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## **SOUTH AFRICA'S PATH TO DIGITAL GOVERNANCE: A GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH**

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### **Confronting the challenges at home**

South Africa finds itself at a critical crossroads, grappling with deep-rooted governance challenges, corruption, and a lack of accountability in its state entities. Notwithstanding these frustrating challenges there is an opportunity for President Ramaphosa to leverage South Africa's G20 presidency to demonstrate how governance reform -- driven by digital tools -- can create a more inclusive, accountable, and efficient system of directing and controlling organisations - especially within state managed entities.

### **Digitised governance: A path to restoring trust**

The adoption of digitised governance frameworks within South Africa's state entities offers a concrete solution to address the inefficiencies and corruption that have plagued the country's public sector. Digital tools can promote transparency, streamline decision-making, and ultimately improve the delivery of public services. This transformation is not only essential for South Africa's internal recovery, but also presents a model for other developing countries, where similar governance issues persist.

In the era of rapid technological advancement, the need for a digitised public sector has never been greater. By leveraging digital tools, South Africa can create a more transparent, responsive and accountable government. Such efforts will help rebuild trust in public institutions, demonstrating that real change is possible, even amid internal strife.

### **Aligning local action with global leadership**

At the global level, President Ramaphosa's leadership in the G20 presents a unique opportunity to advocate for the very values of *solidarity*, *equality*, and *sustainable development* he highlighted in his WEF 2025 speech in Davos, and which he champions for South Africa. The G20 Summit scheduled for November 2025 in Johannesburg -- being the first of its kind to be held in South Africa and on the African continent -- will not only spotlight South Africa's commitment to international cooperation, but also serve as a platform to showcase the country's progress in transforming its own governance systems, not least also showing its progress against specifically, Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs) which addresses the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The President's dual role -- as President of South Africa and the G20 -- allows him to lead by example. South Africa's G20 presidency can highlight the importance of inclusive governance and the role of technology in fostering international collaboration, addressing challenges like climate change, poverty, and inequality. By digitising its own state entities governance frameworks -- or at least starting this process before the next G20 Summit -- South Africa is well positioned to establish a blueprint for other developing nations seeking to modernise their governance frameworks and tackle recurring systemic issues.

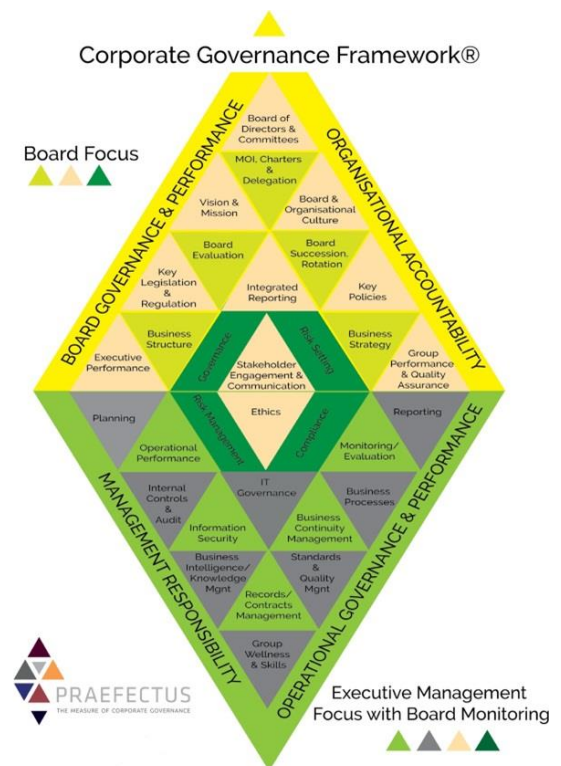
### A long-term vision for reform

The axiom that *"governance is a process and not a singular event"* comes to mind, including the reminder that this process is led from the top. With this said, the digitisation of South Africa's state entities is not a quick fix, but instead a long-term commitment to improving governance and service delivery. Achieving this will require concerted efforts from government, civil society and the private sector. It will also demand cultural change within South Africa's public institutions, where transparency, accountability and a focus on public service must be ingrained at every level.

The process will most likely face resistance, given entrenched interests and the sheer scale of reform that is needed. However, by focusing on the long-term benefits that include *inter-alia*; better public services, reduced corruption, enhanced global credibility, improved sovereign ratings and the repositioning of the country as an attractive investment destination, South Africa can, and must make meaningful strides toward digital governance if it is serious about reform, transformation and a fair and just society.

### A digital future for South Africa and beyond

Despite the internal challenges and geo-political shifts, South Africa has the potential to demonstrate how technology can drive governance reform and address systemic issues. The digitisation of state entities offers a pathway to a more transparent, accountable, efficient and effective government. This transformation not only supports South Africa's internal recovery but also positions the country as a beacon of hope for other nations seeking to modernise and build



more inclusive, sustainable futures. By leading in digital governance frameworks, South Africa can inspire global change; one step at a time.

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