

BETTER THAN CASH
ALLIANCE



Annual Report

2024

Responsible digital payments

Powering financial inclusion, economic growth, and digital transformation

June 2025

Hosted by:



Responsible digital payments serve as a catalyst for inclusion, opportunity, and shared prosperity.

The mission of the Better Than Cash Alliance (the Alliance) is both ambitious and urgent: to unlock economic opportunities for the 1.4 billion individuals – predominantly women and youth – who are currently excluded from and underserved by the formal financial system. We assert that when digital payments are responsibly implemented and widely adopted, they become a significant catalyst for empowerment, resilience, and prosperity.

In 2024, we made significant progress in reshaping financial systems, in collaboration with our members and a broad coalition of partners. We worked alongside the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretary General, H.E. Wamkele Mene, to integrate responsible digital payments into the world's first Digital Trade Protocol to accelerate attainment of the One African Market and Women and Youth Financial and Economic Inclusion (WYFEI) to turbocharge Agenda 2063. In Asia, we advanced inclusive merchant payments through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Additionally, we catalyzed innovation in agricultural value chains in Guatemala and Indonesia and collaborated with merchants in Pakistan. These efforts demonstrate the potential of our collective efforts to turbocharge the move from cash to digital payments.

With the Alliance Secretariat now fully integrated into the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sustainable Finance Hub (SFH) in the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), we have a significant opportunity to swiftly take digital payments to everyone without them, or improve the experience for those who digital payments are yet to be better than cash. Leveraging UNDP's extensive presence in over 170 countries and territories, and all Alliance members, we can decisively expand adoption and active usage of digital payments to achieve significant impact, especially to those who are most excluded or underserved.

I am excited about the future and trust that in collaboration with our Secretariat team, members, and partners, we have a real and urgent opportunity to action our commitment advancing the effective utilization of digital payments to drive prosperity, for everyone.

L. Nshuti Mbabazi
Managing Director
Better Than Cash Alliance





INDICATOR

New and/or responsible accounts created/activated

Policies and strategies adopted and implemented that incorporate the UN Principles for Responsible Digital Payments

Non-members' commitments to responsible digital payments

2024 RESULT

105 MILLION

41

35

TARGET: 30

TARGET: 30

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

In the Philippines, the merchant accounts accepting QR Ph person-to-merchant (P2M) transactions increased to >1.5 million between 2022 and 2024.

Ethiopia's National Digital Payments Strategy (NDPS) 2021-2024 has added 110 million mobile money accounts.

In Colombia, 2,500 Venezuelan migrants and refugees, 85 percent women, now receive cash transfers in their own digital accounts.

The Heads of State and Government of the African Union adopted the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade, which includes provisions on digital financial inclusion (DFI), digital public infrastructure (DPI), and interoperable digital payments, a world first.

The ASEAN Policy Toolkit has been endorsed by ASEAN Finance Ministers, aiming to address trust-based barriers faced by micro-merchants in adopting and maintaining the use of digital financial services (DFS).

Several policies and decrees have been introduced in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal to mandate responsible digitization within the health and micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) sectors.

The International Women's Coffee Alliance has endorsed responsible digital payment systems to enhance women's economic involvement within the coffee value chain.

The CAF – Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean – has signed a Letter of Intent to collaborate on enhancing financial inclusion and promoting the responsible adoption of digital payments, with a particular focus on women.



INDICATOR

Gender-intentionality

The share of advisory funding committed to gender-intentional work

Scale

Responsible payment digitization initiatives scaled by members and partners

Activation

Progress on digital payments use in countries where the Alliance supported national policy and strategy implementation

2024 RESULT

82%

TARGET: 75%

42

TARGET: 31

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

The Alliance prioritizes women across its initiatives, including collaborations with continental and regional partners such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and CAF.

India has established the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH) [Swanari Gender Data Observatory](#), designed to address the gender gap in financial inclusion.

Around 85 percent of Tier 1 Suppliers for Alliance members [Gap](#), [H&M](#), and [Target](#) disburse wages digitally, predominantly to women.

Following a joint pilot with the Alliance Secretariat, a UN humanitarian member agency has expanded its digital cash transfers in Colombia, resulting in the opening of 3,500 new accounts.

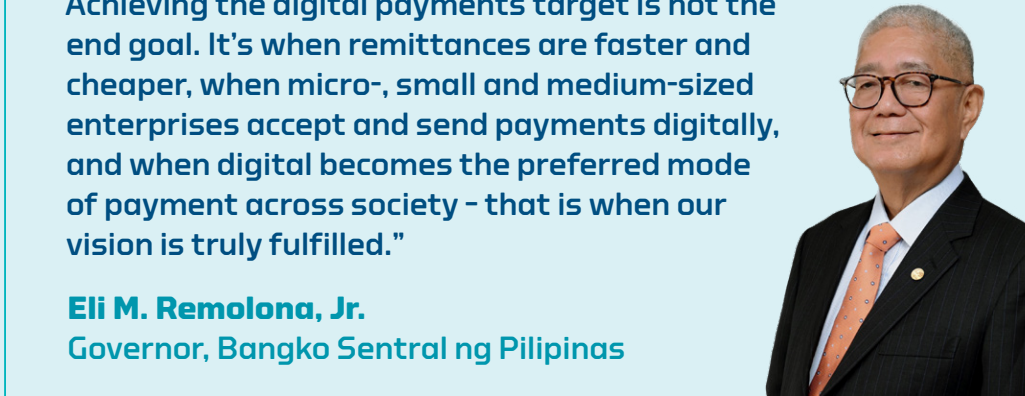
Alliance members Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and the Philippines have seen a significant surge in the number and share of digital payment transactions:

- **The Philippines** From 1 percent in 2013 to > 52 percent in 2024.
- **Ethiopia** Mobile money with a six-fold increase from 40 million transactions in 2022 to around 300 million transactions.
- **Bangladesh** From 20 percent in 2022 to 56 percent in 2024.



“The AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade is more than a policy document ... A key element of this effort is the facilitation of cross-border digital payments, which can unlock new opportunities for businesses and consumers alike, enabling seamless financial transactions across African borders.”

H.E. Wamkele Mene
Secretary-General, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)



“Achieving the digital payments target is not the end goal. It's when remittances are faster and cheaper, when micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises accept and send payments digitally, and when digital becomes the preferred mode of payment across society - that is when our vision is truly fulfilled.”

Eli M. Remolona, Jr.
Governor, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas



“Our commitment to fostering financial inclusion is unwavering. Initiatives like Raast, Asaan Digital Account, and Digital Banks are pivotal in expanding access to financial services for the unbanked and underbanked segments of our society.”

Jameel Ahmad
Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan

“Ethiopia is advancing towards a cash-light society by expanding digital payment infrastructure, transforming sectors like healthcare. With strategic support from UNDP's Better Than Cash Alliance, the Ministry of Health is spearheading nationwide integration of digital payments, enhancing access, equity, efficiency, and transparency in health services.”

H.E. Dr. Ayele Teshome
State Minister
Ministry of Health of Ethiopia



“The Better Than Cash Alliance has been a crucial partner in this journey, helping us to identify those best practices abroad, helping us to have exchanges with other central banks, and peer-to-peer exchanges that have been very relevant also to identify what those good approaches in the designing of the system are.”

Ana María Prieto
Director of Payment Systems
at Banco de la República
Colombia



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**Policy: Advisory and
advocacy driving digital
financial inclusion at global,
regional, and national level**

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Private sector

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**Digitizing health
payments and social
protection transfers**

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1.

Policy: Advisory and advocacy driving digital financial inclusion at global, regional, and national levels

GLOBAL LEVEL

Brazil G20 Presidency: Endorsement of G20 finance ministers to support financial inclusion at the last mile

Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI). Together with the Government of Brazil and as an implementing partner of the G20 GPFI, the Alliance, along with the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) and the World Bank, delivered a guidance note, [G20 Policy Options to Improve Last Mile Access and Quality of Inclusion](#). The note provides actionable policy recommendations on enabling key digital public infrastructure (DPI) and consumer protection to foster inclusive and secure financial ecosystems in line with the [UN Principles for Responsible Digital Payments](#).

Outlook to South Africa G20 Presidency 2025 – from access to usage. To ensure continuity, the Alliance is actively contributing to the GPFI, G20 Women's Empowerment Working Group and Digital Economy Working Group, with a strong focus on advancing women's financial inclusion, particularly in informal trade across Africa, where exclusion is the highest.



Strengthening reaching financial equality

Championing gender-responsive financing at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68). On International Women's Day 2024, the Alliance joined global leaders at the CSW68 side-event titled "Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Public and Private Commitments," reinforcing that inclusive digital payments are not just tools of convenience but catalysts for equality and prosperity.

The Alliance continued to promote the ***Reaching Financial Equality for Women action plan***. In 2024, the **World Food Programme (WFP)** became part of the Reaching for Financial Equality coalition, prioritizing transferring money directly into women's accounts, including promoting IDs for women.



Responsible digital payments enhancing climate resilience

Alliance members and partners reinforced the ***Call to Action for Responsible Digital Payments to Accelerate Climate Action*** at the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference / Twenty-ninth Conference of the Parties (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan, and at the Singapore FinTech Festival 2024, emphasizing the importance of women's financial inclusion for improved climate resilience. Digital payments play a vital role in enhancing emergency response and supporting long-term resilience strategies – join our ***Call to Action!***

In Indonesia, the Alliance and the Ministry of Finance convened 70 experts to explore how digital payments and public infrastructure can support climate adaptation – by **expanding financial access in climate-hit farming areas**, enabling digital social protection, and improving disaster response through faster, transparent services.



Responsible digital payments are key to inclusive DPI

Global DPI Summit The Alliance facilitated exchanges with representatives from central banks, ministries of finance, and other institutions from Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, and Uganda, in which they shared practical examples with each other on inclusive DPI and the importance of responsible digital payment systems. Watch the [video](#).

Global Fintech Fest With its panel “Driving Growth through Interoperable Innovations in Cross-Border Payments,” which brought together central bankers, financial institutions, and innovators from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the Alliance helped spark stronger collaboration to harness DPI – such as PIX, RAAST, and Project Nexus – for inclusive financial and economic growth.



At the **2024 Global Inclusive Finance Summit**, the Alliance led a panel on building trust in digital payments. Speakers from India’s Information Technology Ministry, Amazon Pay, and NPCI highlighted the importance of fraud prevention, financial education, and balancing security with user experience to ensure meaningful, responsible use.

Responsible digital payments

By the end of 2024, the Alliance [online course on Responsible Digital Payments](#) had received over 1,100 enrolments, including trainings with Alliance member governments, the World Health Organization (WHO) Digital Finance team, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Center on Digital Wages for Decent Work, and corporate members including Inditex and Target.

In Côte d’Ivoire, the Alliance conducted in-person training of 1,400 health workers on responsible payments digitization. In Mexico, 199,359 people registered for **Condusef’s** Financial Literacy Certification that includes UN Principles for Responsible Digital Payments.

CONTINENTAL/REGIONAL LEVEL

AFRICA: Advancing inclusive digital payments for the success of the One African Market, especially through financial inclusion of women and youth in cross border trade

As an implementing partner of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, the Alliance supported the development and implementation of the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade, which was adopted by Heads of State and Government in early 2024. Through the Annex on Digital Payments, the Alliance is now focusing on implementing the Protocol through proof of concepts with women and youth traders, informing global agendas such as the G20 South Africa presidency, as well as driving national policies for adoption of the Protocol at country level.

Together with the AfCFTA Secretariat, the African Union (AU) Women and Youth Financial and Economic Inclusion Initiative (WYFEI 2030) Secretariat, and the African Union Development Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), the Alliance led engagements at land borders across North and East Africa to assess challenges and financial access barriers faced by women- and youth-led micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). In Egypt, led by the Central Bank of

Egypt, digital payments were activated for over 140 women-led MSMEs, in partnership with champions from the government and private sector.

AfCFTA Secretary-General and Digital Financial Inclusion Champion H.E. Wamkele Mene highlighted the significance of women and youth financial inclusion for inclusive trade at the One Africa Market at the DPI Summit in Cairo and the FinTech Summit in Nairobi, and emphasized the need for a robust DPI across Africa, including interoperable digital payments for everyone.

We look forward to a continued partnership with all Alliance members and our digital financial inclusion champions to ensure responsible digital payments are at the foundations of digital trade in the AfCFTA.

At the AfCFTA Biashara Afrika Forum, the Alliance co-hosted a High-Level Panel Session on “Enabling Seamless and Inclusive Cross-Border Digital Payments in Africa,” to discuss how to create a vibrant digital payments ecosystem that fosters inclusive growth, reduced transaction costs, and increased trade volumes across Africa.

 Better Than Cash Alliance
@BetterThan_Cash



At #BiasharaAfrika2024 in Rwanda DFI Champion @mnsanzabaganwa of @AfricanUnion explains how #WYFEI2030 aligns with the #AfCFTA agenda by empowering youth & women entrepreneurs across Africa, driving economic growth through digital payments & financial inclusion.



5:59 AM · Oct 10, 2024 · 146 Views

Expanding collaboration with regional organizations across Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, to accelerate responsible payments digitization and digital financial inclusion

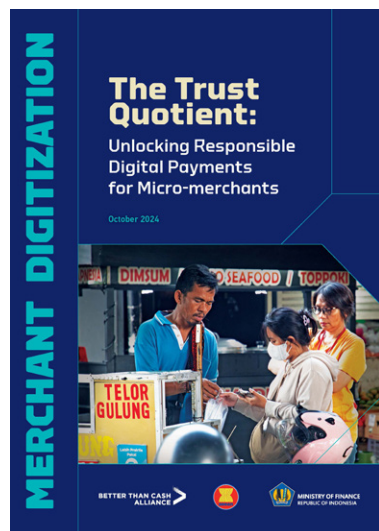
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Strengthening regional digital financial inclusion through policy and peer learning

A roadmap for fostering trust and sustained digital payment adoption and use, especially among micro-merchants.

The [ASEAN Policy Toolkit for Unlocking Responsible Digital Payments for Micro-Merchants](#) was developed in partnership with the ASEAN Working Committee on Financial Inclusion, supporting Indonesia's 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship. Endorsed in April 2024 under Lao People's Democratic Republic's ASEAN Chairmanship, the Policy Toolkit outlines trust barriers and recommends actions to mitigate risks and boost sustained digital payment use by micro-merchants.

Outlook to 2025: This ASEAN engagement will span three successive chairmanships, with a 2025 workshop under Malaysia's chair to develop implementation pathways for priority recommendations.



70 million MSMEs across ASEAN are transitioning to digital financial systems, with 80 percent of financially included adults making or receiving digital payments in 2021.

Alliance research highlights that micro-merchants encounter challenges such as data privacy concerns, unexpected charges, and complex recourse mechanisms that risk their continued use of digital payments.



Latin America and the Caribbean

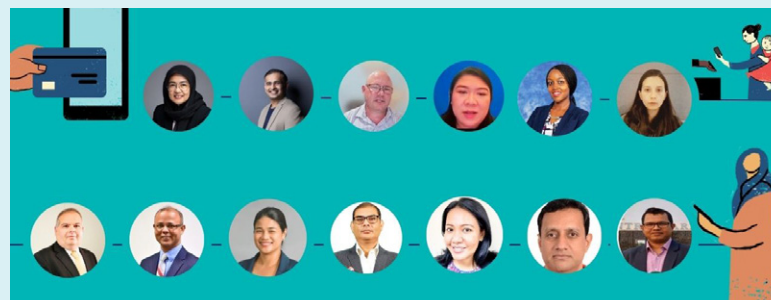
Together with CAF – Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean – the Alliance is developing an action plan aligned with the UN Principles for Responsible Digital Payments, which focuses on increased access to digital payments for climate resilience to guide the creation of inclusive financial products.



Scaling responsible instant payments: insights from the Alliance's peer exchange

The Alliance convened central banks and payment system leaders from around the world for a three-part peer-exchange series on scaling responsible instant payments.

The learning series highlighted practical strategies for scaling instant payments with trust and interoperability at the core. Insights from successful implementations – such as Jordan's CliQ and Brazil's PIX – have directly informed country-level support, such as in Colombia's pre-implementation design of an inclusive payment system (Bre-B) and in Pakistan's RAAST initiative, where the Alliance is helping identify pricing and policy levers to drive adoption.



NATIONAL POLICIES TO ACCELERATE USE OF DIGITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES (DFS) AND INCLUSIVE DPI

ETHIOPIA Implementation of first-ever National Digital Payments Strategy (NDPS) leading to 110 million accounts opened

More than 90 percent of agreed actions from Ethiopia's NDPS have been executed, including several policies and regulations on transforming the financial sector. Proofs of concepts are further being implemented in key sectors for scale, including agriculture and health.

Over 100 million mobile wallets have been opened since 2021, with a sixfold growth in transaction volume, from 48 million transactions in 2022 to 298 million in 2023. The proportion of the adult population with a bank account increased from 22 percent in 2014 to almost 50 percent today.

The Alliance is now working closely with the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) to develop the NDPS 2.0, focused on deepening usage of digital payments – particularly among SMEs, women, and rural populations. To kick off the process, NBE, with the support of the Alliance, held the inaugural National Digital Payments Conference in Addis Ababa.



THE PHILIPPINES Digital payment uptake from 1 percent in 2013 to over 50 percent in 2024

Using a policy simulator on Impact Pathways for Digital Payments jointly developed with the Alliance Secretariat, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) implementation of its Digital Payments Transformation Roadmap 2020–2023 has seen significant progress in the adoption of digital payments, with digital retail payments rising from 1 percent in 2013, to over 50 percent in 2024.

Further, between 2022 and 2024, some 1.5 million merchant accounts for QR Ph person-to-merchant (P2M) have been created; 60 percent of businesses in the country are led by women. The volume of QR Ph P2M transactions has grown around 28 times since 2022.



INDIA

Leveraging gender-disaggregated data across financial institutions to drive product and policy innovations for women entrepreneurs

The Alliance collaborated with the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH) on its Swanari program to launch the [Swanari Gender Data Observatory](#) (SGDO), in response to the 10-point [Call to Action for Reaching Financial Equality for Women](#).

By consolidating and analyzing gender-disaggregated data across 300 indicators, this unique initiative seeks to bridge the gender gap in financial inclusion through catalyzing innovation, informing gender-intentional policy, and promoting the inclusion of women entrepreneurs.

Next steps include standardizing gender-disaggregated data collection across the financial sector, catalyzing the design and scale-up of DFS tailored for women entrepreneurs, and sharing lessons learned and tools to inform similar central bank-led gender data initiatives globally.



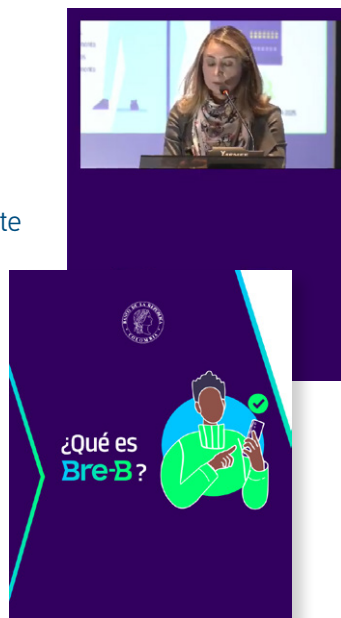
COLOMBIA

Advancing DPI to develop inclusive digital payment ecosystems and increase uptake by merchants

The Alliance is partnering with Banco de la República to embed interoperability – a core principle of the [UN Principles for Responsible Digital Payments](#) – into Colombia's new low-value instant fast payment system (FPS), [Bre-B](#). Modeled on global best practices and informed by peer exchanges with Ghana, Jordan, and the Philippines, Bre-B will launch in May 2025. By 2028, it is projected to financially include 5.1 million Colombians, contribute US\$282 million to gross domestic product (GDP) growth, and enhance savings and financial resilience, particularly for women and remote communities through mobile banking.

To ensure broad participation, Banco de la República established a [Payment Systems Forum](#), engaging regulators, banks, fintechs, and electronic money issuers to co-design operating rules, technical frameworks, and settlement processes. The Alliance provided technical assistance, integrating best practices into Colombia's DPI strategy.

Outlook to 2025: Ongoing support for regulatory reporting and data analytics to monitor systemic risks, the creation of public communication materials to build trust, and exploring cross-border payment expansion to integrate Colombia into the global digital economy.



BENIN

Strengthening DPI and digital financial inclusion coordination and policy to advance implementation of the One Africa Market

The Alliance supported the adoption of new policies and institutional reforms advancing responsible digitization across Benin's public, microfinance, e-commerce, and finance sectors. A [joint decree](#) by the Ministers of Economy and Finance and of Microfinance and Social Affairs established Francophone Africa's first coordinating unit (Permanent Secretariat) to oversee DFI and DPI, with Alliance support.

Early results include:

- One third of Benin's revenue collection has been digitized, and 20 percent of its public services – including payments – are now available on the national public services portal.
- A government [decree](#), the first in the region, implemented with the Alliance and financial service providers (FSPs), is condemning gender-based discrimination in access to credit. Although women generate ~70 percent of Benin's trade-related GDP, they previously received less than 40 percent of available credit.
- Digitizing the microfinance sector has been identified as key to boosting MSME financing, economic opportunity, and trade.

South-South cooperation for responsible payments digitization

Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal have set the example for South-South cooperation with activation of four cooperation agreements to scale responsible digitization in health and microfinance sectors.



A photograph of a family of four in a shop. A man with a beard and a striped shirt is holding a blue box. A man with glasses in an orange shirt is holding a smartphone. A woman in a colorful sari is smiling, and a young girl with a braid is looking up at the man with the phone. The background is filled with colorful products on shelves.

2.

Private sector

ALLIANCE WORK IN AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS

Global companies advancing digital payments and financial inclusion

Alliance member associations, the World Cocoa Foundation and Sustainable Coffee Challenge continued to prioritize and implement digital payments along their member companies' supply chains. For example, coffee giant Sucafina is investing to understand farmer experiences of wage digitization in their countries of operation and has already digitized 100 percent of its payments in Uganda. Sucafina is now working to digitize payments in Indonesia, Rwanda, and other countries for efficiency and shared prosperity.

The Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP), with which the Alliance worked on a study on responsible digital payments in Rwanda's tea sector, has facilitated the Alliance's initiative with the Tea Association of Malawi (TAML), and is now focusing on pilot design to digitize payments in Sri Lanka's tea sector. The International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA) endorsed leveraging responsible digital payments to accelerate women's economic participation in the coffee value chain.



Making payment digitization responsible in the tea sectors of Malawi and Rwanda

Malawi

A study by TAML revealed that over US\$54.8 million circulates in cash annually within Malawi's tea communities. In response, the Alliance is partnering with TAML to build a responsible digital payment ecosystem for over 82,000 people in the sector.

Next steps: The Alliance and TAML will conduct a pilot in selected tea estates, starting at Makandi and its 7,000 workers, with selected FSPs in 2025, to address barriers and find solutions for enhancing the adoption of digital payments, especially among women tea workers and micro-merchants. This includes worker sensitization and financial literacy programs, capacity enhancement for payroll teams to integrate digital payments into estate operations, and continuous monitoring and data collection to track financial inclusion impact.

Rwanda

Together with ETP and the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB), Alliance research identified six recommendations to guide pilot initiatives to scale responsible payment digitization in Rwanda's tea and coffee sectors.

Digitizing coffee value chain payments in Ethiopia and Guatemala to drive farmer financial inclusion and climate resilience

Ethiopia

Ethiopia, Africa's largest coffee producer, relies on over 4 million smallholder farmers, for whom adapting to climate change is crucial. Together with the Ethiopia Coffee and Tea Authority, the Alliance facilitated a pilot with Oromia Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union (OCFCU) and FSPs to enhance digital payments targeting 500,000 farmers. As a result of the first pilot with 2,500 farmers, OCFCU started paying carbon credits into farmers' bank accounts. To prioritize women coffee farmers, the Alliance partnered with the Ethiopia Women in Coffee Association to embed DFS into their programming.

Next steps: Continue engagement with FSPs and primary co-ops, as well as farmer sensitization and onboarding, to digitize further transactions. Similarly work on expanding the merchant network in the farmers' area to drive adoption and usage for all of OCFCU's 500,000 farmers within the next two years; and scale to other coffee farmers' cooperative unions and food value chains.



Guatemala

In Guatemala, climate change threatens smallholder farmers, with droughts affecting up to 55 percent of their production. To combat this, the Alliance Secretariat and Anacafé, the national coffee association, are driving payment digitization to enhance climate resilience, financial inclusion, and women's empowerment in the coffee sector.

A joint study revealed that cash transactions cost the sector US\$6.8 million per harvest in hidden losses. While many small-scale farmers and workers rely on cash for daily expenses, transitioning to digital payments can cut costs, improve efficiency, and strengthen economic stability – especially for women, who make up 26 percent of the workforce and manage one third of production units.

To accelerate this shift, the Alliance and Anacafé are piloting a digital footprint initiative, unlocking access to credit, micro-insurance, and financial tools that help farmers mitigate climate risks and build long-term resilience.

Responsible payment digitization in the cocoa sector in Ghana and Indonesia to improve women's economic opportunities

Ghana

In Ghana, the Alliance continued to collaborate with the Ministry of Finance, Ghana Cocobod, and the Bank of Ghana to digitize the cocoa value chain. Advisory support is being provided to integrate digital payments into the Cocoa Management System (CMS), including a pilot to enhance farmers' capacity, enable companies to integrate payment processes with CMS, and collaborate with FSPs to embed the UN Principles for Responsible Digital Payments. Lessons will be shared with other value chains in Ghana, Ethiopia (coffee), and Malawi and Rwanda (tea). The pilot will continue into 2025, with plans to scale it to nearly 1 million cocoa-farming households across the country.

Indonesia

Alliance research – Scaling Responsible Digital Payments in the Indonesian Cocoa Sector – developed in partnership with the Indonesian Government and the cocoa industry, identified a US\$710 million cash per year opportunity, ripe for digitization, in line with national digital infrastructure advancements and global sustainability imperatives. This work and its recommendations have already catalyzed partnerships between leading cocoa buyers and FSPs to boost financial access for Sulawesi's cocoa farmers, and will further be advanced – with the government and key industry players – to ensure responsible payment digitization along the cocoa value chain.



Farmers' voices



“It’s not just about technology - it’s about trust, timing, and what makes sense for our daily lives.”

The audio series shares their needs, aspirations, and experiences in farmers' own words - underscoring why responsible, tailored digital financial solutions are essential.

DIGITIZING WAGES FOR DECENT WORK

Global progress on responsible wage digitization

The ILO Global Centre on Digital Wages for Decent Work, the Gates Foundation, and the Alliance released a brief, [Promoting responsible digital wage payments](#), which serves as a key advocacy instrument and playbook for the ILO Global Centre and its local teams. The brief aims to propel digital wage payment initiatives in collaboration with the private sector and government bodies.

Alliance member companies, including Gap, H&M, and Target, have already digitized the vast majority of payments to their workers in Tier 1 facilities, where over 60 percent of the workforce are women. H&M has included the [UN Principles for Responsible Digital Payments](#) into its supplier management procedures and has digitized wage systems in 84 percent of its 876 Tier 1 facilities, an estimated 864,000 workers since 2017. Gap has increased the share of Tier 1 suppliers offering digital wage payment systems from 68 percent to 98 percent, including roll-out to more than 1,000 supply chain managers and business partners since 2017. For Target, of the 108,889 workers in its Tier 1 supplier factories, 86 percent are being paid digitally. Target adapted the Alliance training of trainers on the [UN Principles for Responsible Digital Payments](#), including roll-out to more than 1,000 supply chain managers and business partners.



Wage digitization in Ethiopia's industrial parks

As part of Ethiopia's National Digital Payments Strategy, the Alliance and IDH – the Sustainable Trade Initiative are driving responsible wage digitization to foster a digital payment ecosystem within the country's industrial parks. Recognized as a priority use case for digital payments adoption, this initiative aims to enhance living wages and worker well-being and prosperity, particularly for the garment sector, where women comprise 75 percent of the workforce.

At Bole Lemi Industrial Park, where 23,000 workers earn an average monthly salary of ETB 2,500, cash transactions circulate totaling US\$52.8 million annually. The pilot program will focus on digitizing these wages, reducing reliance on cash, and increasing financial inclusion, while further looking at digitizing the entire ecosystem around factories, to ensure meaningful use of digital wages for workers.

Insights from this pilot will be used for scaling wage digitization across Ethiopia's industrial sector, supporting broader private sector adoption of responsible digital payments.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN MERCHANTS & MSMEs THROUGH ACCESS TO DIGITAL PAYMENTS

A regional roadmap in West Africa to drive merchants' digital payment adoption and financial inclusion

The Alliance has established a permanent High-Level Steering Committee, bringing together leading institutions in Africa such as the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) Commission, the African Union Commission (AUC), the AfCFTA Secretariat, the Federation of West Africa Chambers of Commerce, and the WAEMU Federation of Tech Companies. This Committee is mandated to develop a roadmap to incentivize merchants' adoption of digital payments in the region by overcoming structural barriers such as the lack of interoperability, to enhance trade in the realization of the One African Market.

At the GITEX Africa Summit held in Morocco in 2024, the Alliance facilitated three high-level sessions with members of the [High-Level Steering Committee](#) to disseminate the region's priorities for advancing the merchant digitization agenda at WAEMU and continental levels.

Specific policy interventions informing roadmap implementation include a shared [mobile banking platform](#) to improve merchants' access to micro-finance opportunities, and an interoperable regional payment platform by Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO) to facilitate cross-border transactions. Proofs of concepts with merchants will be conducted to inform and accelerate policies and their implementation.

The roadmap is further informed by the Alliance's work with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, on addressing the barriers to digital payments adoption by merchants, including a launched Merchant Payments Tracker. The number of merchants adopting digital payments has gone from 600 in 2022 to [300,000](#) in 2024. Some [60 percent](#) of merchants in the country are women.

Addressing barriers and incentives for merchants' digital payment adoption in Pakistan

Building on its earlier engagement with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and work on merchant payment digitization, the Alliance is currently working with SBP and industry participants on simplifying and accelerating the roll-out of instant merchant payments, including actions to address the key issues to digital payment adoption among merchants such as pricing, awareness/communication strategies, and robust recourse mechanisms.

In 2023, Pakistan's instant payment system RAAST had launched the P2M use case. Consequently, overall transactions grew from 147 million in 2023 to nearly 500 million in 2024. The Alliance's work is supporting SBP's focus on promoting responsible digital payments adoption through RAAST, including establishing a National Merchant Payments Working Group to drive coordination between industry and public stakeholders. According to the Small & Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), there are more than 5.2 million SMEs in Pakistan.





3.

Digitizing payments in health and social protection

HEALTH

Global advocacy on health payment digitization with WHO and the Global Fund leading to implementation

The majority of Alliance member WHO's digital finance team passed the [UN Principles for Responsible Digital Payments](#) course. WHO has already paid more than 2 million health workers digitally, and is now looking to integrate health worker payment digitization into overall national health digitization strategies.

The Alliance, WHO, and The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria jointly [launched](#) the Call to Action "[Health for All through Responsible Digital Payments](#)" at the Africa Health Tech Summit 2024, with recognized DFI Champion Adda Faye, CFO of the Global Fund. The call to action has been inspired by lessons learned and best practices such as Senegal's digital health insurance registration, WHO-expedited polio campaign payments, and the Global Fund's mobile transactions in Burkina Faso.

The Global Fund has made digital payments mandatory in its [grant budgeting guidelines](#). To implement the Call to Action, the Global Fund and the Alliance are now looking into driving adoption of responsible digital payments within Global Fund programs worldwide.

On the sidelines of the DPI Summit 2024, the Alliance co-hosted a session on "Transforming Healthcare with DPI," focused on interoperability and responsible digital payments. Insights from Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, India, and Zambia highlighted DPI's potential to build inclusive, sustainable health care systems globally.



Integrating health payment digitization into national digital health strategies with Alliance member governments

Ethiopia

Ethiopia's Ministry of Health (MoH), in partnership with the Alliance, launched the National Digital Health Payments Initiative. This initiative focuses on:

- integrating digital payment systems in more than 4,600 health facilities to increase efficiency in revenue collection,
- digitizing community-based health insurance payments for more than 12 million households, and
- facilitating digital payments to about 40,000 health extension workers.

Outlook for 2025: Pilots are being kicked-off with the MoH and selected FSPs, including training programs for federal, regional, zonal, and woreda health and finance staff, and the development of community-based literacy models. By utilizing mobile money and digital banking services, the MoH aims to reduce inefficiencies in financial transactions, ensuring that health care providers and recipients experience seamless payment processes, leading to better accessibility of and outcomes for the national health system.



Côte d'Ivoire

With Alliance technical advisory, the Ministers of Health and Finance signed six new decrees and circulars setting up a new Coordinating Unit to oversee health digitization, and to accelerate health payments digitization across all state-owned hospitals in Côte d'Ivoire.

- Côte d'Ivoire was the first country in West Africa to launch a national payment app (Santé CIV) to digitize health payments, now with more than 15,000 patients paying digitally in over 100 hospitals; more than 70 percent of app users are women.
- More than 1,400 health professionals were trained on the UN Principles for Responsible Digital Payments across all public hospitals.
- Building on the development and piloting phase of the Santé CIV app, next steps include digitizing patient journeys, and supporting the government with advocacy to scale beyond hospitals to all health care centers in the country.



DIGITIZING CASH TRANSFERS TO IMPROVE DELIVERY OF SOCIAL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN AID

THE PHILIPPINES Advancing digital payments for climate resilience and financial inclusion

As one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, the Philippines recognizes the importance of delivering social protection in a prompt, efficient, and transparent manner. The government, through its Department of Finance, endorsed the [Call to Action on Responsible Digital Payments for Climate Action](#), and its commitment to advancing digital solutions that strengthen both climate resilience and financial inclusion.

Building on this momentum, the Alliance has been engaging with key government agencies and development partners such as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and UNDP, to support the responsible digitization of social transfers, particularly in the context of emergency response and anticipatory action.

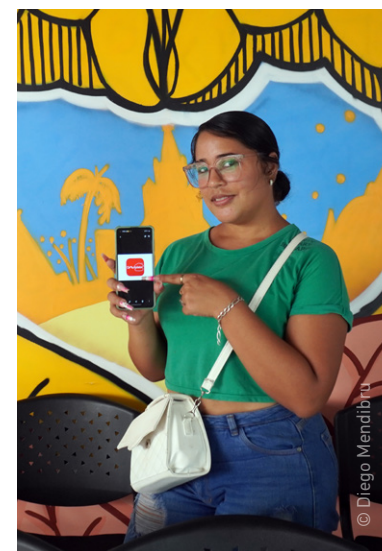


COLOMBIA

In 2023, the Alliance together with the World Food Programme (WFP), conducted a pilot to digitize cash transfers to 2,500 Venezuelan migrants, the majority of them women. A 2024 impact study, presented to representatives from Colombia's financial regulators, fintechs, and other international development organizations, revealed:

- 94 percent of respondents expressed their desire to continue using the mobile wallet,
- over 90 percent of users have created or improved their household budget,
- 95 percent of women surveyed stated the transfers strengthened their economic independence at home,
- 64 percent of women perceived an improvement in their ability to decide household expenses,
- 31 percent of respondents kept money in their mobile wallet and chose not to withdraw it as cash for at least a week,
- 19 percent reported receiving deposits for products or services from their businesses.

WFP further scaled the cash transfer pilot to two additional programs in Colombia, reaching another 3,200 people.



Communications highlights

Communications continue to advance the Alliance Secretariat's advisory and advocacy goals, including thought leadership on priority themes (e.g., financial equality) at national, regional, and global levels. Here are some highlights in addition to those shared throughout the report.

Leading news outlets

The Alliance Secretariat's achievements, working with members and partners, in transitioning from cash to responsible digital payments attracted attention from national, regional, and global media outlets, including GovInsider, African Business, Business Fights Poverty, the World Economic Forum, the Africa Report, MSN, FinDevGateway, Jeune Afrique, and The Banker.



Website

The Alliance website attracted 59,000 active users with significant international engagement, particularly from India (18,000) and the United States (9,400). The website saw active users from diverse regions, including Ethiopia, Germany, and the Philippines, emphasizing broad global impact and outreach efforts. Notably, Singapore experienced a remarkable 756 percent increase in active users.

Organic Search continues to be the largest source of new users, with 44,000 sessions, underscoring the effectiveness of the content in reaching users through search engines. Users continue to engage with the site over multiple weeks, reflecting sustained interest in the content.

Since its 2022 launch, the Alliance's [UN Principles for Responsible Digital Payments](#) online learning course, delivered in partnership with the [Digital Frontiers Institute](#), has attracted over 500 participants.

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Communications highlights

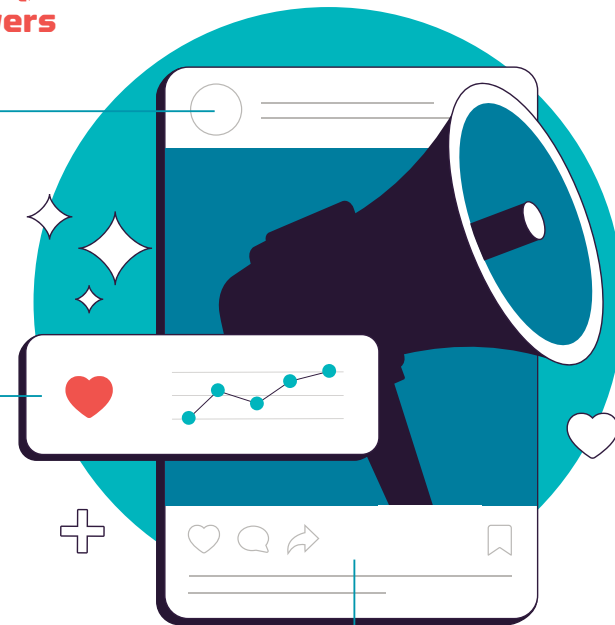
Social media

The Alliance's digital communications strategy has yielded noteworthy results, significantly enhancing its online presence and engagement. The Alliance achieved an impressive 410,400 impressions across all its social media channels. This effort has grown overall audience to 31,146 followers, marking a 15.4 percent year-on-year increase.

Alliance social media profiles have seen a substantial rise in engagement, with 32,877 interactions – 14.6 percent growth from 2023. This increase in engagement reflects a stronger connection and interest from audiences. In addition, the Alliance boosted its engagement rate to 7.6 percent, representing a 66.7 percent improvement in per-impression interaction – showcasing success in creating more compelling and interactive content.

One of the most notable achievements of the strategy is the significant growth in people clicking links, which reached 22,337 – a remarkable 68.7 percent increase from the previous year. This demonstrates effectiveness in directing the audience to actionable content and driving meaningful interactions. The total audience has grown to 31,146 followers, with LinkedIn emerging as the top-performing platform with 3,674 new followers, a 28.7 percent increase over the previous year.

31,146
followers

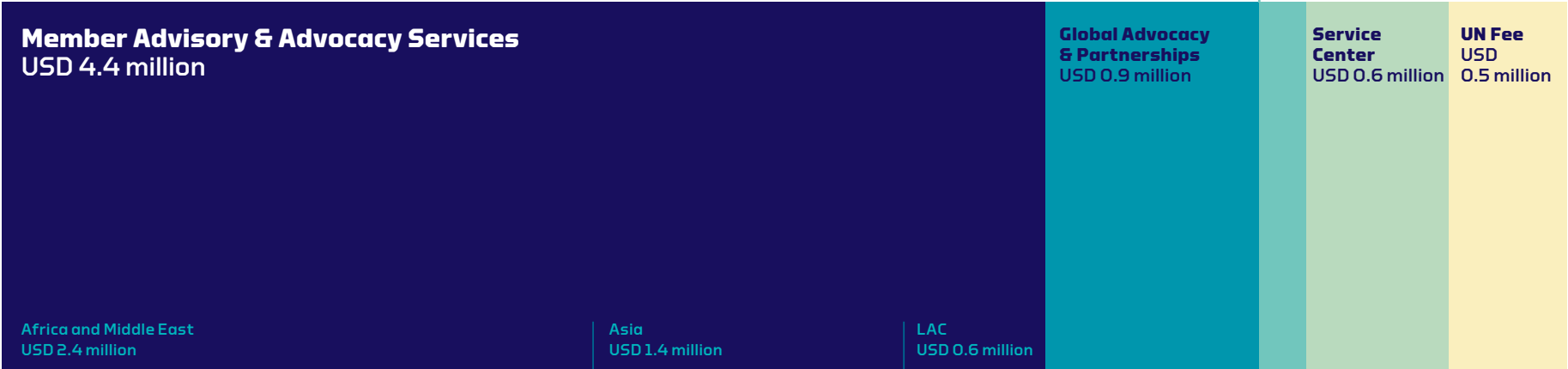


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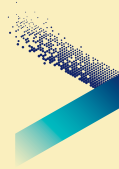
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Budget

2024 Alliance expenditure



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ET DE LA SOUVERAINETÉ
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Liberté
Égalité
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Federal Ministry
for Economic Affairs
and Energy