

# New Network Readiness Index Report Reveals Most Future-Ready Societies

## NRI 2019 Highlights

- *Sweden, Singapore, and the Netherlands are the most future-ready societies, according to the latest Network Readiness Index (NRI) report.*
- *A collective prosperous future can only be achieved by integrating people and technology with the right governance structures.*
- *Technological innovation is a powerful tool to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*

## Washington, DC, 15 December 2019

– The three countries most likely to reap the benefits of the digital future are Sweden, Singapore, and the Netherlands, according to the 2019 Network Readiness Index (NRI) report. Ranking the network readiness of 121 economies, the study also reveals that the United States and other Northern and Western European countries are among the world's most future-ready societies because of their success in combining technological opportunities and human wellbeing.

The Network Readiness Index, first launched in 2002 by the World Economic Forum has been redesigned by its co-editors, Soumitra Dutta and Bruno Lanvin, to reflect how technology and people need to be integrated within an effective governance structure in order to have the right impact on our economy, society and the environment.

*“Technology today is not regarded as it was twenty years ago. Its social, environmental and organizational impacts should be perceived to be at least as important as its economic potential”, notes Bruno Lanvin.*

The redesigned NRI recognizes the pervasiveness of digital technologies in today's networked world and therefore rests on four fundamental dimensions: Technology, People, Governance and Impact. This holistic approach means that the NRI covers issues ranging from future technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) to the role of the digital economy in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

*“People and technology will increasingly interact as collaborators and partners. To ensure a positive and inclusive impact on society and business, appropriate governance mechanisms need to be implemented to address issues related to trust, security, and inclusion”, says Soumitra Dutta.*

The Network Readiness Index 2019 ranks a total of 121 economies based on their performances across 62 variables. The top performers in this year's index are high-income countries from Northern and Western Europe along with Singapore and the United States.

*“As the evolution of the Digital Age unfolds, it is imperative that the requirements to derive maximum benefit from ICT be clearly understood and benchmarked for nations to measure progress. The NRI report serves as a beacon that illuminates the path to success in this new Age.” Dr. Jim Poisant, Secretary General, WITSA.*

Country	NRI rank	NRI score
Sweden	1	82.65
Singapore	2	82.13
Netherlands	3	81.78
Norway	4	81.30
Switzerland	5	81.08
Denmark	6	81.08
Finland	7	80.34
United States	8	80.32
Germany	9	78.23
United Kingdom	10	77.73

The NRI 2019 champions were already top-ranked in the most recent NRI (of 2016) and one finding is that this stickiness in the rankings reflects the investment in a supportive ecosystem for digital leadership put in place across all key stakeholders. One concern that arises from the continued investment by high-income countries in their technology infrastructure is ***the persistence of a technological divide at the global level.***

Another key message emerging from the analysis is that ***the ability to integrate people and technology with the right governance structures is key to a collective prosperous future.*** The positive impact of technologies will not be achieved unless we are able to set up effective governance mechanisms to integrate technology with the three key stakeholder groups – individuals, businesses, and governments.

A third message of the NRI 2019 is that ***technological innovation is a powerful tool to achieve the SDGs.*** In the face of growing distrust vis-à-vis governments (compounded by privacy concerns) on one hand, and technological innovations on the other (artificial intelligence and cybersecurity being two areas in

point in this regard), it is critically important to rebuild the human face and values base of information technology.

The 2019 NRI is being released by the Portulans Institute, a Washington D.C. based technology and innovation think tank, in collaboration with the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA), a leading recognized international voice of the global ICT industry.

*“WITSA sincerely appreciates being selected as a 2019 NRI, Knowledge Partner. We consider this report to be critical for Global ICT development.” Yvonne Chiu, Chairman, WITSA.*

The 2019 NRI complete report can be downloaded here, the Executive Summary here, or you can choose to navigate it at [networkreadinessindex.org](http://networkreadinessindex.org) starting in December 18th. The NRI December 18th global launch is hosted by the Global Governance Centre at the Graduate Institute Geneva.



## About the NRI:

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The Network Readiness Index (NRI) was first published in 2002 and provided a holistic framework for assessing the multi-faceted impact of ICT on society and the development of nations. Until 2016, the NRI was part of the Global Information Technology Report (GITR) published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), Cornell University and INSEAD. The NRI was forward-looking. In many ways, it anticipated many of the aspects which would become critical in the following years. Early on, the NRI identified the three key stakeholders for ICT: individuals/society, businesses, and governments, and included elements of ICT application that were novel for the time—for example, a focus on the political environment and quality of regulations. At a time when the primary concerns in ICT revolved around infrastructure issues, the NRI provided a forward-looking and holistic perspective on the application of ICT within national economies.

The NRI rapidly developed into an influential global benchmark for the application and utilization of

ICT. Many economies utilized the NRI to design their ICT strategies, and the NRI was used and frequently quoted by leaders from the public and private sectors. Over the ensuing two decades, the NRI framework underwent one major revision, which allowed an explicit focus on the impact of ICT. Despite the challenges inherent to collecting data from more than 120 economies, the NRI chose to retain its extensive global coverage and evolved into a trusted global benchmark of the use of ICT for development and competitiveness.

Earlier this year (2019), due to some internal re-organizations and changed priorities, the WEF handed over the production of the NRI to Soumitra Dutta and Bruno Lanvin. This provided an opportune moment to revisit the NRI framework and make it future-ready. Over the last decade, ICT has become more integrated with our lives than we could have ever anticipated. This has in turn raised important issues of trust, governance, and impact that have become critical in recent years.

## About the Portulans Institute:

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Founded in 2019 by Soumitra Dutta, Bruno Lanvin and Carolina Rossini, the Portulans Institute (PI) is an independent nonprofit, nonpartisan research and educational institute based in Washington DC. Our areas of expertise include technology competitiveness, innovation readiness, and people and global talent. Our mission includes:

- To develop cross-community knowledge and dialogue on how people, technology and innovation contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth.

- To inform policymakers by producing independent, rigorous metrics and data-based research.
- To collaborate with private sector leaders in driving a business agenda that invests in people, technology and innovation for a prosperous common future.
- To host and co-organize events and conferences on the above issues affecting human-centric sustainable economic prosperity.

## About WITSA:

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The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) is the leading recognized international voice of the global ICT industry, whose members from over 80 countries and economies represent more than 90 percent of the world ICT market. WITSA's vision is "Fulfilling the Promise of the Digital Age." When everyone on earth has access and is benefiting from ICT, WITSA's vision will be realized. WITSA is dedicated to advocating policies that advance industry growth and development; facilitating international trade and investment in ICT products and services; strengthening WITSA's national industry associations; and providing members with a broad network of professional contacts.

WITSA members are leaders in a globally interconnected marketplace. Because the challenges facing the ICT industry are undisputedly global in nature, WITSA members work together to achieve a shared vision on important issues of common interest. WITSA makes it possible for its members — ranging from Mongolia and Argentina to Kenya and the United States — to identify common issues and priorities, exchange valuable information, and present a united position on industry issues. For more information on WITSA, please visit [www.witsa.org](http://www.witsa.org).



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