

# **National Information and Infrastructure and Communication Policy (Implementation Plan 2012-2016)**

## **Kingdom of Eswatini**

Inclusion

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### **Definitions of Data:**

N/A

### **Main Focus of Document:**

Discusses the government's measures to implement ICT initiatives that are aimed at facilitating the development of the country.

### **Target Beneficiaries or Sectors:**

citizens

### **Key Elements:**

Contains various objectives, which include integrating ICT into the education system, supporting legal and regulatory frameworks to aid ICT development and creating a favourable investment climate in the ICT sector, all of which would ensure an environment fit for e-commerce. The policy document represents the government's commitment to the implementation of ICT initiatives aimed at facilitating and accelerating development. Broadly, this encompasses:

- Increasing national consciousness on the role and potential of ICTs for the sustainable development of Swaziland;
- Guiding the successful integration of ICT in the education system - ensuring standardisation, reducing wastage and ineffective use of technology thereby optimising technology use in enhancing teaching and learning;
- Facilitating the development and implementation of the necessary legal, institutional and regulatory framework and structures to support the deployment, utilization and development of ICT;
- Creating a conducive/enabling environment for cooperation and partnerships in ICT, between the public and private sectors and all interested stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels;
- Creating a favourable investment climate in the ICT sector and to identifying innovative financing mechanisms that address specific needs for ICT development;
- Facilitating the deployment, expansion, rehabilitation and modernization of the national information and communications infrastructure;
- Facilitating the development of a viable ICT industry to facilitate research and development, manufacturing, content development and distribution of ICT products and services and employment creation;
- Development of national human resource capacity to enable the exploitation of ICTs within the society;
- Providing universal access to information for all citizens in order to improve the quality of life through inclusive access to education, science and technology, health, culture, entertainment etc.;
- Ensuring that the benefits of ICTs are utilised in addressing gender (disadvantaged groups) inequalities in education, employment opportunities, and decision making;
- Ensuring that all sectoral development plans and projects have an ICT component and to coordinate ICT activities in the country including the formulation of appropriate policies, strategies and plans for the implementation of e-applications e.g. electronic government and governance, e-health, electronic commerce; and
- Facilitating Eswatini's integration and participation in the local and global economy and in the global information society.

Armed with information on other national plans and strategies, a task force discussed economic issues, along with the findings of an ICT baseline study, and identified the following ICT policy pillars:

- Human resource capacity
- Education
- Infrastructure development – Equal access for all
- Strategic ICT Leadership
- Environmental Management
- The Financial Services Sector
- Media
- ICT Industry
- Legal and Regulatory Frameworks A transparent enabling environment, appropriate infrastructure, capacity and leadership were found to be critical towards the achievement of all the goals.

Broad strategies designed to help achieve the goals set in the ICT policy include:

- Developing the necessary legal, institutional and regulatory enabling environment and structures for supporting the development, deployment and exploitation of ICT within the economy and society;
- Developing the physical ICT infrastructure for Eswatini using innovative methods including unbundling and co-location with other infrastructure providers e.g. electricity, roads, railways;
- Building broadband capacity in information and communications infrastructure and introducing new services to improve universal access and service quality;
- Promoting the development of a competitive local ICT industry for the manufacture of technology products and services coupled with the facilitation of private sector involvement in the development of the economy;
- Improving human resource development through identified capacity building initiatives in order to meet national development demands and requirements; and
- Promoting the deployment and exploitation of information, knowledge and technology within the economy and society in order to address issues related to equitable access to education, training etc.

Still outstanding are cyber security statutes and a majority of the ICT reforms. Over 15 years ago, Eswatini was supposed to implement the SADC Telecommunications Model Bill. This has not happened because for a long time there was no department of Communications in the country, and due to the dynamic nature of the ICT industry, Eswatini has missed opportunities to align its frameworks with the global environment. These include bills and policies in the following:

- Telecommunications Bill
  - Technology neutral licensing
  - Interconnection
  - Number Management
  - Spectrum Management
  - Universal access/service
  - An Independent regulator
  - Public Private Partnership funding
  - Cyber security laws
- The absence of these reforms makes it difficult to deal with issues related to cross-border roaming, technical and financial auditing, pricing and costing models, dispute settlement, cyber-security, market data collection and information sharing, universal access and service funding, and monopoly power. This makes the development of the sector extremely stunted and difficult for Eswatini, not to mention being out of tune with the region and the world. There is a need for acceleration of the processes involved in the enactment/approval and operationalisation of statutes and regulations.

Broadband Data Data collection Digital infrastructure Electronic commerce Gender Inclusiveness Interconnection Licensing Private sector Research and development (R&D) Spectrum Universal access

**Policy/regulation mirrored:**

N/A

**Countries:**