joined by Uganda (117th), and Gambia (120th) in the top three performing low-income economies. Cabo Verde (95th) and Ghana (98th) also featured in the top 100.

Most African countries continue to be grouped as low-income or lower middle-income, yet the report shows many African economies are successfully creating opportunities to induce digital change at a faster pace than expected given their levels of development. Most of these economies perform above expectations in areas associated with government, technology, and people. Rwanda remains at the forefront within the region as the only economy surpassing expectations across all four dimensions of digital readiness for the second consecutive year.

The NRI, published by Portulans Institute and Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, provides a robust framework for assessing the impact of Information Communication & Technology (ICT) on society and the development of nations. It evaluates 134 economies based on 58 indicators across four dimensions of digital readiness – technology, people, governance, and impact – providing meaningful insight for business leaders and policymakers.

This year's report, titled 'Trust in a Network Society: A crisis of the digital age?', draws attention to the potential for a serious crisis in public trust in the internet and related technologies in an increasingly interconnected world.

Soumitra Dutta, co-editor of the NRI and Peters Moores Dean at Saïd Business School, said:

'Many African economies are successfully creating opportunities to induce digital change at a faster pace than expected given their levels of development, with Kenya, South Africa, and Mauritius leading Africa's digital ascent in the Network Readiness Index. The continent is showcasing digital governance prowess and resilience, with 20 African nations creating the necessary opportunities to induce faster paced change above their expected levels of development.'

Looking across the continent Cote d'Ivoire (101), Senegal (102), Tanzania (104), Nigeria (106) and Botswana (110) all finish in the top 100 countries, whilst Benin (111), Namibia (112), Zambia (116),

Uganda (117), Cameroon (118), Zimbabwe (119) and Gambia (120) all finish in the top 120.

The remaining African nations to feature in the 134 ranked countries were Malawi (121), Guinea (122), Mali (123), Madagascar (124), Eswatini (125), Ethiopia (126), Angola (127), Lesotho (128), Burkina Faso (129), Mozambique (130), Congo (132), Chad (133) and Burundi (134).

Of the 134 economies included within the NRI – an increase from 131 in the previous year – each is assessed across certain criteria. These are categorised into four pillars: Technology, People, Governance, and Impact. Each country is then given an NRI score and a corresponding rank.

Globally, the US secured the #1 ranking for the second year in a row, whilst Singapore retains its second-place position, and Finland surged by four places to secure #3 from #7 last year. The Netherlands and Sweden have ranked fourth and fifth, respectively.

Switzerland ranked sixth (down from fifth in NRI 2022) in this year's NRI, Republic of Korea achieved seventh place (up from #9), Denmark placed #8 (down from #6), Germany dropped to ninth place, (down one), and the U.K. ranked 10th.

Among the top 25 countries, 16 are from Europe, five are from Eastern and Southeastern Asia (including Singapore, the Republic of Korea, China, Hong Kong, and Japan), two come from Oceania (Australia and New Zealand), and two are from North America (Canada and the United States).

The NRI 2023 publishes at a time characterised by dramatic technological advancement, and captures the readiness of 134 economies to capitalize on this widespread change.

Bruno Lanvin, co-editor of NRI, said:

'You cannot improve what you cannot measure. But can you improve anything that remains imperfectly defined? As our digital world continues to evolve and shape before us, policy makers, investors, analysts, academics and ordinary citizens are often expected to make fast decisions and articulate sound assessments about rapidly changing trends and practices. The need for fact-based and quantifiable descriptions of our network societies has never been so urgent. This is an area in which, for several decades, NRI has been trying to inform the choices to be made by business, government and civil society.'

The regional leaders for NRI 2023 include Kenya, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, the Russian Federation, Finland, and the United States. Overall, these regional trends in the NRI 2023 highlight the varying levels of progress and challenges faced by economies across the different parts of the world as their journey towards digital readiness and network capabilities continues.

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