

National Integrated ICT Policy White Paper

South Africa

Inclusion

Definitions of Data:

n/a

Main Focus of Document:

Outlines the government's commitment to building a more inclusive society in order to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality in the country by 2030

Target Beneficiaries or Sectors:

citizens

Key Elements:

The objectives of the Policy are to facilitate:

- Decisive and visionary leadership of the digital transformation project in South Africa.
- A whole of government approach to digital transformation and coordination between government departments and entities and across all relevant spheres of government.
- Effective monitoring of the implementation of strategies adopted and the impact of these on the vision of inclusive digital transformation of government, the economy and society.

Key elements of the Policy include: 4.1.3 Intervention Cabinet will establish an Inter-Ministerial Committee answerable to the Executive – the Digital Transformation Inter-Ministerial Committee ("the Digital Transformation Committee"). The final constitution of this Committee will be finalised by Cabinet on adoption of this White Paper. The Committee will be responsible for driving the programme for change across the public service. It will facilitate coordination of activities across government to ensure that a whole-of-government approach is applied. Individual Ministries will be responsible for roll-out of ICT-related solutions in their specific focus areas. The Committee will assist in ensuring that any challenges faced by individual Ministries in implementation are addressed speedily and that Departments, Provincial and Local Governments are provided with strategic assistance where necessary. Instruments will be put in place to ensure compliance across government with standards and approaches adopted by the Committee and/or in this White Paper. All relevant legislation will be reviewed, including the Public Service Act and the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, and amended where necessary to ensure clarity about the different roles to be played by different Ministries and entities. The Digital Transformation Committee will oversee the development of a detailed digital transformation plan and road map to realise and prioritise all policies included in this White Paper for adoption by the Digital Transformation Committee. The Digital Transformation Committee will rigorously monitor progress against objectives. Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) will assist in identifying and measuring key indicators to assess progress.

Digital literacy: Access without literacy will not address the digital divide. With the evolution of technology, the needs of users to effectively exploit the technology have changed and awareness and ability are now key factors that affect access. Interventions will thus need to be made to increase digital literacy, particularly by potential users of broadband in rural and low income communities. Thus a digital literacy training and skills development component needs to be incorporated into fund projects so that a lack of digital literacy and awareness does not become a barrier to the uptake and usage of broadband in communities. In order to increase the impact of digital literacy interventions and to increase their sustainability and accountability, they should be targeted at communities and channelled via community institutions such as libraries and schools, rather than operators.

Consumer Protection Specific rules on user/consumer protection must be set and regularly reviewed. These should consider the different categories of users including both individuals (from all over South Africa and of different levels of ability, income levels, ages and access to the means to complain) and institutions (e.g. public, private, academic, non-governmental and community-based). Specific standards must be set to ensure quality of emergency services. The framework should also recognise that at times, licensees are consumers/users of each other's services e.g. wholesale customers of some any open access networks.

In reviewing the framework to ensure quality of service and consumer protection, the regulator must also set out rules and standards to ensure that licensees provide understandable and transparent information so that users can make an informed choice about service providers. This includes:

- Accurate, understandable and comparable information at the point of sale that enables customers to compare different services.
- Rules requiring service providers to facilitate the right of customers to complain about any alleged breach of quality of service standards including compelling all providers to inform consumers of how to complain.
- Rules to be put in place requiring clarity before signing up with any provider on levels of service that potential customers can expect.

- Quality of service licence conditions/regulations will need to be regularly reviewed given new issues will emerge as technologies and services change.

Innovation and fair competition The introduction of an open access regime in this White Paper shifts the focus to a large extent to service-based competition rather than facilities-based competition.

Both ex ante and post ante competition interventions can play a crucial role in limiting the digital divide through addressing market inefficiencies, promoting investment in the ICT sector and facilitating innovation. Interventions to promote fair competition assist in addressing “the market efficiency gap” - those areas/communities not reached by ICT networks/services but where it is commercially feasible to provide services.

The key objectives of this policy framework on competition related issues are to:

- Encourage fair and sustainable competition to ensure all users have access to a choice of affordable services that meet their specific needs.
- Promote certainty about the competition regulatory framework and the roles and responsibilities of each regulator.
- Where necessary, put in place proportionate remedies that address the needs of users and promote innovation, investment, affordability and quality of service.
- Ensure all users have sufficient comparable information about the different offerings available to them to make an informed choice about which to access.
- Ensure users can switch providers easily.
- Facilitate competition and stop anti-competitive practices to allow competitors (including potential new services and providers) access to users.
- Ensure responsive and effective ex ante regulation where appropriate and relevant, based on regular evidence-informed reviews by the regulator of potential bottlenecks, and the impact of existing pro-competitive measures.

Broadband Competition Digital divide Digital literacy Electronic communication Inclusiveness Innovation Legislative framework

Policy/regulation mirrored:

Countries: