



POLICY BRIEF: DIGITAL INCLUSION IN ALBANIA

July 2025

Current situation, challenges, and recommendations

Digital inclusion is not explicitly defined in Albanian legislation, though its components appear across various strategies, typically as broadband access, digital literacy, and reduced disparities. Vulnerable groups are acknowledged but not clearly defined, and policies mainly emphasize infrastructure over skills and accessibility. For experts, Albania is undergoing patchy digitalization rather than digital transformation, and it only partially aligns with EU standards. Efforts remain fragmented, underfunded, and lack systematic involvement of civil society and marginalized communities.

Box 1: Vulnerable groups at risk of digital exclusion ²



Older adults (limited digital skills and accessible support)



Persons with disabilities (inaccessible platforms and limited assistive technologies)

Rural residents (poor infrastructure and limited digital learning opportunities)



Low-income households (lack of access to devices and stable internet)

Roma and Egyptian communities (multiple, intersecting forms of exclusion)

Transgender individuals (discrimination and limited access to digital services)



Young people not in education, employment, or training (limited structured digital learning pathways)



Women and girls, especially in rural areas (restricted access and time constraints)

Unemployed individuals (few opportunities for digital upskilling)

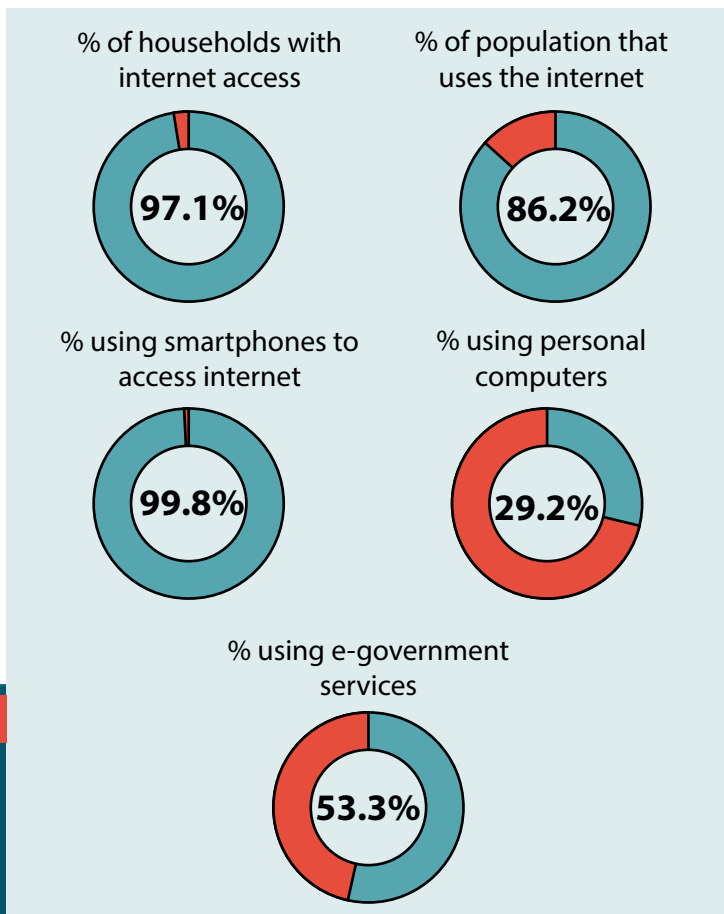


Figure 1: Basic indicators of digital inclusion
Sources: Instat, 2023a, 2023b, 2024¹

Individuals with low levels of formal education (limited digital literacy)

Children cared for by older adults (lack of support for digital access and learning)

Smallholder farmers (weak infrastructure, fragmented agricultural information systems)

¹ Instat. (2023a). *Income and Living Conditions in Albania*. <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/social-condition/income-and-living-conditions-in-albania/>; Instat. (2023b). *Survey on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) usage in Households and by Individuals in 2023*. <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/social-condition/information-and-communication-technologies-ict-usage-in-households-and-by-individuals/publication/2023/survey-on-information-and-communication-technologies-ict-usage-in-households-and-by-individuals-in-2023/>; Instat. (2024). *Survey on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) usage in Households and by Individuals in 2024*. <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/social-condition/information-and-communication-technologies-ict-usage-in-households-and-by-individuals/publication/2024/survey-on-information-and-communication-technologies-ict-usage-in-households-and-by-individuals-in-2024/>

² Based on information collected from interviews and focus groups.

Key challenges

Low digital literacy leads to reliance on others for accessing digital services, resulting in hidden costs and data privacy risks.

People with disabilities and farmers face digital exclusion due to inaccessible platforms, lack of assistive technologies, limited digital skills, poor connectivity, and fragmented systems.

Although digital skills are part of the curriculum, weak infrastructure, ineffective teacher training, and lack of resources widen the digital divide for students from low-income families.

Digital health services are underdeveloped, with discontinued pilot programs and reliance on informal tools, leaving patients, especially in remote areas, without reliable digital access to healthcare.

Digital policies are often developed without community input, leading to strategies that reflect institutional priorities rather than the needs of affected populations.

Despite major infrastructure investments, digital inclusion efforts are hindered by underfunding for support, accessibility, and training, as well as limited local government capacity for implementation.

Lack of transparency in digital inclusion funding and limited focus on user experience in monitoring leave vulnerable groups overlooked in both data and policy outcomes.

e-Albania users widely reported frustration over the absence of accessible help or complaint mechanisms, leaving those with limited digital skills without support to navigate digital services.

excluded users and build trust, with services offered free of charge by local institutions.

Digital transformation should prioritize public communication and citizen engagement by ensuring transparency in impact, funding, and progress, while also promoting awareness of services and digital rights through national campaigns.

Targeted, community-based digital skills training is essential to bridging digital gaps and promoting inclusive participation.

Mainstreaming digital inclusion across health, education, employment, and financial services is key to closing persistent access gaps for older adults, people with disabilities, rural residents, and low-income users.

Inclusive digital policymaking requires regularly updated, disaggregated data on access, use, and skills across all vulnerable groups to inform policy design, evaluation, and progress tracking.

Promising policy example: The e-Albania Corner Initiative

In 2023, the civil society organization Walk in My Shoes identified a significant barrier to digital access among Roma and Egyptian communities: many community members were unable to use the e-Albania platform independently. To access online services, individuals frequently visited internet centers but often forgot their login credentials—making them vulnerable to exploitation. In some cases, their accounts were blocked, and they were demanded payments of 500 lek (approximately 5 euros) to restore access. In response, the organization launched the e-Albania Corner Initiative, operating in nine localities across the country. These support hubs, integrated into local after-school programs and functioning three times a week, provide hands-on assistance with accessing and navigating e-Albania. To raise awareness and promote uptake, the team conducted a grassroots information campaign using door-to-door leaflet distribution and posters in prominent community spaces. The impact has been significant: over 600 e-Albania accounts created and more than 1,500 official documents downloaded, including school registration forms, housing and property documents, pension applications, and ID/passport forms. While the initiative primarily targets Roma and Egyptian communities, approximately 30% of beneficiaries come from other vulnerable groups, demonstrating broader community need. Launched in 2023, the initiative is ongoing and serves as a scalable model for inclusive digital service delivery.

Key recommendations

The government should establish a unified digital inclusion framework aligned with EU standards, ensuring that inclusion is integrated into all aspects of digital transformation.

Digital literacy initiatives should be continuous and comprehensive, covering not only basic skills but also digital rights, data protection, and cybersecurity, with delivery supported by partnerships across education, civil society, and local institutions.

Public platforms like e-Albania should be made more user-friendly through simplified navigation, plain language instructions, human support, and instructional videos to improve accessibility.

A hybrid model that maintains in-person public services alongside digital platforms can support digitally