

Digitalization for Enhancing the SEZ Ecosystem

Tools and Implementation Frameworks

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SEZ ecosystem



A structured environment fostering **investment, innovation, and industrial growth**. Key stakeholders include **government bodies** setting policies and incentives, **SEZ authorities** ensuring compliance, **developers and operators** managing infrastructure, **investors and enterprises** driving production and job creation, **service providers** delivering logistics and utilities, and **local communities** supplying labor and benefiting from economic spillovers. These stakeholders work together to **streamline regulations**, reduce costs, and promote **a collaborative business climate** that supports **economic diversification and regional development**.

Digitalization of SEZs and IPAs



UNIDO SEZ Report, 2024 [1]



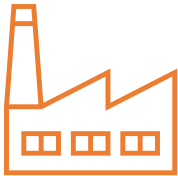
UNIDO IPA Report, 2022 [2]



[1] United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). (2024). *Characteristics, trends, and way forward for Special Economic Zones in Africa: Insights from a UNIDO-AEZO Survey*. Vienna, Austria, UNIDO.

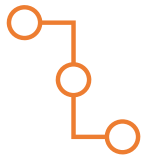
[2] United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). (2022). *Investment Promotion and Facilitation in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Region: State-of-play, challenges and opportunities*. Vienna, Austria, UNIDO.

Observations



Scale limitations

Limits the ability to leverage economies of scale. Limited scale and lack of industrial clustering hinder competitiveness. Small scale restricts the development of vibrant industrial ecosystems.



Facilitating linkages and spillovers

Lack of integration between SEZs and the domestic economy. SEZs functioning as enclaves with minimal linkages to local firms. Local procurement, technology transfer, skills development.



Ensuring sustainability

Overlooked social and environmental considerations in SEZ development. Lack of focus on resource efficiency, environmental compliance, and decent work conditions. Importance of attracting sustainable investment.

Observations



Attracting investments

Lack of investment compared to other regions
Limited visibility and improvement in national investment climates
Challenges in attracting FDI despite opportunities (AGOA, AfCFTA)



Promoting sectoral diversification

Concentration in traditional, low-value-added sectors
Need to diversify SEZ activities into other sectors
Reducing dependence on quota-hopping and export preferences



Strengthening management quality

Management and bureaucratic hurdles
Administrative and operational efficiency
Investment promotion strategies

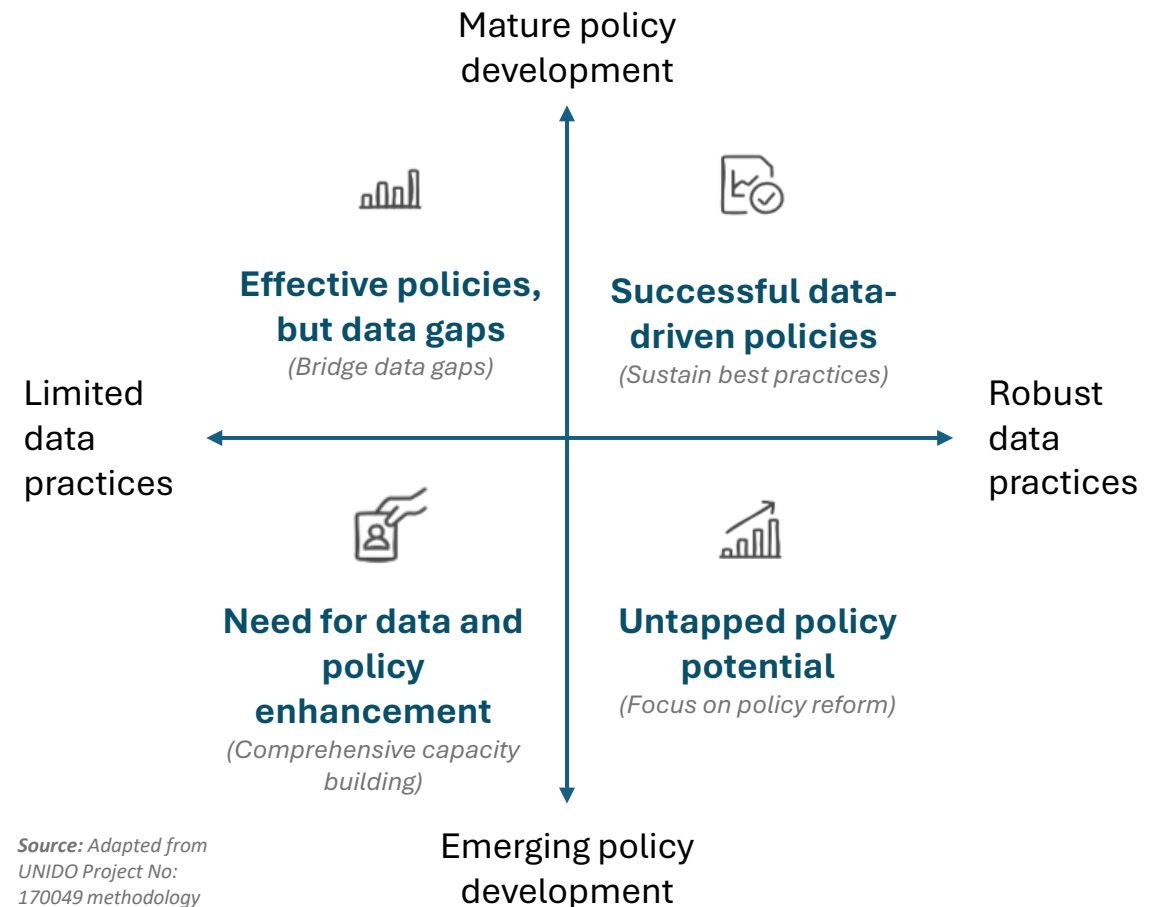
Observations



Supporting policy reform

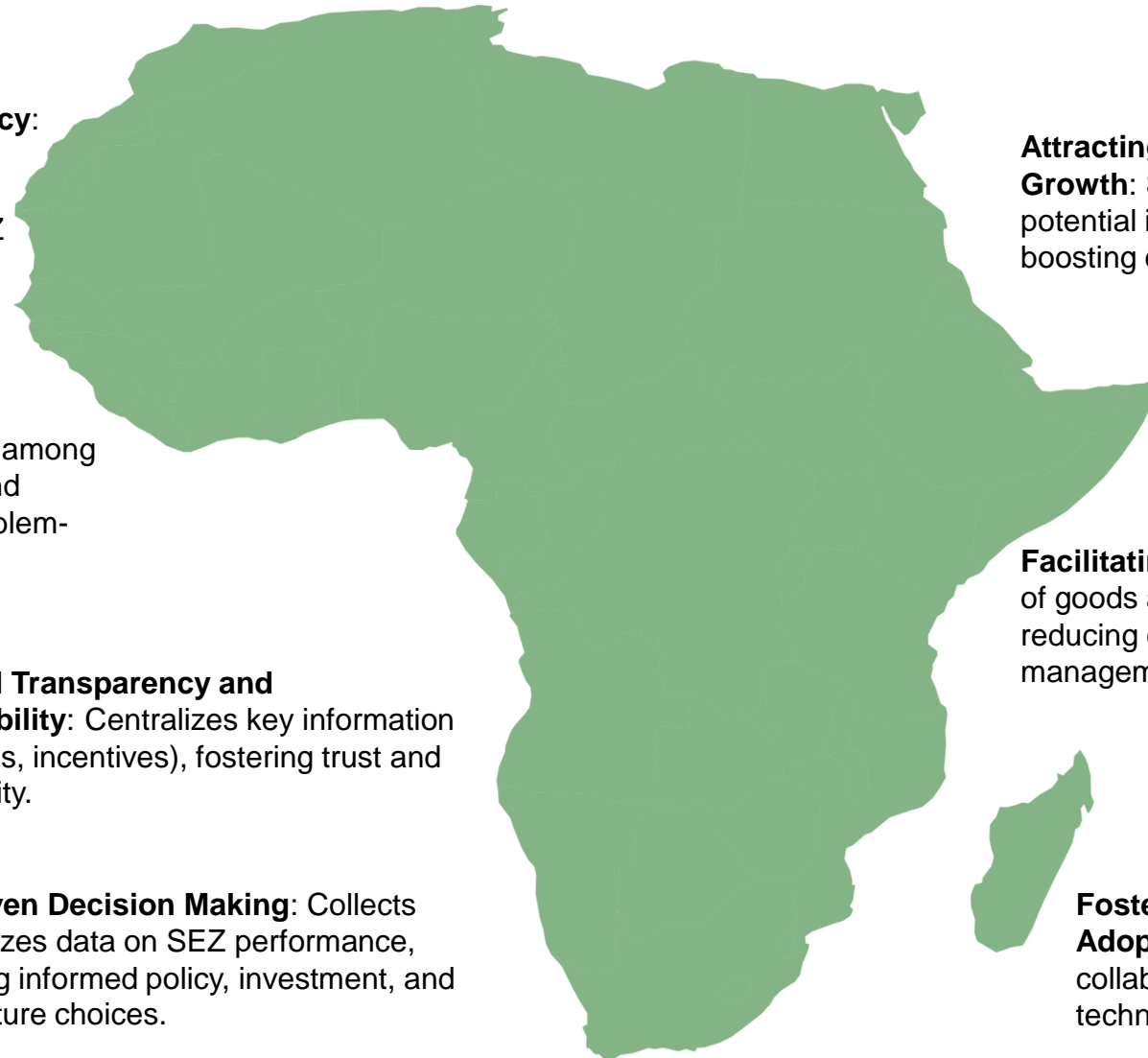
- Effective policy and regulatory environments
- Streamlined investment procedures and improved customs administration
- Using SEZs as pilots for broader economic reforms

Collecting and analyzing firm-level data on businesses structure, performance, impact and perceptions



Source: Adapted from UNIDO Project No: 170049 methodology (HTT)

Digitalization for SEZ ecosystem



Streamlined Operations and Efficiency:

Automates administrative tasks (e.g., permits, customs) to save time and resources for both businesses and SEZ authorities.

Improved Communication and Collaboration:

Facilitates interaction among businesses, government agencies, and service providers, enabling faster problem-solving.

Enhanced Transparency and Accountability:

Centralizes key information (regulations, incentives), fostering trust and predictability.

Data-Driven Decision Making: Collects and analyzes data on SEZ performance, supporting informed policy, investment, and infrastructure choices.

Attracting Investment and Promoting Growth:

Showcases SEZ opportunities to potential investors, creating jobs and boosting economic development.

Facilitating Trade and Logistics:

Tracking of goods and streamlined processes, reducing costs and enhancing supply chain management.

Fostering Innovation and Technology Adoption:

Supports innovation hubs and collaboration, driving competitiveness and technological advancement within the SEZ.

Digitalization in African SEZs



Uneven adoption

Growing SEZ footprint

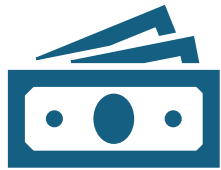
Trade facilitation gains

Incomplete digitalization

Policy & collaboration

Country initiatives

Impediments to digitalization



Lack of infrastructure

Inadequate ICT Infrastructure
Insufficient Power Supply
Limited Access to Finance



Skills shortages

Digital Skills Gap
Lack of Training and Education



Regulatory challenges

Unclear Regulatory Frameworks
Bureaucracy and Red Tape
Lack of Coordination

How UNIDO can support

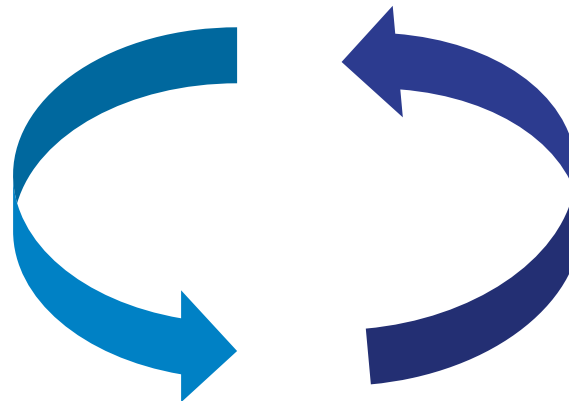


Leveraging digitalization for a concerted investment promotion effort



The UNIDO Investment Portal which provides investment location information including investment project opportunities, country and regional level institutional partners, value chain and sectoral details and information on industrial parks and sites

<https://investment.unido.org>

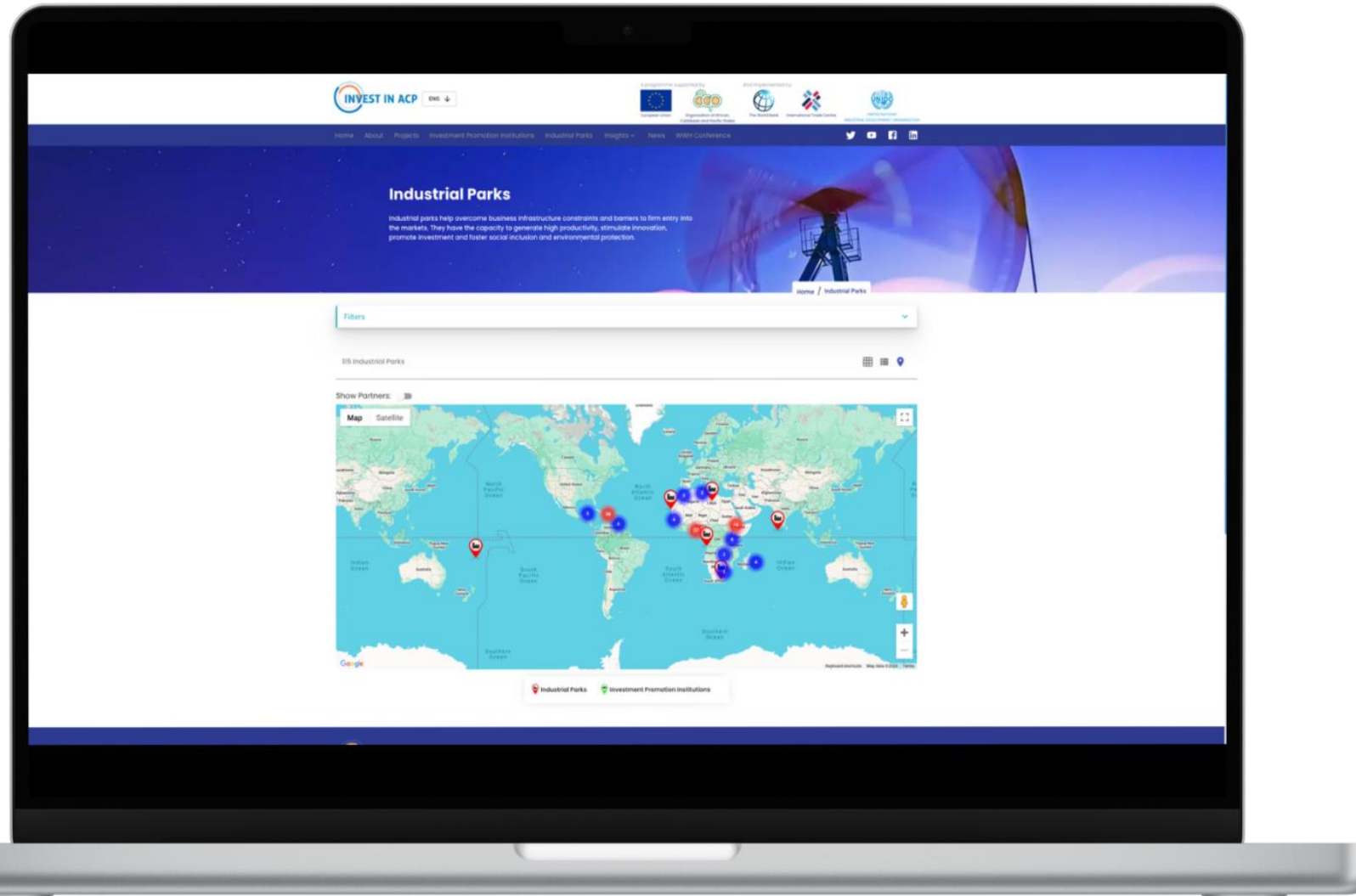


Digital Investment Profiling System (DIPS)

The Digital Investment Profiling System (DIPS) constitutes the back-end of the Investment Portal. It serves as a web application for IPAs and IPIs for the management of investment profiling data including Investment Opportunity Profiles (IOPs) as well as business intelligence on existing investors in the country.

<https://dips.unido.org>

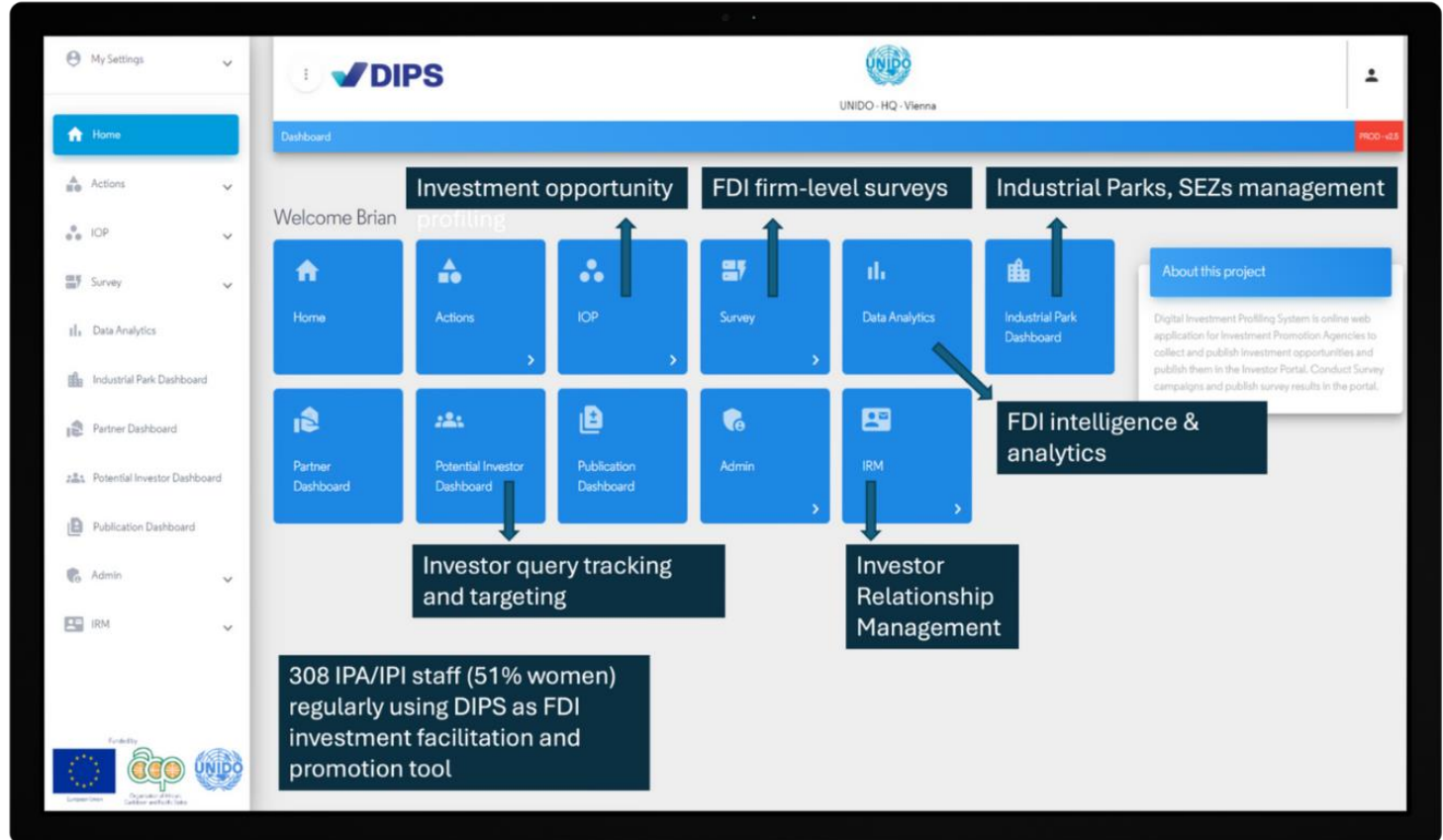
How UNIDO can support



The public
promotion site

How UNIDO can support

The versatile back-end



My Settings

Home

Actions

IOP

Survey

Data Analytics

Industrial Park Dashboard

Partner Dashboard

Potential Investor Dashboard

Publication Dashboard

Admin

IRM

DIPS

UNIDO - HQ - Vienna

Dashboard

Welcome Brian

Investment opportunity promoting

FDI firm-level surveys

Industrial Parks, SEZs management

Home

Actions

IOP

Survey

Data Analytics

Industrial Park Dashboard

Partner Dashboard

Potential Investor Dashboard

Publication Dashboard

Admin

IRM

About this project

Digital Investment Profiling System is online web application for Investment Promotion Agencies to collect and publish investment opportunities and publish them in the Investor Portal. Conduct Survey campaigns and publish survey results in the portal.

FDI intelligence & analytics

Investor query tracking and targeting

Investor Relationship Management

308 IPA/IPI staff (51% women) regularly using DIPS as FDI investment facilitation and promotion tool

DIPS

By numbers

148

Institutions Registered

116

Special Economic Zones



8

Diagnostic studies conducted

12.000

Companies in 9 countries

7800

Companies screened

440

Companies Surveyed

500+

Inquiries Received

1050

Investment opportunity Profiles published from more than 4000

Other UNIDO support



The IPP serves as a global knowledge exchange and resource center for industrial parks and related area development initiatives.

Knowledge Sharing: Exchanges best practices in industrial parks.

Strategic Alliances: Fosters collaboration across sectors.

Capacity Building: Provides training and resources.

<https://ipp.unido.org/>



Computer Model for Feasibility Analysis and Reporting (COMFAR) is a software tool designed to support investment profiling and feasibility analysis for industrial and non-industrial projects

Comprehensive: Financial and economic analysis.

Flexible: Supports diverse project types.

User-Friendly: Features an intuitive interface and multilingual

Supported: Includes manuals and training. Since 1981, 3rd version, 4th online upcoming



Subcontracting and Partnership Exchanges (SPXs) help local enterprises navigate globalization and leverage opportunities in subcontracting, outsourcing, and supply chains.

Matchmaking: Links buyers and suppliers.

Profiling: Highlights SME capabilities.

Buyer Engagement: Identifies procurement needs.

Capacity Building: Boosts SME competitiveness.



Q&A



Thank You

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