

07.05.2024

BRICS Digitalization

Konstantin Sukhoverkhov, program coordinator, Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC)

In 2024 the Russian Federation is presiding as the Chairman of the BRICS. This fall the countries of the Union will meet for a summit in Kazan. The year of 2024 is important both for Russia and for the original five BRICS countries, for the reason that in this year the Union was joined by new members - Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Ethiopia. Through this process the BRICS has embraced new regions of the world – the Middle East and the North Africa. This has increased the financial, trade and economic, political, humanitarian and other potentials for the BRICS union.

At the same time the expansion of the BRICS creates a new economic reality and raises questions about the future of the Union and about the future of international economy and politics. Moreover, the expansion of the BRICS raises the issue of developing mechanisms for supporting overall sustainability and unity of its member countries. Digitalization could be one of these mechanisms.

© MOSCOW FORESIGHT - 2026. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



© MOSCOW FORESIGHT - 2026. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

As applied to the development of cooperation of the BRICS countries via digitalization, it should be noted that many corporate services today are digitalized, applications and software are located in cloud services, enabling a rather large-scale integration of various systems, including the financial sector. Geographical distribution could not be bridged without coordination in the digital technology sphere, and it is a key issue for efficient cooperation between the BRICS countries. Experts say that this is caused by varying levels of digitalization in the BRICS countries, by very different development rates of the countries.

Given the broad geography of the BRICS countries, this would require availability of Internet networks with wide coverage in the countries, extensive penetration of cloud applications, use of artificial intelligence. All of the above requirements would provide for real time data analysis and extraction of useful information. Under the BRICS format, digitalization issues would call for organizational efficiency and flexibility. Wider and deeper development of digitalization would in future enable overcoming interaction difficulties of the BRICS countries under the broad geography of the Union, curbing effects of the sanctions pressure (both for Russia and other countries of the Union), creating a foundation for development of a common currency unit under the BRICS format.

© MOSCOW FORESIGHT - 2026. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



© MOSCOW FORESIGHT - 2026. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

The issue of digitalization of the BRICS also raises the question of technological development of the Union’s countries. The BRICS countries need to achieve their technological sovereignty, which would also facilitate integration of their tech platforms and develop digitalization in various areas, for instance, in economy.

Technological development and digitalization inevitably touch upon the issue of economic cooperation. All these areas for cooperation for the BRICS countries were highlighted in the Johannesburg Declaration -II. China could offer options based on its technology platform. India also has the potential for this. Russia, just as some of its BRICS partners, has its own digital products, which could be of interest to members of the Union. For example, Russia, being a leader in digitalization of public services, could share its experience in electronic government development. Moscow’s electronic services could be of special interest to BRICS countries and cities of the Union. In 2023 Sergei Cheryomin, Head of the Department for Foreign Economic Activity and International Relations of the City of Moscow, speaking at "Moving South: Effective Development in the New World" session at the SPIEF, pointed out that foreign partners of Moscow were primarily interested in developing smart and safe cities, and in digitalization of healthcare and education.

Exchange of experience and technologies coupled with the economic component could strengthen and develop technology cooperation between the BRICS countries and conduct digitalization of the Union under a broad range of issues.

© MOSCOW FORESIGHT - 2026. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.