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DIGITAL POLICY

FOR SRI LANKA

“LEADING IN DIGITAL EXCELLENCE”



JATHIKA JANA BALAWEGAYA (NPP)

DEVELOPED BY:
ICT ENGINEERING PROFESSIONALS OF
NATIONAL INTELLECTUAL'S ORGANIZATION (NIO)

AUGUST 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy document represents a culmination of contributions from industry experts associated with the National Intellectuals Organization (NIO) and invited experts. It is designed to complement and integrate with the broader range of policies under the National People's Power (NPP)'s national policy framework. Upon the establishment of an NPP government, a Digital Advisory Council will be appointed. This council will consist of government representatives, industry experts, and representatives from industry bodies. Their first task will be to review this policy document thoroughly, with a focus on prioritizing actions for the initial 12 months. Concurrently, this document will evolve into the National Digital Policy, seamlessly integrated with the National Plan. This integration will include the specification of clear deliverables and timelines, ensuring that the digital transformation agenda aligns with national objectives and is effectively implemented.

2. VISION

To empower every citizen of Sri Lanka through transparent and efficient governance, partnering them in development through, the cultivation of a thriving digital industry, and the creation of a robust digital economy that supports the sustainable development of key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, Tourism, SMEs, marine services, and sports.

3. GOALS

3.1. Develop the Digital Industry

- ⦿ USD 5Bn annual foreign revenue by 2030
- ⦿ Expand workforce to be 200,000 by 2030
- ⦿ A robust startup eco-system that can deliver high value exists making pathways for unicorns emerge.
- ⦿ Establish Four Digital Technology parks

3.2. Transparent and Efficient Governance

- ⦿ Implement rapid digitization programs for all government institutions to increase their efficiency, transparency, and make them paperless.
- ⦿ Develop a national AI policy and a national AI system for citizens to obtain government services.

3.3. Drive the Digital Economy

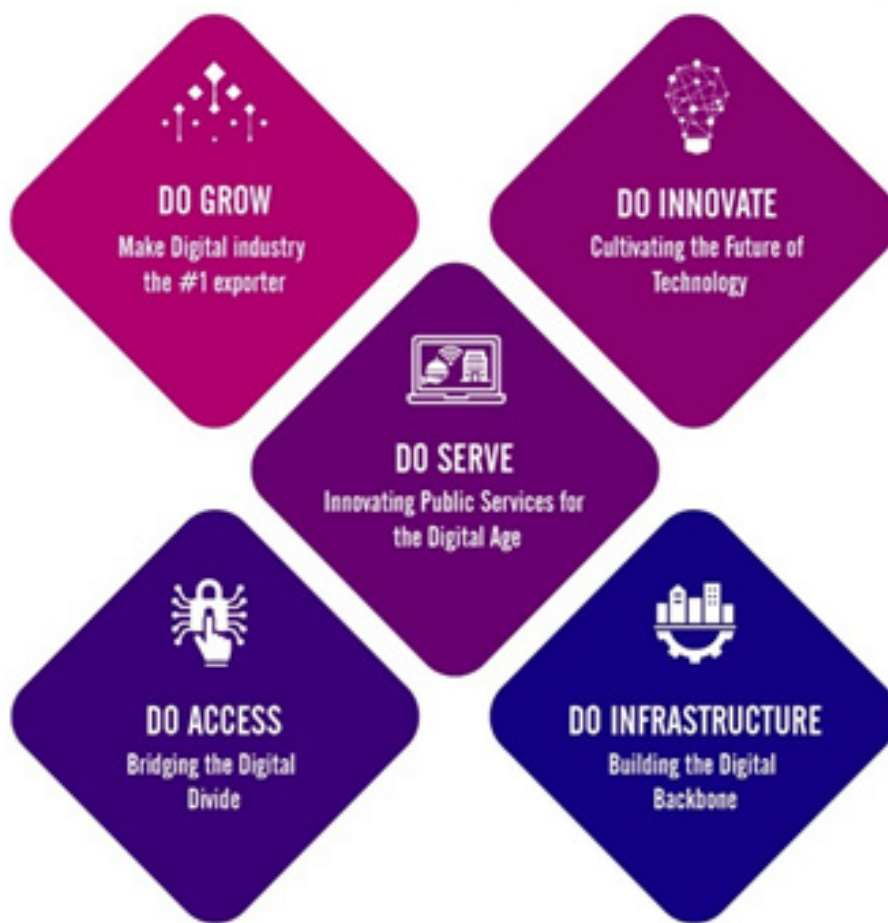
- ⦿ USD 15Bn annual volume of digital economy by 2030 (from current USD 3.47Bn)
- ⦿ All citizens to be digitally literate
- ⦿ Work towards average transaction cost to be lower than 1%
- ⦿ Develop and adopt a National AI Policy

3.4. Supporting Development of Strategic Industries and Sports

- ⦿ Aligned with research and development policy, a focused effort will be taken to ensure digital innovation for all strategic industries.

4. Pillars of Focus

The National People's Power (NPP) has outlined a comprehensive strategy to develop Sri Lanka's digital industry, emphasizing five key pillars: Do Grow, Do Innovate, Do Serve, Do Access, and Do Infrastructure. Each pillar represents a distinct area of focus aimed at fostering digital transformation across various sectors, enhancing innovation, improving service delivery, expanding digital access, and strengthening infrastructure. The strategy is designed to integrate advanced technologies with traditional industries, ensuring that digital growth is inclusive and sustainable. Through this framework, NPP envisions a digitally empowered Sri Lanka, where technology drives economic growth and social progress.



5. Key Strategies

5.1. Develop the Digital Industry

A digital industry refers to the sector of the economy that focuses on the creation, development, and delivery of digital products, services, and technologies. This includes areas such as software development, digital platforms, cloud computing, data analytics, cybersecurity, digital marketing, and the production of digital content. The digital industry is characterized by its use of cutting-edge technology to innovate and transform traditional business models, enhance productivity, and enable new forms of communication, commerce, and social interaction. It plays a pivotal role in driving economic growth, creating jobs, and fostering a digitally empowered society.

Recognizing the digital industry as a crucial contributor to foreign exchange earnings both in the short and long term, the government is committed to fostering growth in this sector. To this end, export revenue from digital services will be subject to zero or concessionary corporate tax rates. This initiative is designed to incentivize the expansion and sustainability of digital services businesses, enhancing their competitiveness on a global scale. Concurrently, the government will strive to reduce the operational costs associated with these businesses by transitioning to more renewable energy sources, thereby lowering the cost of electricity.

We need to identify different sectors within this industry to create appropriate strategies. The two main sectors are:

5.1.1. Digital Services Businesses

Enterprises that provide services primarily through digital means, leveraging technology to deliver solutions, support, and services to consumers or other businesses. These services can range from cloud computing, software-as-a-service (SaaS), and IT consulting to digital marketing, online education, e-commerce platforms, and data analytics.

5.1.2. Software/Hardware Product-Based Businesses and Startups

Companies that focus on the development, commercialization, and distribution of software products as their primary business model. Unlike service-oriented companies, these businesses create software solutions that are packaged and sold to end-users or other businesses, either as standalone products or as part of a broader software suite. Software product-based businesses and startups play a critical role in the technology ecosystem, driving innovation and providing tools that empower other industries and consumers.

5.2. Strategies to Develop Digital Services Industry

5.2.1. Branding Sri Lanka as a Destination for High-Value Technology Solutions

Current branding of Sri Lanka's IT industry has been centered around the concept of "Island of Ingenuity." This branding initiative emphasizes Sri Lanka as a hub for innovative information technology and knowledge services. The aim is to highlight the country's capabilities in delivering high-quality, innovative solutions across various sectors such as software development, IT-enabled services (ITES), and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO).

Strengthening the Brand of Sri Lanka's Technology Industry

This policy is dedicated to reinforcing the theme of positioning Sri Lanka's technology industry within the high-value sector on a global scale. To achieve this, a comprehensive brand and communication strategy will be developed in collaboration with a top-tier international agency. This strategy will be crafted with input from all relevant stakeholders to ensure a unified and impactful message.

Key Elements of the Strategy Include:

- 01. Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage industry leaders, government bodies, and academic institutions to gather insights and align objectives. This collaborative approach ensures the brand accurately represents the strengths and aspirations of Sri Lanka's technology sector.
- 02. International Branding Agency:** Partner with an internationally recognized branding agency that brings global expertise and a fresh perspective. This partnership will aim to create a distinctive and appealing brand identity that resonates on an international level.
- 03. Multi-Channel Communication:** Implement a robust communication plan that leverages all available channels to promote the new brand. This includes digital media, traditional media, direct marketing, and public relations.
- 04. Diplomatic Channels:** Utilize the network of Sri Lankan embassies and diplomatic officers worldwide to disseminate brand messages. Ambassadors and diplomatic staff will act as brand champions, promoting Sri Lanka's tech industry in their respective postings.
- 05. Consistency Across Touchpoints:** Ensure that all communications and brand materials are consistent in message and design across all touchpoints, creating a cohesive and recognizable brand presence.
- 06. Monitoring and Adaptation:** Continuously monitor the effectiveness of the branding and communication efforts and adapt strategies as necessary to respond to market feedback and changes in the global tech landscape.

By developing and executing a strategic brand and communication plan, this policy will significantly enhance the global perception of Sri Lanka's technology industry, categorizing it firmly as a high-value and innovative destination for technology investments and partnerships.

5.2.2. Create Scale and Strengthen Destination Identity by Inviting Marquee Global Players

Create Space, Incentives, and a Talent Pipeline to Attract Global Players

Our initial focus will be on attracting global giants from US and India, such as TCS, Infosys, and Wipro, followed by other international leaders. Strategic concessions through the Port City development and the establishment of regional hubs will further bolster our efforts to draw in these global players. By creating dedicated spaces, offering targeted incentives, and developing a robust talent pipeline, we aim to position Sri Lanka as a premier destination for global technology companies.

Facilitate Inward Mobility of Foreign Industry Experts

Established technology companies require the ability to quickly scale up operations and ensure smooth transitions for new teams. By streamlining the process for bringing experienced management and industry experts into Sri Lanka, we can empower these companies to make more ambitious investments and drive innovation within the country.

5.2.3. Support Mid-Size Sri Lankan Software Companies to Win Business

Many successful mid-size Sri Lankan digital services companies are heavily reliant on one or two major clients, with most human resources dedicated to these accounts. However, they often face challenges in scaling their operations and maintaining a consistent flow of customer contracts. To address this, we will implement targeted support initiatives aimed at helping these companies diversify their client base, expand into new markets, and secure long-term contracts. This includes providing access to business development resources, networking opportunities, and strategic partnerships that can help them achieve sustainable growth.

Support Business Connections Through Foreign Services

Strengthen the digital industry by educating, training, and holding Sri Lankan foreign missions accountable for fostering business connections. By equipping our foreign service representatives with the necessary skills and knowledge, we can ensure they effectively promote Sri Lanka's digital industry and facilitate international partnerships and investments.

Sponsor and Support Inward and Outward Promotional Delegations

Sponsor and support both inward and outward promotional delegations. These initiatives will enhance Sri Lanka's global presence, attract foreign investments, and open new markets for the digital industry by facilitating meaningful exchanges and partnerships between local businesses and international stakeholders.

Skills Development for Business Development Professionals in the Digital Industry

Implement targeted skills development programs for business development professionals within the digital industry. These programs will focus on enhancing competencies in areas such as digital marketing, international business strategies, negotiation, and partnership management. By equipping professionals with cutting-

edge skills and knowledge, we can ensure they are well-prepared to drive growth, forge strategic alliances, and navigate the rapidly evolving global digital landscape. This initiative will also include ongoing training, workshops, and certification opportunities to keep professionals updated on the latest industry trends and best practices, ultimately contributing to the competitiveness and success of Sri Lanka's digital sector.

Building a Support Network of Expatriate Sri Lankans to Strengthen the Digital Industry

There is a vast network of Sri Lankan businesspersons and professionals across the globe who can be an invaluable asset to the digital industry. While industry bodies have previously attempted to organize this resource, we believe that with government sponsorship, the involvement of foreign services, and a recognition model, we can build a strong and effective network. This initiative aims to connect expatriate Sri Lankans with local digital companies, fostering knowledge exchange, mentorship, and business opportunities that will accelerate the growth and global integration of Sri Lanka's digital industry.

5.2.4. Supporting Freelancers (Gig Workers)

In the rapidly evolving gig economy, accelerated by the rise of remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, freelancers and gig workers have become a significant force. However, this sector remains underdeveloped and underserved in Sri Lanka, despite the success of many individuals who have built thriving careers on platforms like Fiverr. To harness the full potential of the gig economy, we need to create an enabling environment that supports freelancers through improved access to resources, training, legal protections, and opportunities for networking and growth. By doing so, we can empower more Sri Lankans to participate in the global gig economy, fostering innovation, self-employment, and economic resilience.

The state will recognise 'Freelancers' as foreign exchange earning professionals.

Vocational Training for In-Demand Gig Economy Skills

Expand vocational training programs to include short-term and conversion courses focused on skills that are highly sought after on global gig work platforms. These programs will not only teach the technical skills needed but will also cover how to effectively navigate gig platforms, manage client relationships, and implement best practices for success in the gig economy. By equipping individuals with the right skills and knowledge, we aim to empower more Sri Lankans to secure sustainable income through global freelance opportunities, thereby enhancing their economic independence and contributing to the broader economy.

Facilitate and Encourage Inward Foreign Currency Remittances

Currently, gig workers in Sri Lanka rely on global wallet and payment solutions to receive funds, often incurring high fees. As a first step, we will work with banks and the Central Bank to explore the creation of a nominated list of approved platforms for secure and cost-effective remittances and provide rebates on transaction fees incurred with state facilitated inward remittances. In the long term, we will encourage LankaClear, FinTech companies, and banks to expand the local digital wallet infrastructure to efficiently receive foreign currency remittances with minimal fees. This initiative aims to provide gig workers with better financial solutions, ensuring that more of their earnings stay in

their hands while contributing to the national economy.

Income Protection Mechanisms for Gig Workers

As an unorganized sector, gig workers are vulnerable to income volatility due to global economic shifts and changes in personal circumstances. To address this, we will introduce common income protection programs tailored to their needs. Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation (SLIC) and other insurance companies will be invited to propose comprehensive protection plans that not only cover income loss but also include professional liability coverage. These programs will provide gig workers with a safety net, ensuring financial stability and confidence to continue their freelance careers, even during uncertain times.

5.3. Strategies to Develop Software Product Businesses and Startups

5.3.1. Developing a Thriving Startup Ecosystem

Startups are the seedlings that have the potential to grow into industry leaders with proper nurturing. While entrepreneurship is primarily driven by individuals and private initiatives, we recognize the government's pivotal role as a catalyst in the early stages of building a self-sustaining startup ecosystem in Sri Lanka.

Through strategic initiatives and support mechanisms, the government aims to create an enabling environment that fosters innovation, supports risk-taking, and accelerates the growth of startups. This includes providing access to funding, mentorship programs, incubation spaces, regulatory support, and facilitating partnerships with industry and academia.

By nurturing a vibrant startup ecosystem, we aim to cultivate a new generation of successful enterprises that contribute to economic growth, job creation, and technological innovation in Sri Lanka.

Invite Global Accelerators and Venture Studios to Set Up in Sri Lanka

To further enhance the startup ecosystem, we will actively invite and facilitate the establishment of global accelerators and venture studios in Sri Lanka. These entities are pivotal in providing startups with the mentoring, resources, and funding necessary to accelerate their growth trajectories.

Focus on Niche Areas: Encourage accelerators and venture studios that specialize in industries where Sri Lanka has strategic advantages or aspirations, such as digital services, sustainable technologies, agriculture, and tourism innovations.

By attracting renowned global accelerators and venture studios, we aim to bring world-class expertise and investment to Sri Lankan startups, driving their growth and helping them compete on an international scale.

Regulatory Framework for Successful Venture Capital Operations and Angel Networks

To stimulate the growth of the startup ecosystem, a comprehensive regulatory framework will be established to facilitate the operation of venture capital (VC) firms in Sri Lanka. This framework will focus on several key areas:

- **Limited Partner (LP) Protection:** Introduce specific regulations to safeguard the interests of limited partners, ensuring their investments are managed effectively and transparently.
- **Profit Expatriation:** Simplify the process for the repatriation of profits by VCs, ensuring it can be done with minimal hassle. This will include streamlined procedures and attractive tax policy on profits earned by foreign investors, making Sri Lanka an attractive destination for venture capital.
- **Tax Incentives:** Explore the viability of implementing tax incentives and exemptions for venture capital firms to encourage more investment into local startups. This will help reduce the financial risks associated with investing in emerging companies.
- **ESOP Regulations:** Establish clear regulations for implementing Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) to facilitate startup employees owning a stake in the company. This will not only incentivize performance but also align the interests of employees with the long-term success of their companies.
- **Regulatory Support and Compliance Assistance:** Provide VCs with guidance and support in navigating the regulatory environment, ensuring compliance while minimizing administrative burdens.

By enhancing the regulatory landscape for venture capital, including clear guidelines for ESOPs, we aim to attract more VCs to invest in Sri Lankan startups, thereby providing the necessary capital and expertise to fuel the growth and innovation of these young companies.

Access to Infrastructure

To support the burgeoning startup ecosystem, access to essential infrastructure such as workspaces, high-speed internet, and meeting and event spaces will be prioritized. We plan to explore opportunities to allocate spaces within government-owned buildings and transform them into co-working environments. These spaces will be managed by private parties and offered to early-stage qualifying startups and accelerators at concessionary rates.

Government Innovation Fund

To foster innovation and entrepreneurship in the IT sector, the NPP government will establish a Government Startup Fund. This initiative aims to identify and support groundbreaking innovations and ideas, providing them with the necessary resources to develop into world-class products. The fund will operate as follows:

- **Annual Project Competition:** An annual competition to identify the top 5 best innovations and ideas, open to startups and entrepreneurs across Sri Lanka.
- **Expert Judging Panel:** Projects will be judged by experts from the Digital Ministry, the Digital Tech industry, and academia, based on innovation, feasibility, market potential, and alignment with national goals.
- **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Program:** Selected projects will receive seed capital under a PPP program for 3 years, enabling them to develop and scale their products to reach global markets.

- **Oversight and Management:** A project division under the Digital Ministry will oversee the program, providing comprehensive support and coordination.
- **Government Exit Strategy:** After 3 years (or earlier), the government will exit by selling its stake once companies achieve their development targets, allowing reinvestment in new projects.

5.3.2. Sri Lanka HQ Strategy

Many successful intellectual property (IP) driven technology companies relocate their headquarters overseas, driven by the need for capital, proximity to their markets, the brand strength of the host country, stable policies, and robust legal protection. To counter this trend and make Sri Lanka a compelling headquarters destination for IP-based businesses, we will adopt a comprehensive and strategic approach.

5.3.3. Policy Reforms and Incentives

Collaborate with the broader policy planning group and stakeholders to reform policies affecting IP-driven companies, enhancing the business environment to encourage their growth and retention within Sri Lanka. This initiative will include offering tax incentives, streamlining the process for intellectual property registration and protection, and simplifying regulations related to overseas investments, setting up international offices, and recruiting global staff. We are committed to maintaining stable and predictable policies that build long-term confidence among business leaders and investors.

By addressing these critical areas, our long-term goal is to position Sri Lanka as an attractive destination for IP-based businesses to establish their headquarters, thereby retaining home-grown innovations and contributing significantly to the national economy.

5.3.4. Opening Opportunities for Local Companies to Participate in Government Digital Transformation Initiatives

Participation in large national projects could provide the crucial elevation needed for local software companies to break into the global market. To facilitate this, procurement policies will be revised to create more opportunities for local companies to engage in government digital initiatives. In instances where the scale and sensitivity of the project demand enhanced capabilities, expert panels may recommend collaborations with foreign entities to strengthen the local company's proposition. This approach not only supports the growth of local businesses but also ensures that the government benefits from innovative, competitive solutions while fostering a more inclusive and capable domestic tech industry.

5.3.5. VAT on Digital products & services

VAT on sale of digital products & services with local value addition will be made free of VAT within the first two years.

5.3.6. Zero Regulatory Disadvantage to Sri Lankan Companies

To foster a competitive and fair business environment, the government commits to ensuring that there is no regulatory disadvantage imposed on Sri Lankan companies compared to their international counterparts. This policy aims to create a level playing field where both local and foreign entities operate under the same regulatory standards and obligations.

Key Areas of Focus:

Uniform Regulatory Framework

Develop and enforce a uniform set of regulations that apply equally to both local and international businesses operating in Sri Lanka. This includes compliance with standards, licensing requirements, and operational guidelines that ensure fair competition.

Taxation Equity

Structure direct and indirect tax obligations to ensure parity between local and international companies. This will involve reviewing and potentially adjusting tax regimes to prevent any biases that could disadvantage local enterprises.

Implement clear, transparent tax policies that are straightforward to comply with, reducing the administrative burden on local businesses and ensuring they are not at a financial disadvantage.

Consumer Rights

Strengthen consumer protection laws to ensure they equally protect the rights of consumers, regardless of whether they are purchasing from local or international companies. This includes fair trading, warranty, return policies, and the right to information.

Regularly update consumer protection regulations to reflect changes in the global market dynamics and

technological advancements.

Level Playing Field in Digital Commerce

Ensure that digital commerce regulations are applied uniformly to protect and promote fair competition among local and international e-commerce businesses.

Address any disparities in digital infrastructure access that could disadvantage local companies in the digital marketplace.

By implementing these measures, the government aims to ensure that Sri Lankan companies operate on an equal footing with international companies, fostering a healthy, competitive market that benefits the economy and consumers alike.

5.4. Transparent and Efficient Governance

The rapid advancement of technology and the increasing digitalization of societies necessitate the transformation of government functions to keep pace with these changes. The NPP digital government will aim to:

- **Enhance Public Services:** Make government services more accessible, efficient, and user-friendly.
- **Increase Transparency and Accountability:** Enable better tracking and monitoring of government activities.
- **Boost Economic Growth:** Drive economic growth by fostering innovation, attracting investments, and creating new job opportunities.
- **Improve Decision-Making:** Enhance the effectiveness of government policies and programs through data-driven decision-making.
- **Ensure Social Inclusion:** Bridge the gap between different segments of society, ensuring equal access to government services.

5.4.1. The Bottom-Up Approach

A bottom-up approach is essential for redesigning governance processes to ensure they are effective, efficient, and aligned with citizens' needs. This approach involves:

- **Understanding Citizen Needs:** Engage with citizens to understand their needs, preferences, and challenges.
- **Task Analysis:** Identify the tasks required to deliver government services effectively.
- **System Requirements:** Determine the systems needed to support these tasks, including IT infrastructure, software, and human resources.
- **Institutional Support:** Establish institutions to maintain and oversee these systems, ensuring continuous improvement and innovation.

5.4.2. Digitization of Government Institution

A core objective of this policy is to bring transparency and efficiency across all activities of the government. To streamline the execution and oversight of digital transformation projects within the government, the establishment of a Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) is proposed. This agency will be central to ensuring that digital initiatives across various government departments are effectively coordinated and aligned with the national digital strategy. DTA is detailed under section 8 - Implementation Structures.

Following are some of the key priority projects:

Digital ID

We recognize the importance of a secure and efficient digital identity system for Sri Lanka. As part of our digital strategy, we propose implementing a national digital ID program modeled after successful initiatives like India's Aadhaar and Estonia's e-ID. Our vision is to provide every Sri Lankan citizen with a unique digital identifier that will streamline government services, enhance security, and promote financial inclusion.

The NPP's digital ID initiative will leverage biometric data such as fingerprints, iris scans, and facial recognition to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the system. Citizens will be able to use their digital ID to access a wide range of services, from obtaining government documents to making financial transactions. The system will be designed with robust security measures and strict data protection protocols to safeguard personal information.

By implementing a comprehensive digital ID program, the NPP aims to reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, eliminate duplicate records, and improve resource allocation. The digital ID will serve as a gateway to a more transparent and accountable government, empowering citizens to engage with public services more effectively. Additionally, the system will facilitate financial inclusion by enabling unbanked individuals to access banking services and participate in the digital economy.

The NPP is committed to ensuring that the development and implementation of the digital ID system are carried out in a transparent and inclusive manner. We will engage with stakeholders from various sectors, including civil society organizations and technology experts, to ensure that the system aligns with international best practices and addresses the needs of all citizens.

Transformation of Government Revenue Departments

As part of its commitment to economic recovery, the National People's Power (NPP) is prioritizing the transformation of three critical government revenue departments: the Inland Revenue, the Excise Department, and Sri Lanka Customs. Recognized as essential for bolstering the economy, this strategic project aims to advance the digitization of these departments to improve revenue collection efficiency and transparency.

The initiative will involve a comprehensive overhaul of existing digital platforms and the introduction of innovative systems to enhance tax collection, customs clearance, and regulatory compliance processes. By streamlining these functions, the project seeks to reduce bureaucratic delays and minimize corruption opportunities significantly. The expected outcomes include more efficient revenue collection, improved accuracy in data management, and a more user-friendly interface for both taxpayers and importers.

Ultimately, this digital transformation will not only increase government revenue but also promote a more accountable and responsive governance structure. It will pave the way for sustainable economic growth and strengthen public trust in government institutions, aligning with the broader vision of the National People's Power to enhance the welfare of all Sri Lankans through improved administrative efficiency and transparency.

Healthcare

To improve health and enhance access to healthcare in Sri Lanka's villages, our strategy will focus on leveraging technology to bridge the gap between urban healthcare services

and rural communities. By integrating the Suwa Seriya Emergency Care Service, we will ensure that timely medical assistance reaches even the most remote areas, providing a lifeline to those in need. Additionally, we will learn from successful digital health implementations in countries like Portugal and Cameroon, where innovative solutions have transformed healthcare delivery. These insights will guide us in developing user-friendly digital platforms that facilitate telemedicine, health education, and remote consultations, empowering villagers to take charge of their health and well-being. Our commitment is to create a robust digital health ecosystem that not only improves access to essential services but also promotes health literacy and preventive care, ultimately fostering a healthier, more resilient Sri Lanka.

Digital Land Title Registry

The National People's Power (NPP) proposes a transformative initiative to digitize the land registry in Sri Lanka, enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accessibility in land transactions. Through the introduction of an electronic Land Registry System (e-LR), the NPP aims to modernize and streamline the process of land registration. This digital transformation will facilitate easier and more secure access for citizens to vital information and transaction capabilities, significantly reducing bureaucratic delays and the risk of fraudulent activities. The digitization of the land registry will not only improve the overall investment climate but also promote fair trade practices, contributing to a robust economy. This initiative aligns with the national digital economy strategy for sustainable growth and innovation and sets the stage for future expansions to include other classes of assets, thereby creating a comprehensive asset ownership register.

Modernizing Transportation

The National People's Power (NPP) acknowledges the vital role of a modern and efficient transportation system in driving economic growth and enhancing the quality of life for all Sri Lankans. To realize this vision, we will collaborate with government bodies such as the Ministry of Transport and private sector stakeholders to digitize the transportation industry comprehensively. Our plan includes the development of a unified digital platform that integrates both public and private transportation modes, providing a seamless interface for passengers to plan, book, and pay for their travel. This platform will offer real-time access to vehicle locations, traffic updates, and seat availability, fostering the development of innovative mobility applications and services. Additionally, we will transition to digital payment and ticketing systems to reduce cash transactions, enhance operational efficiency, and enable dynamic pricing models. For transport providers, the platform will feature tools to manage operations, utilize data-driven insights, and engage with passengers effectively. Through these initiatives, the NPP aims to create a robust transportation ecosystem that not only makes commuting more convenient and affordable for citizens but also opens up new avenues for growth and innovation within the transport sector.

5.4.3. Robust Government IT Infrastructure (LGC)

To keep the Lanka Government Cloud (LGC) robust and equipped to meet future demands, it will be assessed and redesigned by top-tier experts, focusing on critical infrastructure elements. As part of this comprehensive enhancement strategy, we will:

- 01. Evaluate Global Partnerships:** Collaborate with leading global infrastructure providers such as Microsoft, Google, Amazon, and Huawei together with local data

center operators. These partnerships will be evaluated for their potential to bring advanced technology solutions and expertise to the LGC. Engaging with these industry leaders will help leverage their extensive experience in managing large-scale cloud infrastructures and incorporate best practices in terms of scalability, security, and efficiency.

- 02. Scalability:** Design the infrastructure to efficiently handle increasing demands from e-government services, ensuring it can scale up or down based on real-time needs.
- 03. Security:** Implement cutting-edge cybersecurity measures, including advanced encryption and intrusion detection systems, to safeguard sensitive government data.
- 04. Interoperability:** Ensure that the infrastructure adheres to international standards for data exchange and system integration, facilitating seamless interactions across government platforms.
- 05. Compliance:** Align the LGC with both international and local data protection regulations to maintain legal compliance and public trust.
- 06. Performance Optimization:** Conduct regular assessments to optimize system performance, ensuring efficient processing of transactions and data with minimal latency.
- 07. Redundancy and Reliability:** Build redundancy into critical components and establish robust failover mechanisms to guarantee service continuity.
- 08. Energy Efficiency:** Redesign the LGC to be more energy-efficient, thereby reducing its environmental impact and operational costs.
- 09. Service Management:** Develop a framework for managing service levels, including clear SLAs and performance benchmarks, coupled with a responsive customer support system.
- 10. Modernization of Hardware and Software:** Regularly update the infrastructure with the latest technological advancements to enhance functionality and security.
- 11. User Training and Support:** Provide ongoing training for government personnel and establish a dedicated support team to address any operational issues with the cloud services.

5.4.4. Digitally Enabled Citizen Services

The principle driving the transformation of citizen services is to ensure that all government services are accessible online or at designated locations in the nearest town. To eliminate the inefficiencies currently experienced by citizens, such as traveling to main cities and spending excessive time within government institutions, all physical services will operate on an electronically managed queue model with pre-booking capabilities. Additionally, all digital initiatives will address language dependencies technically, enabling citizens to interact in the language of their choice. This approach will streamline service delivery, reduce wait times, improve overall citizen satisfaction, and promote inclusivity by making government interactions more convenient, efficient, and accessible in multiple languages. The aim is to provide a seamless, accessible, and

time-efficient experience for all citizens, fostering a more digitally inclusive society.

5.4.5. All Citizens to be Digitally Enabled

Recognizing digital literacy as a fundamental life skill in today's world, it is essential to integrate the effective and safe operation of digital devices and services into the educational curriculum starting from elementary schools. To ensure comprehensive reach, the most essential digital skills will also be disseminated through public and digital media platforms, targeting populations of all ages and capabilities. This strategy aims to equip every citizen with the necessary digital skills, enhancing their ability to engage with modern technologies and digital services effectively. By fostering a digitally literate population, we enhance individual empowerment and collective societal progress, ensuring that all citizens can participate fully in the digital age.

Enhancing the Government Information Center (GIC) 1919 with AI

To improve the efficiency and accessibility of the Government Information Centre (GIC) 1919, we will incorporate Generative AI (GenAI) and Large Language Models (LLMs) to transform how citizens access government information and services. By integrating these advanced technologies, the GIC will be equipped to offer personalized, real-time assistance through AI-powered chatbots and virtual agents. These agents will be capable of understanding and responding to citizen inquiries in all three national languages—Sinhala, Tamil, and English. This integration will facilitate quicker retrieval of information, providing accurate and instant responses, thus significantly reducing wait times and the overall call volume. Moreover, LLMs will analyze interactions to enhance response quality and detect trending queries, allowing the GIC to proactively refine its knowledge base and adapt its services accordingly. This strategic use of AI will not only enrich the user experience but also ensure that the GIC remains an essential, effective resource for all Sri Lankans, enhancing transparency and fostering greater engagement between the government and its citizens.

5.4.6. Secure Digital Infrastructure & Services

Recognizing the critical importance of cybersecurity at the national, institutional, and citizen levels, we propose significant investments in the upliftment of our digital infrastructure, skills, and resources dedicated to cybersecurity. This commitment involves enhancing the security frameworks of our digital services, investing in advanced technology to protect against cyber threats, and providing comprehensive training to ensure that all stakeholders are equipped with the necessary knowledge and tools to safeguard their digital interactions. By prioritizing the security of our digital landscape, we aim to create a resilient and trustworthy environment for all users, ensuring the safety and integrity of their data and digital experiences.

Securing National Digital Infrastructure

To effectively secure our national digital infrastructure, we are committed to implementing a comprehensive strategy that includes the establishment of a National Security Operations Center (NSOC). This center will serve as the cornerstone of our cybersecurity efforts, encompassing multiple layers of security measures and protocols:

National Security Operations Center: The NSOC will monitor, detect, and respond

to cybersecurity threats in real-time. Equipped with state-of-the-art technology, it will coordinate national efforts to protect digital assets across government and critical infrastructure sectors.

01. Upgrading Infrastructure: Invest in the latest cybersecurity technologies and infrastructure enhancements, including advanced firewalls, intrusion detection systems, and secure cloud storage solutions.

02. Regular Audits and Compliance Checks: Conduct regular security audits and compliance checks to identify vulnerabilities and ensure adherence to international and national cybersecurity standards.

03. Cybersecurity Workforce Development: Expand training programs and educational initiatives to build a skilled workforce dedicated to cybersecurity, cultivating a pool of experts through partnerships with universities and professional training organizations.

04. Public-Private Partnerships: Foster collaboration between government agencies and private sector companies specializing in cybersecurity to leverage private sector expertise and innovation.

05. Incident Response and Management: Develop a robust incident response team within the NSOC capable of swiftly managing and mitigating the effects of cyberattacks and ensuring rapid recovery of services.

06. Information Sharing and Collaboration: Enhance mechanisms for timely information sharing about threats and vulnerabilities with all relevant stakeholders, setting up a centralized platform for information exchange.

National Cybersecurity Standards, Guidelines, and Legislation

To bolster our national cybersecurity framework, we are committed to developing and enforcing comprehensive cybersecurity standards, guidelines, and legislation. This initiative will focus on creating a secure digital environment across all sectors and ensuring consistent protection of critical information infrastructures.

01. Development of National Cybersecurity Standards: Define clear and stringent cybersecurity standards that all government agencies, businesses, and organizations must meet. These standards will be aligned with international best practices and tailored to address specific risks pertinent to Sri Lanka's digital landscape.

02. Implementation of Cybersecurity Guidelines: Publish detailed guidelines to assist organizations in implementing the national cybersecurity standards effectively. These guidelines will offer step-by-step procedures, best practices, and recommendations for securing digital assets and managing cyber risks.

03. Legislative Framework: Propose and enact comprehensive cybersecurity legislation that mandates compliance with established standards and guidelines. This legislation will also define legal responsibilities and penalties for breaches, ensuring accountability and enhancing enforcement capabilities.

04. Regular Updates and Revisions: Establish a mechanism for regularly reviewing and updating cybersecurity standards and guidelines to keep pace with evolving technological and threat landscapes. This will involve feedback loops from industry

experts, cybersecurity firms, and international partners.

- 05. Public Awareness and Education Campaigns:** Launch national campaigns to raise awareness about cybersecurity risks and promote the importance of adhering to national standards and guidelines. These campaigns will target organizations, their employees, and the general public to foster a culture of cybersecurity awareness.
- 06. Collaboration with International Bodies:** Engage with international cybersecurity organizations and standards bodies to ensure that Sri Lanka's cybersecurity standards are globally competitive and effective in protecting against international cyber threats.

Cybersecurity Support for the Citizen

To safeguard citizens in the increasingly digital world, comprehensive cybersecurity support services will be established, aimed at educating, assisting, and protecting individuals from cyber threats. **This initiative will encompass several key elements:**

- 01. Cybersecurity Help Centers:** Set up dedicated help centers across the country where citizens can receive assistance and guidance on cybersecurity issues. These centers will offer support for securing personal devices, safeguarding online identities, and responding to cyber incidents.
- 02. Online Safety Education Programs:** Develop and implement national education programs that provide training on basic cybersecurity hygiene, safe internet practices, and ways to protect personal information online. These programs will target all age groups and demographics, utilizing schools, community centers, and online platforms.
- 03. Cyber Incident Response Teams:** Establish specialized teams that can quickly respond to cybersecurity incidents affecting citizens. These teams will provide immediate technical support to help mitigate damages, recover lost data, and guide individuals through the process of securing their digital assets post-incident.
- 04. Specialized Police Cyber Security Unit:** Develop a centralized unit within the Sri Lanka Police, trained specifically in cybersecurity and cyber law, to support and protect citizens. This unit will have trained officers available across the country to respond swiftly to cybercrime incidents, ensuring national coverage and accessibility.
- 05. Awareness Campaigns:** Launch regular awareness campaigns to keep citizens informed about the latest cyber threats and scams. These campaigns will use various media channels to reach a broad audience and will include actionable advice on how to stay safe online.
- 06. Legal and Regulatory Support:** Provide legal assistance to victims of cybercrimes, helping them understand their rights and the steps they can take to seek justice. This will include support in reporting crimes to law enforcement and navigating the legal system.
- 07. Online scams and pyramid schemes:** Strict enforcement of law supported by proactive vigilance to safeguard citizens from such schemes.

5.5. Driving the Digital Economy

As part of our vision to modernize Sri Lanka's economic infrastructure, we are committed to advancing the transition towards a digital economy. Emphasizing more cashless transactions will deliver substantial benefits across multiple facets of society and commerce.

5.5.1. Key Benefits of Moving Towards a Digital Economy Include:

- **Enhanced Economic Data:** Transitioning to a digital economy will provide more accurate and comprehensive data on economic and commercial activities. This richer data set will improve the formulation of policies and enhance revenue collection, enabling more targeted and effective economic planning.
- **Reduced Transaction Costs:** Locally terminated digital transactions are typically less costly than cash or international card transactions. By reducing the dependency on cash, we can lower the overall transaction costs for businesses, contributing to a more efficient economy.
- **Empowerment of Small Vendors:** Supporting small vendors with digital payment solutions will drive more commerce and provide an easier, more secure alternative to traditional cash transactions. This initiative will also offer an affordable alternative to credit card systems, which can be prohibitive for small business owners due to high fees.
- **Facilitation for Foreigners:** Enhancing the ease of transactions for tourists and foreign residents through digital means will improve their experience and potentially increase spending within the country. Simplified digital transactions eliminate the barriers associated with currency exchange and physical cash handling.

5.5.2. Strategic Actions to Foster a Digital Economy:

- **Industry Collaboration:** Work closely with the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL), LankaPay, commercial banks, and key private sector partners to significantly increase adoption of digital payment platforms. By leveraging the government's new Digital Payment Platform and collaborating with financial institutions, the NPP will spearhead initiatives to onboard more merchants and consumers onto secure, convenient digital payment channels.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Invest in the necessary digital infrastructure to support widespread access to and the reliability of digital payment systems across urban and rural areas. This will include more card transactions being settled within Sri Lanka, minimizing outlay. LankaPay will be further strengthened to further this agenda with necessary policy, regulatory, and statutory support.
- **Incentives for Adoption:** Provide incentives for businesses and consumers to transition to digital transactions. This could include near-zero transaction costs and subsidies for digital transaction equipment.
- **Regulatory Framework:** Establish a robust regulatory framework that ensures the

security and privacy of digital transactions, building trust among consumers and businesses.

- **Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Launch comprehensive campaigns to educate the public and business owners about the benefits of digital transactions and how to transition securely.

5.5.3 Regulatory framework for crypto and trading platforms:

Recognizing the potential of cryptocurrencies as integral components of a digital economy in the future, the government is committed to exploring their economic benefits and addressing the associated challenges. Cryptocurrencies and related digital assets, such as non-fungible tokens (NFTs) and potential central bank digital currencies (CBDCs), present new opportunities for economic activity and growth but also pose unique risks that require careful consideration and management.

- **Impact and opportunity report:** An expert committee will be convened to conduct a comprehensive impact and opportunity assessment on the adoption of the crypto economy. This assessment will encompass evaluating the feasibility of issuing a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), the potential for local companies to raise funds through Initial Coin Offerings (ICOs), and the implications of integrating other digital asset classes such as Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) and other related opportunities and challenges.
- **Establishing regulatory framework and monitoring:** Based on the findings and recommendations from the expert committee's report, a necessary regulatory framework will be developed and enacted, supported by robust monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance and address potential risks effectively.

5.6. Digital Transformation of Strategic Industries

Recognizing the pivotal role of digital transformation in industry development, the National Digital Policy outlines a comprehensive strategy to bolster various sectors through targeted digital initiatives. This approach is designed to modernize infrastructure, enhance competitiveness, and spur innovation across key industries. Agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and marine services, energy and transport are identified as key industries within NPP economic policy.

5.6.1. Industry-Specific Technology Incubators

Establish technology incubators tailored to the specific needs of each strategic industry. These incubators will provide startups and innovators with the resources, mentorship, and environments necessary to develop industry-specific solutions. By fostering a supportive ecosystem, these incubators will accelerate technological advancement and commercialization within strategic sectors.

5.6.2. Rural Technology Entrepreneurship

Promote technology entrepreneurship in rural areas to bridge the digital divide and

foster inclusive economic growth. Initiatives will include providing access to digital tools, training in digital skills, and support for applying technology to traditional industries. This will empower rural communities, encourage local entrepreneurship, and stimulate regional development.

5.6.3. Tax Incentives for Digital Transformation Projects within Strategic Industries

Introduce tax incentives for companies undertaking digital transformation projects within strategic industries. These incentives will be designed to reduce the financial burden associated with adopting new technologies and to encourage businesses to invest in digital upgrades. This policy will help accelerate the adoption of digital technologies, improving productivity and innovation.

5.6.4. Path for Overseas Startups to Collaborate with Local Teams or Relocate to Sri Lanka

Create pathways for overseas startups to collaborate with local teams or relocate to Sri Lanka to work on solutions that address the needs of strategic industries. This initiative will include facilitating visas, providing relocation assistance, and offering access to local networks and markets. By attracting international talent and companies, Sri Lanka can enhance its domestic capabilities and foster a globally competitive business environment.

5.6.5. Implementation and Oversight

A dedicated unit within the government will oversee the implementation of these strategies, ensuring that they align with broader economic goals and that measurable outcomes are achieved. Regular reviews and adjustments will be made based on performance metrics and evolving industry needs. A recognised Industry 4.0/5.0 maturity index will be used to assess progress and as a criteria for incentives.

5.7. Workforce Strategy

To ensure the successful implementation of our digital industry development goals, a comprehensive workforce building strategy focusing on talent development across multiple educational levels is essential. This strategy will not only support the digital transformation initiatives but also build a sustainable and skilled workforce capable of driving innovation and economic growth.

5.7.1. Talent Development

NPP aims to cultivate a highly skilled, adaptable, and innovative workforce that can support and sustain the growth of a digitally-enabled economy. This approach ensures that educational institutions at all levels contribute effectively to the national objectives, preparing students and professionals alike for the demands of the future workplace.

Schools

- **Digital Literacy:** Initiate programs to create a digitally literate citizenry from a young age, integrating digital skills into the core curriculum.
- **IT Skill Development:** Develop IT as a foundational skill across all levels of education, ensuring that students are equipped with essential technological competencies.
- **Industry Connections:** Establish IT clubs with direct industry connections to provide real-world exposure and early professional networking opportunities for students.

Universities

- **Curriculum Expansion:** Expand university curriculums to include cutting-edge technologies, cybersecurity, governance, and management to keep pace with global industry trends.
- **Capacity Increase:** Increase the capacity of government universities to accommodate more students, thus expanding the talent pipeline.
- **Quality Assurance:** Implement monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms for private educational institutes to maintain high educational standards. Professional (Vocational)
- **Curriculum Overhaul:** Overhaul the vocational system to adopt internationally developed curricula, enhancing the relevance and quality of vocational education.
- **Rapid Scaling:** Recognize this tier as crucial for the rapid scaling of the IT workforce, providing targeted training that meets immediate industry needs.
- **Language and Management Skills:** Develop language proficiency and general management skills alongside technical training to produce well-rounded professionals.

Conversions by Bridging Courses

- **Coding Bootcamps:** Establish coding bootcamp operators to facilitate fast-tracked, intensive training programs that cater to career changers and professionals upgrading their skills.

Research

- **National R&D Coordination:** Ensure research is driven by national needs and coordinated through the national R&D policy, focusing on areas with the highest impact on societal and economic advancement.
- **Commercialization:** Increase the commercialization of research outcomes through stronger industry linkages, ensuring that academic discoveries translate into market-ready solutions.

- **International Collaborations:** Explore joint research opportunities with foreign universities to leverage global knowledge and resources, enhancing the scope and impact of local research efforts.

5.7.2. Talent Retention

Retaining and attracting talent is essential for the objectives of this policy to be attained. While brain drain is a natural occurrence in developing countries, a strong emphasis on retention will be adopted.

Quality of Life

Following attributes were identified as important for IT professionals:

- **Law and order**
- **Safety for the family**
- **Good education for children**
- **Access to top quality healthcare**
- **Housing and vehicle ownership**
- **Entertainment**
- **Wellness**

Within an NPP led government, law and order will be established the soonest.

Specific Strategies

NPP aims to create a highly attractive living and working environment for IT professionals, thereby not only enhancing their quality of life but also positioning Sri Lanka as a desirable destination for high-tech talent globally.

- **Mini Town Development:** Collaborate with real estate developers to construct mini towns that cater specifically to the needs of IT professionals closer to Digital Parks. These towns will include state-of-the-art residential facilities, schools, healthcare centers, and leisure facilities, all integrated into a cohesive community.
- **Incentives for Economic Contribution:** Implement incentive schemes for IT professionals based on their contributions to earning foreign currency and their tax contributions. These incentives might include tax reliefs, subsidies for home and vehicle ownership, and exclusive access to premium community services.
- **Current PAYE tax brackets will be expanded to deliver short term relief to IT professionals.**

5.7.3. Attracting Expat Digital Professionals and Digital Nomads

As part of our strategy to strengthen Sri Lanka's position as a global hub for digital talent, the National People's Power (NPP) is committed to attracting expatriate digital professionals and digital nomads. This effort will not only enhance the local talent pool but also foster a vibrant, multicultural tech ecosystem that drives innovation and global connectivity.

Strategic Initiatives Include:

Visa and Residency Incentives: Introduce specific visa categories and residency programs tailored for digital professionals and digital nomads. These might include long-term visas, visa-on-arrival options, and streamlined processes for obtaining residency based on professional qualifications and contributions to the local economy.

Co-Working and Co-Living Spaces: Develop state-of-the-art co-working and co-living spaces that cater to the needs of digital professionals and nomads. These facilities will be equipped with high-speed internet, modern amenities, and flexible living arrangements, making them ideal for short-term and long-term stays.

- **Tax Incentives:** Provide tax incentives for expatriate digital professionals, such as tax breaks on income earned from foreign sources and exemptions on import taxes for essential equipment, to make working in Sri Lanka financially attractive.
- **Community Building and Networking Events:** Organize regular community-building activities, tech talks, workshops, and networking events to integrate expat professionals into the local tech community and encourage collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- **Promotional Campaigns:** Launch targeted promotional campaigns showcasing Sri Lanka as an ideal destination for digital nomads and expat professionals. Highlight the country's cultural richness, natural beauty, cost of living advantages, and the quality of life that digital professionals can enjoy here.
- **Partnerships with Global Tech Entities:** Forge partnerships with international tech companies, universities, and professional networks to promote Sri Lanka as a career base for digital professionals looking for opportunities in Asia.
- **Support Services:** Offer dedicated support services to help expatriates navigate the legal, financial, and cultural landscape of Sri Lanka, including assistance with housing, schooling for children, and integration into the community.

5.8. Regional Expansion of Digital Businesses

Central to the National People's Power (NPP) national policy is the commitment to ensure equitable access to development for all Sri Lankans, regardless of their geographic location.

5.8.1. Establishment of Four Digital Industry Parks

A pivotal element of this strategy is the establishment of four Digital Industry Parks, strategically located across the country. These parks will serve as hubs for technological innovation and development, driving economic growth and providing local communities with access to cutting-edge digital technologies and job opportunities.

Concept of a Digital Park

A Digital Park serves as a vibrant ecosystem, bringing together students, researchers, industry leaders, community members, and government bodies. These parks are designed as special economic zones, offering a range of incentives to attract industries to invest and establish operations within the parks. The specialization of each park is tailored to meet the unique requirements and industries of its region, fostering a localized yet globally connected tech environment.

Locations and Strategies:

- **Northern Province (Jaffna):**

With the rapid development of Tamil Nadu and the new international flight connections between Jaffna and Chennai, Jaffna is poised to become a hub for tech innovation. The existing startup ecosystem in Jaffna provides a solid foundation for the first Digital Park.

- **Central Province:**

Positioned as the educational heartland of Sri Lanka, the Central Province is ideal for a Digital Park focusing on educational technology and research.

- **Southern Province:**

The Southern Province has several universities and technical institutes that produce a steady stream of graduates in IT, engineering, and related fields. An IT park in this region would provide employment opportunities for these graduates and prevent brain drain.

- **Eastern Province:**

The Eastern Province has a young and growing population, with educational institutions producing graduates in IT, engineering, and other relevant fields. Compared to Colombo, the cost of land, labor, and utilities in the Eastern Province is lower, making it an attractive location for setting up IT businesses with reduced operating expenses.

5.8.2. Overall Strategy:

- **Incentives and Benefits:** Each Digital Park will offer tax breaks, investment facilitation, and streamlined regulatory processes to attract domestic and international tech companies.

- **Community Engagement:** Engage local communities through educational programs, job training, and employment opportunities generated by the parks, ensuring that the benefits of technological advancements are widely distributed.
- **Sustainable Development:** Incorporate sustainable infrastructure and green technologies in the design and operation of each park, reflecting a commitment to environmentally friendly growth.

5.9. National AI Policy

AI is already having a profound impact on the world. AI will change the world as we know it. It's an opportunity and a threat to any economy and society. Many countries have published policies to help them gain the best possible outcomes with AI while establishing guardrails to minimize the negative impact on society.

A National AI policy will be developed and adopted.

Policy Team will Study, Work Already Done:

- **A white paper developed under the guidance of the Ministry of Technology**
- **Discussion paper produced by LIRNEasia**
- **AI Policies published by many countries**

The National AI Strategy for Sri Lanka should outline a comprehensive plan to harness the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to drive economic growth, improve public services, and enhance the quality of life for all citizens. The strategy should focus on developing scalable, impactful AI solutions while prioritizing accountability, risk management, and responsible development and deployment. Key elements of the strategy should include:

- Establishing a robust data governance framework to ensure the availability of high-quality, ethically sourced data to train AI systems
- Investing in skills development and education to build a pipeline of AI talent, from primary schools to universities and lifelong learning programs
- Upgrading digital infrastructure, including high-speed internet connectivity and cloud computing resources, to support AI deployment
- Fostering a vibrant AI research and innovation ecosystem through partnerships between academia, industry, and government
- Promoting the adoption of AI in the public sector to enhance service delivery, decision-making, and resource allocation
- Stimulating AI adoption in the private sector, especially among SMEs, to boost productivity and competitiveness

- Developing a legal and regulatory framework that encourages innovation while ensuring the safe and ethical use of AI
- Engaging with the public, civil society, and international partners to build trust and address concerns around AI's societal impact

5.10. Implementation Structures

5.10.1. Digital Advisory Council

To ensure the successful execution of the digital strategy by the new government under the National People's Power (NPP), the formation of a Digital Advisory Council is proposed. This council will play a pivotal role in steering Sri Lanka toward its digital future. Comprising a diverse group of tech entrepreneurs, investors, software engineering experts, and academic leaders, the council will create a rich collaborative environment that taps into a wide range of expertise to drive innovation and digital transformation across various sectors. Representation from industry bodies SLASSCOM, FITIS, CSSL, and other interest groups is expected to ensure cohesive policy formulation and execution.

5.10.2. Digital Transformation Agency

- **Driving Digital Economy**
- **Digitalisation of Government Agencies/Departments.**
- **Supporting Digital Industry Growth**
- **Offices of National CTO and Digital Transformation Project Management will be structured within DTA.**
- **DTA will consist of an executive management team and a board of Directors with Digital Advisory Council as a sounding and policy review board.**

5.10.3. Establishment of the Sri Lanka CTO Office

The establishment of a Chief Technology Officer (CTO) office in Sri Lanka aims to centralize and enhance technological governance within the country. The CTO office will be responsible for several key initiatives:

- **Architecture and Standards:** Establish and maintain a unified architecture and set standards across all government digital initiatives, ensuring interoperability and security.
- **Sandbox Environment:** Develop a sandbox environment that allows developers to test new applications and integrations in a controlled setting, encouraging innovation without compromising existing systems.
- **Universal User Interface (UI) Design:** Define, design, and develop a common UI that accommodates various levels of digital and language skills, making digital

services accessible to all citizens. This UI framework will be made available to any developer working on government-related projects.

- **Extension of Lanka Gate:** Expand the Lanka Gate project to ensure that all government services are exposed as APIs, facilitating easier access and integration for third-party developers and enhancing service delivery.
- **Technology Acquisition Strategies:** Formulate strategies for the acquisition and integration of new technologies to keep abreast of global advancements and ensure the government's technological infrastructure remains modern and efficient.

5.10.4. Digital Transformation Project Management Office (DTPMO)

In alignment with our commitment to enhancing governmental operations through digital technology, we propose the establishment of a Digital Transformation Project Management Office (DTPMO). This office will serve as the central hub for overseeing and coordinating all high-value digital transformation initiatives across government departments and agencies. The DTPMO will ensure that these initiatives are executed efficiently, within budget, and achieve their intended outcomes.

5.10.5. Key Functions and Responsibilities:

- **Strategic Planning and Oversight:** The DTPMO will develop comprehensive strategies for digital transformation projects, setting clear objectives, timelines, and milestones. It will also monitor the progress of these projects against set goals, ensuring that they stay on track and align with the broader digital government strategy.
- **Resource Allocation:** Managing the allocation of resources, including budgeting and staffing, to maximize the effectiveness of digital transformation efforts. The office will ensure that projects have the necessary tools and manpower to succeed.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Facilitating communication and collaboration among all stakeholders involved in digital transformation projects, including government officials, IT professionals, and external vendors. This will include regular updates and feedback sessions to keep all parties informed and engaged.
- **Risk Management:** Identifying potential risks to project timelines and outcomes, and developing mitigation strategies to address these risks proactively.
- **Quality Assurance:** Implementing quality control measures to ensure that digital solutions meet government standards and are delivered effectively. This includes regular testing and review processes.
- **Training and Support:** Providing ongoing training and support to government staff and agencies involved in digital projects, ensuring that they are equipped with the necessary digital skills and knowledge to utilize new systems effectively.
- **Innovation and Adaptation:** Encouraging innovation by staying abreast of emerging technologies that can enhance government operations and adapting project plans to incorporate these technologies where beneficial.

6. Linkage with Other NPP Policies

- Education Policy
- Economic Policy
- Research & Development Policy
- Telecommunication Policy
- Industrial Development Policy

