

Thinking Through Alternative Digital Futures

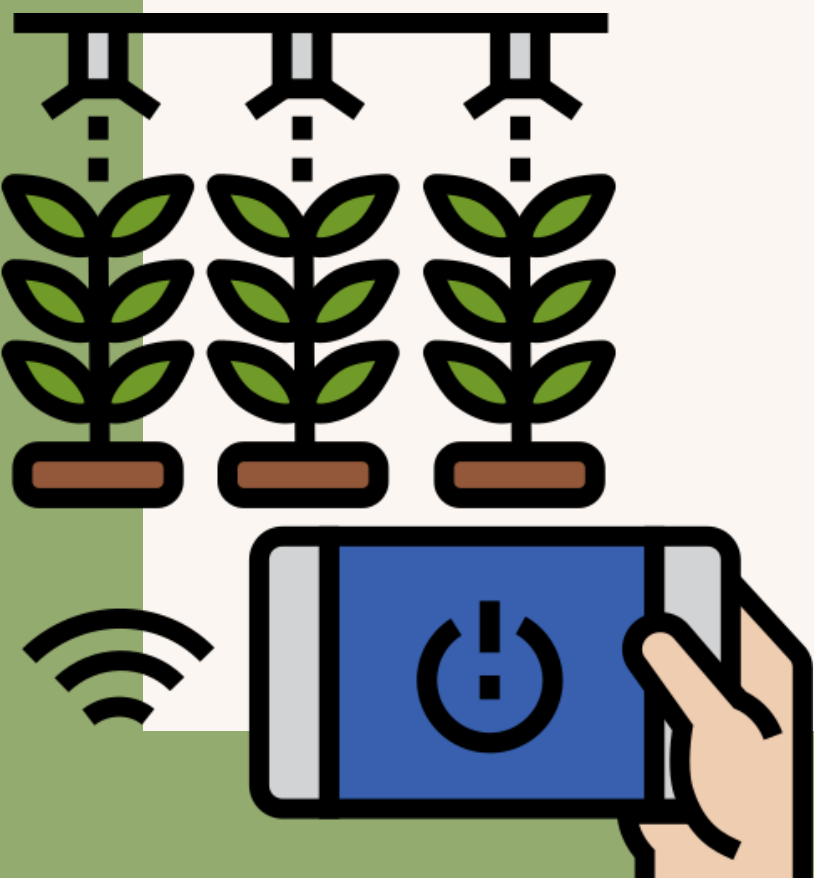


July 20th, 2024
IT for Change



Fair.Green.Global.
Dialogue and dissent

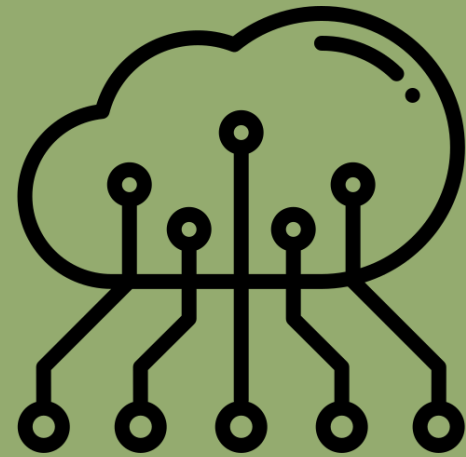
What is the Digital Economy?





01.

Digitisation versus
Digitalization



02.

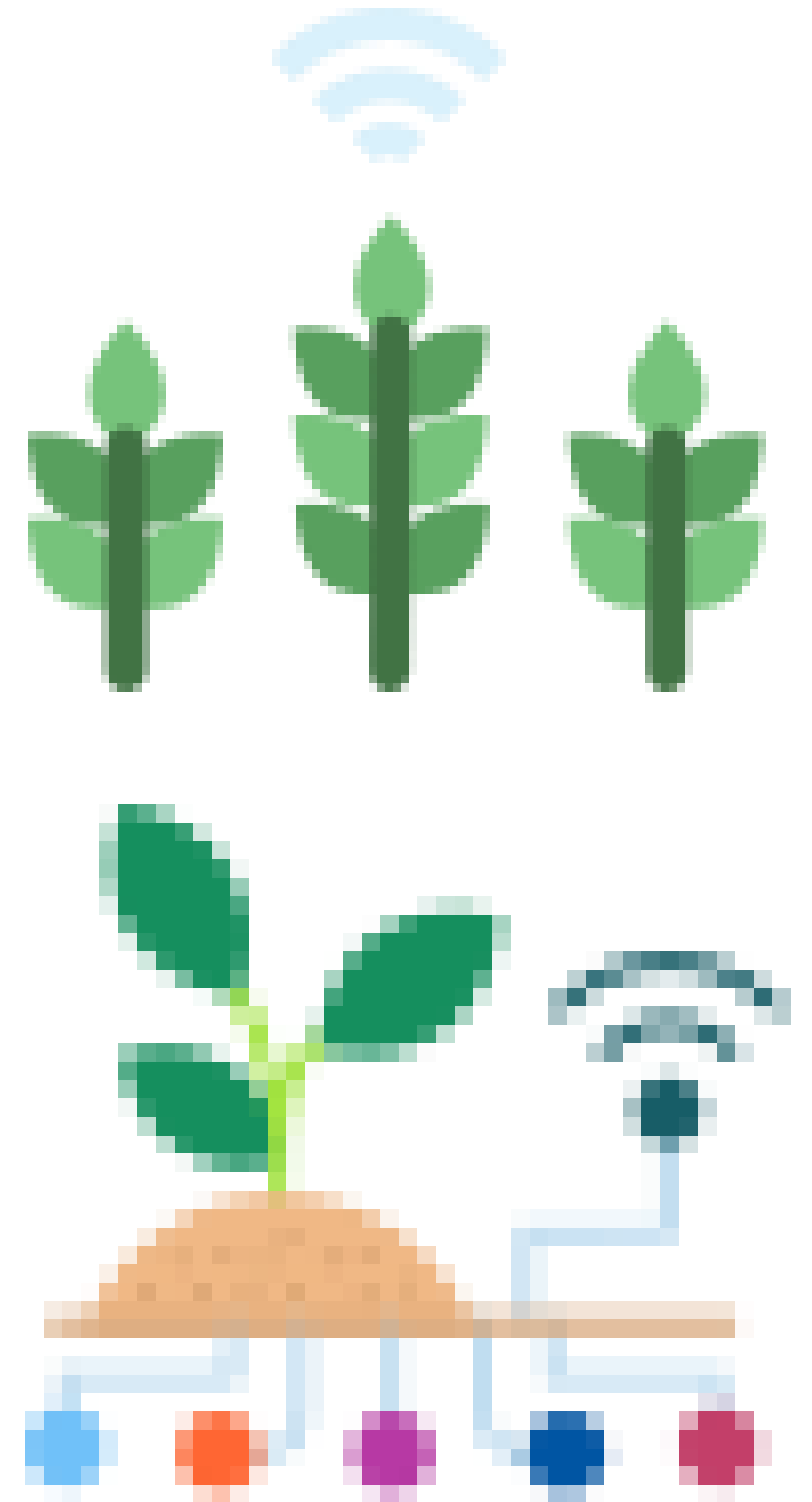
Big Data



03.

Digital Infrastructures

Uses of Digital Technology in Agricultural and Environmental Management



Types of Technologies Used



Big Food x Big Data x Big Tech

Big Food controls
most of the major
markets

Big Food
positioned as
savour of food
sytstems

Financialisation of food
sector

Technofinance fix

‘Overall, this digital agricultural revolution is being driven by the low cost of collecting data on everything from soil conditions to animal health and crop development along with weather station data and data collected by drones and satellites. The promise of these technologies is more food, produced on less land, with fewer inputs and a smaller environmental footprint.’

([Weersink et. al. 2018](#)).

Agriculture 4.0

Data used to grow,
process, track,
trade, sell

Targeted
interventions

More output with less
input

Addresses
sustainability
issues

Climate-smart
interventions

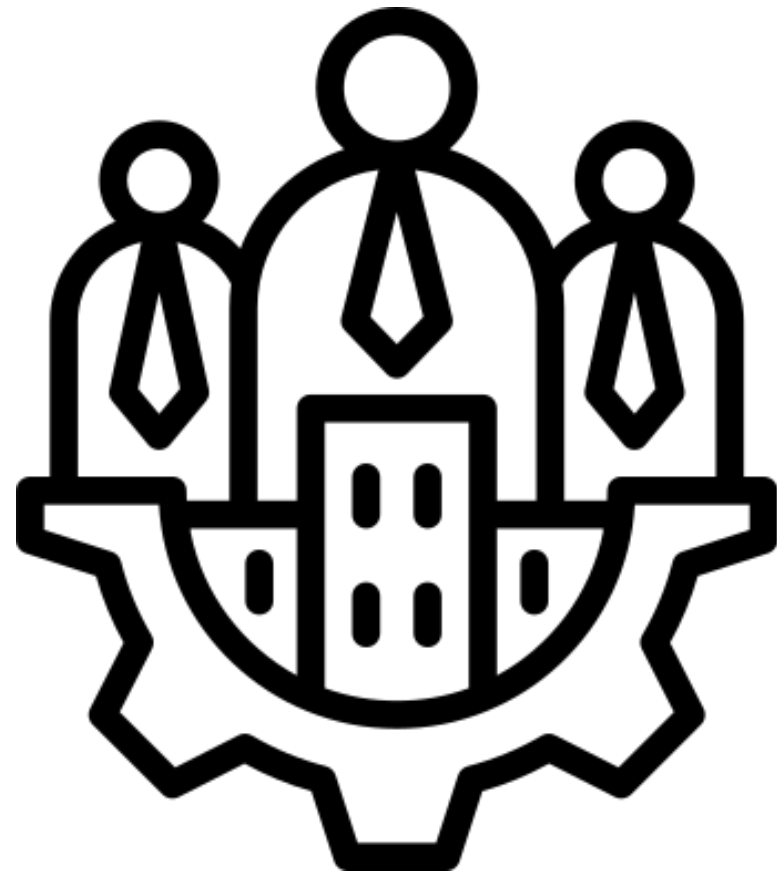
Removes
middlemen

The (further) embedding of private capital in agriculture

- GAFAM and other large tech companies are taking a large role in the agriculture sector
- Agriculture and tech firms are partnering
- Firms in the agriculture sector are partnering with tech firms to expand their reach
- Information is commodified
- Data acquired on one operation is used to sell products for other operations

The (further) embedding of private capital in agriculture

- Proprietary products
- Restricts farmer autonomy, creates technology lockins
- Unclear data governance protocols in the absence of sufficient regulation



“[E]nvironmental narratives are legitimizing a digital transition in the food system that might otherwise raise critical questions about issues such as data sovereignty, increased surveillance and corporate control over farming practices.”
([Prause et. al, 2021](#))

Potential implications of unchecked corporate-led digitalisation

01. Unequal access to data

02. Digital control and value extraction

03. Widening gaps

04. Expansion of monopoly power and platform dependencies

05. Replacement of state services

06. Ecological implications

07. Complexities of farm and ecological environments

Considerations for digital rights

Account for data rights of portability, transparency, ownership, liability

Prevent data grabs and dispossession

Account for the collective value of data

Protection against profiling

Addresses sustainability issues

Proper oversight

Alternative Data Futures

Rethinking data

Unpacking data
infrastructures

Alternative data
frameworks and
technologies

Collective data
governance

Digital Public Goods

Alternative policy
frameworks

Thank you
very much!

