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***Local Governance and ICTs  
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***LOG-IN Africa***

***COUNTRY REPORT – SOUTH AFRICA  
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0. Executive Summary (bullet points) – 1 page

- South Africa is a lower-middle income country with a well-developed urban economy and a less well-developed economy outside of the urban centres. It has high levels of poverty and unemployment.
- In SA, society is stratified along four major lines of inequality, viz. class, gender, ‘race’, and spatial.
- The implementation of ICT for development and e-government strategies are likely to have a strong bias towards cities and provincial towns. However, the need for initiatives targeting marginalized areas has been identified.
- South Africa has a national legislature consisting of two houses – the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) as well as three spheres of government – national, provincial and local. Each sphere is distinct, independent but inter-related. The practical implications of this are evolving on a daily basis.
- The 1996 White Paper on Local Government initiated a period of restructuring where 843 local authorities were collapsed into 284 Local Councils, a number of District Councils and 6 metropolitan councils resulting in “wall-to-wall” local government.
- Local governments differ considerably in terms of capacity, service delivery, and effectiveness
- Local governments are required to be developmental. As such, local economic development is a priority for many. Local governments are also the key player in developing Integrated Development Plans (IDP’s)
- At the national level and in those previously advantaged provinces and local governments, ICT’s are extensively used to address key business processes.
- Weaknesses in the e-government policy environment include duplication, problems of interoperability, inability to leverage economies of scale and security. A policy to address these issues was developed and approved by Cabinet in 2001. These policies are under review at the moment and the outcomes of this review are not clearly evident at the moment,
- The e-government policy does not apply to local government and currently there are limited provisions in this regard,
- A review of the overall macro-organisation of the state may impact on this state of affairs. Although not a key factor under consideration for this review, it is likely that provisions dealing with information systems & management would be incorporated.
- The key research needs identified for the South African content with regard to local governance and ICT’s relate to access, content, citizen service, and economic and social development
  - Two thematic issues are notable for future research on access and capacity - the importance and need for e-readiness assessment for local e-governance, and the key dimensions of e-readiness assessment
  - A current weakness in the e-government space that should be addressed by research is the lack of adequate content development and management
  - The need for research to assess quality improvements in citizen service through appropriate and multi-channel access
  - The need to valuate current efforts where ICT’s have been used to enable social and economic development

## **1. Introductory note and methodological approach**

This paper draws on work conducted by the two participating agencies, the Wits LINK Centre and the Centre for Public Service Innovation, both of whom are engaged in research and advice to government regarding the introduction of electronic government and the use of ICT's for social and economic development.

The background paper was compiled through a document review, including two large-scale studies; and the knowledge of the three participating researchers, who are active researchers in the fields of local governance and ICT, e-government and public policy. In particular, the study to inform an e-government access strategy which was conducted by LINK (and Sangonet and Mohlaleng) for the Centre for Public Service Innovation in 2003 was used to provide some perspective for this paper. In addition, data from the recent South African E-Access and Usage household and individual user survey is used to provide background information on ICT usage.

Due to the limited time that was available for compiling the paper and problems of timing, the paper did not benefit fully from the input of appropriate policy-makers responsible for e-government and the deployment of ICT's. However, it does reflect some of the discussions held with these officials by the researchers in relation to other work.

Finally, attempts were made to include in the report the findings of a large-scale audit of ICT's at the local government level which was conducted by a private research agency. Unfortunately, neither of the parties had the resources to acquire the report or the underlying database. Neither were we successful in getting a copy of a paid report from third party sources. Notwithstanding this, the report does include the headline findings from this audit and survey.

## **2. General overview of the country in terms of socio-economic development**

This section of the input paper is based on work done by the authors for the CPSI e-government access strategy in 2003.

**TABLE 1: General Social Data Profile**

Total population (millions)	44.3
Urban population (% of total population)	55.0
Population growth (annual %)	-1.3
Human Development Index (HDI)	0.702
Human Poverty Index (HPI)	20.2*
Share of consumption	
Poorest 10%	1.1
Poorest 20%	2.9
Richest 20%	64.8
Richest 10%	45.9

Inequality measures	
Richest 10% to poorest 10%	42.5
Richest 20% to poorest 20%	22.6
UNDP Gini index	59.3**
Life expectancy at birth (years)	47.8
Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and over)	85.3

*Source: UNESCO; Census 2001; UNDP Human Development Report 2001; World Bank's World Development Indicators Database, April 2002*

*\*The HPI is an attempt to capture a broader measure of poverty, by going beyond just money or income. The HPI was computed on the basis of deprivation in longevity, deprivation in living standards, and deprivation in knowledge.*

*\*\*The Gini index measures inequality over the entire distribution of income or consumption. A value of 0 represents perfect equality, and a value of 100 perfect inequality.*

South Africa is a lower-middle income country with annual GDP of 212, 777bn USD in 2004. It ranked 27 in the World Bank Indicators Database of 184 countries (World Bank 2004). It has a population of 44,3 million people living in nine provinces, with close to 9 million people living in Gauteng, the economic hub of the country. It has a well-developed urban economy with nine major cities, though a less well-developed economy outside of the urban centres. It has high levels of poverty and unemployment.

“South Africa’s per capita GDP, corrected for purchasing power parity (PPP), was \$11 240 per annum in 2001 (UNDP 2002), making it one of the 50 wealthiest countries in the world. However, the strikingly poor social indicators resulted in a ranking of 111 out of 175 countries in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2001, and 115 in 2003 ...” (DBSA 2005, p40).

In SA, society is stratified along four major lines of inequality, viz. class, gender, ‘race’, and spatial. Poverty affects at least 20.2% of the population. As a result of the AIDS pandemic, life expectancy at birth is only 47.8 years. Apartheid policies, by engendering a situation of inequitable access to employment, service delivery, infrastructure, and resources to the black population, have resulted in poverty being characterised by a strong racial dimension, with the largest proportion of people living in poverty being African black. The official unemployment rate for 2002 was 30.5 % (DBSA 2005, p45). Moreover, poverty is geographically concentrated, with the largest share of the poor (72%) residing in rural areas, especially the former homelands. There is a marked tendency for poverty to be more prevalent among female-headed households and among children (Klasen, 1997; Donian and Humphries, 1998; May, 1998).

In this context, the implementation of any ICT for development and e-government strategies are likely to have a strong bias towards cities and provincial towns, where the majority of the population reside. Notwithstanding this bias, President Mbeki noted in his State of the Nation Address before to the first joint sitting of the third democratic parliament on 21 May 2004, that “the Departments of Public Service and Administration,

Provincial and Local Government, and Communications will work to ensure that modern information and communication technologies (ICT) are introduced in these development nodes as quickly as possible, to assist in all their developmental and governance efforts.” Efforts in this regard have yet to deliver major results and therefore the proposed research project must focus on approaches and strategies that address the needs of citizens in rural and remote areas, and in what timeframe.

### **3. National Governance Background**

South Africa has a national legislature consisting of two houses – the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). Its functions are law-making and parliamentary oversight of the executive or Cabinet.

South Africa has three spheres of government – national, provincial and local. National and provincial elections are held at the same time every five years. Local government elections are also every five years and usually take place about a year after national and provincial elections.

There are 37 national departments headed by Ministers and numerous agencies reporting directly to a Minister or who report to a Governance Board. There are a number of state owned enterprises in the fields of telecommunications, electricity, transport, defence technologies and systems, to mention a few. The national departments are primarily responsible for making policy and designing strategy to address the twin foci of economic competitiveness and social inclusion. National departments operate as individual institutions with clearly defined mandates, but in the last five years have increasingly moved to a cluster system. There are currently five clusters. These are a) justice, crime prevention, and security, b) economic, investment, and employment, c) governance and administration, d) social, and e) international relations, peace, and security.

Furthermore, South Africa has five (5) development financing institutions responsible for financing development in key economic sectors – the Industrial Development Corporation (manufacturing focus), the Development Bank of Southern Africa (infrastructure focus), the Land Bank (land and agriculture focus), the National Housing Finance Corporation (housing) and the Independent Development Trust (financing poverty reduction). These institutions report to their respective shareholders who are national government ministers.

South Africa has 9 provincial governments, each with its own provincial legislature and provincial administration. Each provincial administration may have a maximum of ten Members of the Executive Council (political principals). Typically each provincial government has ten departments responsible for various aspects of service delivery including health, social development and welfare services, education, agriculture and conservation, safety and security, transport, local government planning and housing. Provincial departments are key agencies of service delivery.

There are many initiatives to improve service delivery including but not limited to the Batho Pele or “people first” campaign to improve customer service spearheaded by the national Department of Public Service and Administration and Project Consolidate, a campaign spearheaded by the Department of Provincial and Local Government to improve service delivery through active support and deployment of specialists to designated local governments.

#### **4. Local Governance policy and strategy**

South Africa’s Constitution provides for a system of co-operative governance, where National, Provincial and Local Government co-function distinctively, interdependently but are interrelated. More importantly, the Constitution establishes the principle of developmental local government where municipalities are mandated to foster and drive socio-economic development as well as perform their service delivery functions. The 1996 White Paper on Local Government initiated a period of restructuring where 843 local authorities were collapsed into 284 Local Councils, a number of District Councils and 6 metropolitan councils resulting in “wall-to-wall” local government.

Local council areas are effectively regions incorporating urban, peri-urban and rural areas under Local Government’s jurisdiction, district councils are umbrella authorities that incorporate a number of local municipalities and the 6 Metropolitan Councils represent the major cities and their surrounding urban and peri-urban areas – City of Jo’burg, Tshwane, Ekurhuleni, City of Cape Town, eThekweni and Nelson Mandela Metropole.

The majority of municipalities are peri-urban or rural municipalities and all are responsible for providing bulk infrastructure including water, sanitation, refuse collection, electricity reticulation and other basic services to households and communities.

The demand on Municipalities to be developmental has led to an emphasis on Local Economic Development (LED) as a means of poverty alleviation through municipal-led initiatives and projects. LED is promoted through programmes headed by the Department of Provincial and Local Government, with Municipalities now required to include economic development in their list of mandates. The local government restructuring process has made Integrated Development Planning (aimed at promoting integration by balancing social, economic and ecological issues) a key requirement of Municipalities. IDPs reflect a preoccupation with strategic planning processes that respond to change more flexibly and provide the challenge for municipalities to move beyond planning into implementation.

Three Acts determine parameters for the definition, functioning and demarcation of Municipalities: the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 and the Municipal Demarcation Act of 1998. The legislation is supported by an array of policy documentation related to local economic development, social development, public/private partnerships as well as community based public works. The Municipal

Systems Act of 2000 formally introduced “integrated development plans” as frameworks for implementation to be adopted by all levels of local government.

The national government’s Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) defines integrated development planning as a process through which municipalities prepare a strategic development plan, for a five-year period. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is a product of the integrated development planning process, the principal strategic planning instrument which guides and informs all planning, budgeting, management and decision-making in a municipality. Included also are very definite guidelines on Community Participation that focus specifically on involving Civil Society in decision-making. The Municipal Structures Act distinguishes between categories and types of Municipalities and the governance systems available to them. Here distinction is made between Category A (Metropolitan), Category B (Local) and Category C (District) Municipalities. Types of governance systems within that include Mayoral, Executive, Plenary, sub-council and ward systems. The Demarcation Act governs the spatial delineation of Municipalities and establishes the Demarcation Board – the agency responsible for demarcation and revisions of Municipal boundaries.

Municipalities are managed by Municipal Managers that are accountable to the populace through a five-year performance-based contract (that run concurrently with the 5-year political election term). Political decision-making is the responsibility of elected Councils based on a ward representation system. Local Municipalities fall within District Council boundaries also, where District Councils are expected to play a supportive and coordination role (in their relationship to Local Councils) as well as manage district-level service delivery and development. Provincial Government departments play a mentoring and capacity-building role whilst also having their own specific competencies with regards to service delivery; each Province has a Local Government Department that oversees the implementation of IDPs for example. National Government’s Department of Provincial and Local Government is responsible for the effective functioning of local government whilst also providing funding where required.

Whilst local councils are intended to be self-sustaining in the medium– to long term, rationalisation through amalgamation of former Health Committees, previously Black Local Councils, City and Town Councils has led to the creation of a number of under-capacitated, small local authorities that require support from Central and Provincial Government. The Department of Provincial and Local Government, for example, have formulated a number of mechanisms for assisting Municipalities with service delivery and employment creation. They include capacity building programmes such as the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (intended to foster endogenous economic development through service delivery), the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Unit (MIIU), established to assist municipalities to find innovative solutions to critical financing and management problems (including leveraging private sector investments) and the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (a medium term initiative to introduce a greater level of flexibility into the funding process) intended to assist Local Government in service delivery. Service delivery has been slow in many instances with capacity being one of the most critical issues for delivery. The spatial extents of

municipalities are such that the high service demands of remote rural areas need to be balanced with the relative prosperity of urban areas. Similarly, the push for economic growth and employment cannot happen in isolation from basic needs provision. Finding this balance is difficult for many new Municipalities, the success of which is difficult to determine given the relative infancy of South Africa's Local Government system.

## **5. ICTs and e-government policy and strategy**

In this section, three issues will be considered:- current state of ICT use within the broader government system in South Africa, current policy on e-government, likely next steps for e-government policy and strategy.

The use of ICT's within government, whether this is for purposes of improving service delivery to citizens or to enhance back-office operations has been a significant for at least the last two decades. At the national level, there are currently several large information systems, including the National Population Register, a deed register, the National Transport Information System (NATIS), systems to manage UIF, welfare grants, subsidies as well as systems to manage tax collection and liabilities have been in place for more than 10-15 years.

The responsibility for these systems reside within the appropriate government department, for example, the National Department of Transport would be responsible for NATIS and would manage the introduction of these systems through budget allocations made to it directly.

Over the last few years, there have been numerous efforts that have been implemented or which are in the process of being implemented by individual government departments. This included the creation of systems that enabled the tax authorities to have a single view of taxpayers, a major upgrade and modernisation of NATIS now known as eNATIS, the introduction of systems to manage better co-operation between the police services, the justice system, correctional services, and other government departments, and finally, moves to introduce Smart Cards by the National Department of Home Affairs which is due for roll-out late this year or early next year.

In addition, national government has put in place large 'internally-facing' transversal systems to manage the internal operations of government like payroll, financial management, and supply chain management. However, these are mainly applicable to the national and provincial levels of government. Currently there are some 20 primary and countless minor systems in use in Government's transverse systems domain with an annual cost to the state of about R1.1 bn.

The existence of primary systems for the payroll function for all employees at national and provincial and large parts covered by a common financial management and supply chain management was largely due to the requirement imposed by central co-ordinating departments like the Department of Public Service and Administration and the National Treasury that these would be the systems that would be used.

Over time, a number of challenges have emerged with the current transversal systems including the fact that they are not able to deal with current realities. On this basis, a process is underway to create an integrated financial management system (IFMS). The move to the new systems is likely to take between 5-7 years to implement.

At the municipal level, the picture is less clear. Due to the history and fragmentation and the recent creation of the current 284 municipalities, the deployment of ICT's vary substantially between these municipalities. In general, it would be the larger urban metro's that incorporated major parts of areas that would have in place systems to manage payments, rates and taxes, registrations, as well as manage their own internal operations. New municipalities and those that exist in marginalized areas are likely to have very few systems in place to assist the municipality. As highlighted earlier, a large scale survey and audit was conducted by a private research agency in 2004 and is currently being repeated (but being done in close association with government). This survey and audit reveal major ICT deficits in many marginalized local municipalities including the lack of basic ICT facilities like a stand-alone computer. In addition, many of these local authorities did not see ICT's as crucial when they were confronting more basic needs challenges like housing, water, sanitation, roads, etc. As far as the authors are aware, no extensive data mining has occurred on the data to identify trends and issues that need to be considered in strategy and policy.

In 1999-2000, there was an acknowledgement that despite the considerable initiatives in place, there was a realisation that there were a number of challenges that needed to be addressed if the information systems were to deliver on the development priorities of the new state. These included concerns about inter-operability, duplication of efforts, not achieving economies of scale, and security. In addition, the arrangements were not conducive to the creation of seamless access to government services and these will need to be assessed. There was also a realisation that departments needed to establish a post of Government Information Technology Officer (GITO) to facilitate the use of ICT's for meeting the business objectives of government.

In terms of formal legislation, the Minister for Public Service and Administration (through the Public Service Act) has the authority to determine policy and strategy on e-government and the use of ICT's within government. This was exercised in a strong way in 2001 when the department released an e-government framework. In terms of the framework, each government department will be required as part of their strategic planning processes to develop an information management plan and strategy. In addition, the policy framework suggested the creation of a Gateway portal where all government services could be found in a way where the services are according to the needs of citizens and not the other way round. Finally, the department issued minimum interoperability standards.

To supplement the evolution of the e-government strategy, the CPSI produced a research report that dealt specifically with the development of an access framework to support the e-government strategy. The report proposed a multi-channel approach including the use of intermediaries. In terms of current thinking, it is proposed that local government play a greater role in designing an access strategy as they have the best sense of the needs of the community, are responsible for spatial planning, and is playing a major role in overseeing overall socio-economic development. However, there are major capacity

constraints in many local authorities and such an approach would require a minimum 10-year implementation strategy. This model is currently under discussion within the DPSA and the Governance and Administration cluster.

In the implementation of the first phase of the e-government over the last few years, considerable gaps and weaknesses were identified. As a result, a policy review process is underway. Draft policy proposals were developed by the DPSA and these were recently presented to Government Information Technology Officers (GITO’s). The workshop with GITO’s identified a number of concerns with the draft proposals. A process is underway to incorporate these changes. As such, it is unclear what policy direction will finally be taken and how this will differ from the current policy framework. It is important to note that the jurisdiction of the DPSA does not extend to local government and as such the policy proposals do not extend to local government level.

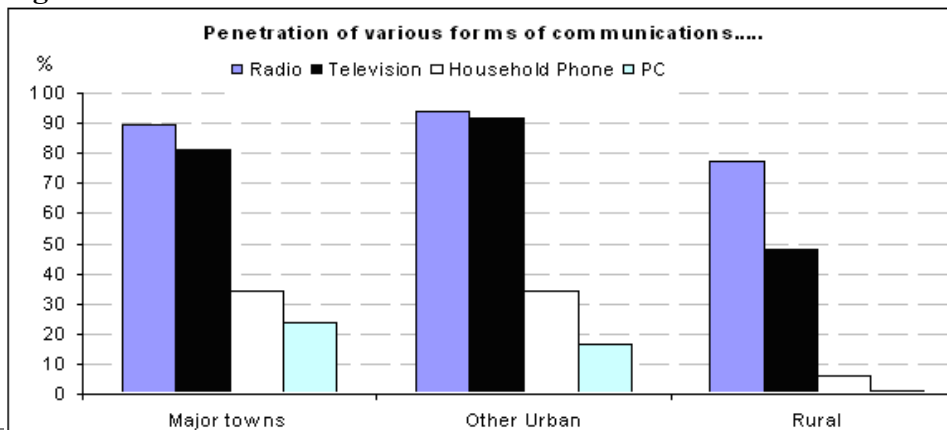
Over the last few years, government has identified a need to harmonise conditions that government the three spheres of government as well as public sector agencies and entities. Although the debates are strongly driven by human resource considerations (i.e. harmonising conditions of service, enabling the easy transfer of staff, etc.), it is likely that governing frameworks on e-government and technology use will also feature in the discussions and policy proposals. Once again, these policy processes are currently underway and it is difficult to tell what the final outcome would be.

**6. Needs analysis**

This section of the input paper uses work conducted for the South African E-Usage and Access Index study in 2004 – 05.

In line with the 2001 national census figures of 24.4% of households having a fixed line telephone, the survey indicated that 22.1% of South African households have a telephone in the house and as anticipated those who do are skewed to urban areas<sup>1</sup>. This includes any phone that is permanently in the home and includes mobile phones that are left in the home for general usage. The most prevalent forms of media and communications devices in the household are, expectedly, radio, television, mobile phone, household phone, PC – in that order.

**Figure 1**



*Source: LINK Centre 2005, E-Index household and individual user survey*

Mobile phone ownership is highest amongst those living in major towns (55.6), followed by those in other urban areas (41%), and finally, those in rural areas (27.7%) as indicated in the Figure 2 below. The fact that over one quarter of those living in rural areas own mobile phones indicates the viability of these as an alternative to fixed line phones where access is likely to be difficult.

These statistics indicate that connectivity is still high on the list of issues needed for adequate levels of e-government readiness.

## **7. Research priorities**

The following section was written on the understanding that the 3-day Nairobi workshop will help to construct a specific overall research programme based on the needs identified by individual members. At the time of finalising this paper, the agenda for the workshop was not yet finalised. As such, it is assumed that some time will be spend at the start of the workshop focusing on issues like the programme structure, participating countries, involvement of countries not part of the initial group, etc.

As such, this section will focus heavily on issues and less on the research strategies at this point in time. Suffice to note the following in terms of our current thinking on the principles of the programme structure and research strategies that would make the most sense for this initiative:-

- That the programme will have a continent-wide stream strongly oriented towards the development of approaches and methodologies.
- In addition, the continent-wide stream would include cross-country projects where two or more countries have a similar focus or interest,
- That the programme will include advocacy element as well as having an active dissemination component. The dissemination component will need to include a look at how existing forums, networks, and initiatives can be used,
- That the programme will allow for country-specific research projects where the country-specific research can be of wider interest to the continent,
- That the programme will include the need to develop continent-wide databases that capture base information across the continent
- That a significant portion of the research programme would be strongly action-oriented. As such, there may be a need to complement the overall high-level work with specific action-research projects at the coalface
- That the network would be broadened to other countries in Africa and the design of the research programme should facilitate this

### **7.1 Themes**

Key themes on improving public service delivery in South Africa and where ICT’s can play a role are access, content, citizen service, and economic and social development. These themes arise out of experience in the past three years and out of previous research such as the e-government access study 2003. These themes provide a broad basis for discussing possible areas for future research.

The concept of the access rainbow is a useful model for visualising the different components of ICT access. This access rainbow consists of layers representing both necessary and sufficient conditions for access to ICT, particularly computing technology. Clement & Shade (1998) presented this model in an attempt to produce a conceptual model of access to ICT that would strengthen a public interest perspective. The model is a seven-layered conceptual framework that can form the basis of both efforts to define universal access to ICT (but also to e-government) and to achieve universal access. The model is summarised in the table below:

**TABLE 3: The Access Rainbow Overview Table**

<b>Layer</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>1 Carriage</b>	The facilities that store, service or carry information
<b>2 Devices</b>	The actual physical devices that people operate
<b>3 Software tools</b>	The programmes that operate the devices and make connections to services
<b>4 Content services</b>	The actual information and communications services people find useful
<b>5 Services/access provision</b>	The organisations that provide network services and access to users
<b>6 Literacy/social facilitation</b>	The skills people need to take full advantage of ICT, together with the learning facilitation and resources to acquire these
<b>7 Governance</b>	How decisions are made concerning the development and operation of the infrastructure

*Source: Adapted from Clement, A and Shade, LR (2000). ‘The Access Rainbow: Conceptualizing Universal Access to the Information / Communications Infrastructure’, in Michael Gurstein (ed.) Community Informatics: Enabling Communities with Information and Communications Technologies. Hershey, PA: Idea Group Publishing.*

This model illustrates the multifaceted nature of access. From the above table we could say that levels 1-3 are the necessary conditions for access, the basic technological infrastructure, and levels 4-7 are the sufficient conditions for access, those that will ensure that people are able to make use of the technology in the manner that they choose to.

The access theme raises a number of sub-themes that require further exploration and research. These are:

**7.1.1 Capacity - Local government e-readiness**

The following two thematic issues are areas for future research: the importance and need for e-readiness assessment for local e-governance, and the key dimensions of e-readiness assessment. E-readiness assessments can ensure that the rights questions are asked when commencing e-government projects and can ensure that e-government initiatives are not relegated to the level of being merely a technology matter that is left to a "Government Computer Centre" to deal with.

A successful e-readiness assessment should answer the following three questions:

- What can we do well as a government agency given our existing institutional resource capabilities?
- What problems and challenges are we likely to face?
- What strategies do we need to put in place to improve our performance, overcome the challenges and advance our e-government maturity?

An e-governance assessment examines and profiles the following dimensions of the government institutional environment:

- **Government business agenda.** All government organizations have specific mandates from which they derive their business activities. The organizational business agenda comprises specific products and services for which it is responsible, determination of the needs and priorities of customers, and a determination of the production and delivery processes that are efficient enough to provide value-for-money to citizens and communities.
- **Communications, information and knowledge capabilities.** Governments are by and large information processors and communicators of such information. The drive towards e-government makes it imperative for governments to assess their existing information and knowledge capabilities and plan to migrate their critical information and knowledge resources from paper-based environment into the electronic media.
- **ICT application portfolio.** E-readiness requires, in addition to information systems for administration, two categories of applications - communication systems, and online business applications. Communication systems facilitate electronic interactions between organizations and their customers and suppliers that combine voice, video and data. At the same time, they need applications that permit them to conduct their business electronically, in order to overcome the delays that are associated with a paper-based environment.
- **Access and connectivity.** Online business applications only makes sense if the organization can establish electronic connectivity with its customers and suppliers so that they can gain access to it products and services, requisition and obtain their choice of products and services, and make payments for such, where it is required, at whatever time and from wherever they are. To this end, technology infrastructure is essential for access and connectivity.
- **Human resource capability.** In this rapidly changing environment, it is to take stock of organizational human resource capabilities so as to define knowledge

- gaps and develop appropriate strategies to bridge them with suitable training and capability building programmes.
- **Funding mechanisms and expenditure profile.** The literature on e-governance in particular and public management in general is full of such rhetorical expressions as value-for-money, efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, accountability and the like. The bottom line in all these is that no organization can survive without financial resources even in an economy where knowledge and information are the critical factors of economic productivity. To this end, an e-governance assessment needs to take stock of organizational financial resources, more so in terms of a set of capabilities.
  - **Regulatory mechanisms and systems.** All organizations require an operating environment with a degree of predictability and orderliness. An e-governance assessment must examine existing laws and legislation, security arrangements, risk and disaster preparedness and management, quality standards and systems. It must also define and put in place systems for managing partnerships and collaborative arrangements.
  - **Leadership and management.** Leadership and management are two sides of the same coin. We need more leadership in times of turbulence, conflict, innovation and change, and more management in times of stability, harmony, maintenance and constancy. Being a fundamental transformation of government processes, systems and structures, e-governance implementation will require more leadership.

### **7.1.2 Content development and management**

One of the major weaknesses in South Africa's attempts to promote e-government (at both national and local level) has been the lack of content development and management. Some institutions, notably the Umsobomvu Youth Fund have run successful content management projects and there is much to learn from these and draw lessons that may be generally applicable to other government departments and agencies.

#### **Philosophy of content development**

Content can be informational and can empower people to take decisions if well presented and if informed by, inter alia, the following features:

- An understanding of the information needs and information use of citizens/users
- Business architecture of the local government agency relevant to the content management project
- Information flows between the user and the local government agency as service provider
- Information flows between local government agencies and members or the broader network of social and governmental institutions within which local government functions
- Information flows within each local government structure
- Information mapping of content providers who can supply relevant information and content for local government agencies

Putting the citizen at the centre of the content development and management activity, an understanding of the information needs of local government customers/users is essential.

Key potential areas for content development include:

- Information regarding job opportunities
- Information about enterprise development opportunities
- Information about learning, skills development and educational opportunities
- Information relating to health and lifestyle choices
- Information regarding participation in social, community and civil society activity

The UYF approach was successful, partly because it was based on communication and information models that formed the foundation of the content development and management project. In respect of the information and communication models applied, the theoretical perspective from which these models were drawn is the perspective outlined by Thomas H Davenport in his article “Putting the I in IT” (Financial Times, 2000, p5 – 9).

Davenport argues that quality of INFORMATION (and of communications) are the hallmarks of a successful business and that IT (computers, e-mail, websites) is but the plumbing that allows information to flow from one space to another and, most importantly, from one person to another or to many people simultaneously. He argues that technology should not dominate the organizational landscape, rather “information staff” are the main value creator and should have the skills typical of librarians. “Librarians, with their skills in categorization, search and retrieval, and understanding information needs, offer great potential to any organization embarking on information management.” (page 7)

The emphasis for the purpose of the UYF information and advice service is on the relevant skills. In the UYF context, the information staff may be called “info-mediaries” or people who communicate and transform information into useful services that can have a positive result for the information users.

Research is required to inform content development and management at local level e-governance.

### **7.1.3 Citizen interface and customer service**

Choice and convenience are two crucial areas for attention in local e-governance. E-governance should make available a range of channels and options for citizen interface and interaction. These can include the channels mentioned under section 5 above – banking and financial connectivity, mobile phones, internet and computerised government counter services. They can also include channels and models such as Call Centres and walk-in citizen service centres.

A critical issue for any local government information service or local e-governance is the **quality of customer service**. Precisely because the interaction with the customer is not face-to-face, the risks of providing a less than satisfactory service are high as the local government agency cannot easily determine whether the customer is satisfied or not. It is therefore appropriate to build a significant service quality component as a guide to e-services. When a customer interacts with the local government information service through any of the channels provided, the customer must experience good service. The potential for better service in the future must be incorporated into the design of the service. This is the key to building good customer relations and heightens the potential for achievement of the goal.

A number of fairly simple approaches to service quality can be incorporated at an early stage, prior to the introduction of more complex quality systems. Inter alia, structured orientation programmes for staff regarding their role as infomediaries should be designed and conducted on a regular basis. A monitoring and evaluation framework and manual should form a cornerstone of work on citizen service and create the opportunity to record lessons learnt and provide recommendations for improvements in the operations and service quality on a quarterly, half-yearly and annual basis.

#### **7.1.4 ICT infrastructure/infrastructure as drivers for local economic development**

A number of projects have been initiated in South Africa focusing on how ICT's can be used as drivers for local economic development. There are a number of long-term projects that are at an advanced stage of implementation (for example, Ugu/ Vhembe/ Mogalakwena/ Cape Town). In addition, the CPSI is in the process of launching an action-research project aimed at Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDP) nodes. This project is likely to begin shortly after the upcoming local government elections, i.e. in the first quarter of 2006.

Using these initiatives as possible case studies, the research questions of interest include:-  
What potential does ICT have for sustainable social and economic development?  
What are the pre-requisites for this success, specifically, human capital, social capital, nature of local government, etc.  
What initiatives have shown the greatest promise and why?

### **8. Projects Profile**

A database of projects would be a value-adding activity that can be facilitated by LOG-IN Africa. However, this will need to be done based on a careful consideration of other initiatives in this regard in order to avoid duplication. Time did not permit the compilation of a project register from South Africa but this can be done as part of the initial activities of the network.

**References**

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