



MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

REPORT

ICT STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

1. BACKGROUND

The roundtable session was held on 04 October 2012 at Destiny Lodge. The department developed an ICT strategy in 2009, which was submitted for Cabinet approval. The strategy could not be approved then as cabinet felt that the work was not widely consulted; secondly cabinet directed that a broadband rollout plan was to be developed. The roundtable was partly addressing the directive of cabinet. There have been a number of consultative sessions with a number of stakeholders since 2009. The roundtable was to engage stakeholders to partner with province towards finalising the framework and explore areas of collaboration in order to grow the sector in the province.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE SESSION

The 2012 Mpumalanga ICT Stakeholder Roundtable session will facilitate the sharing of information between the ICT industry and all levels of government and its social partners to achieve the following objectives:

- Initiate dialogue between role-players on areas of cooperation and collaboration focusing on initiatives to improve ICT applications in the province.
- Provide a strong foundation and sustainable ICT framework for Mpumalanga
- Address major goals, challenges, developmental priorities of the province in terms of service delivery through ICT applications
- Assess the provincial needs and recommend suitable solutions
- Share information on ICT opportunities available within the province
- Explore methods of implementing 2012 ICT Indaba resolutions
- Inform the review of the integrated Provincial ICT Strategy
- Preparatory activity towards convening the envisaged Provincial ICT Conference in the next financial year

4. ORGANIZATIONAL PARTICIPATION

The following institutions were represented during the session:

Government		Industry
National	Provincial	
1) CSIR	1. Department of Education	1) Xon Systems
2) Department of Communications	2. Office of the Premier	2) Kukhanya Technologies
3) Telkom SA	3. MEGA	3) MTN
4) SITA	4. Treasury	4) Cell-C
	5. Human Settlement	5) Elangeni Consulting Services

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Government	Industry
6. Public Works, Roads & Transport	6) Masincazelane Investments
7. Health	7) ZTE Corporation
8. Cogta	8) Pinnacle Africa
	9) Microsoft
	10) EduCrux
	11) Vodacom
	12) MDH
	13) Nkangala Telecoms
	14) Xon/Linkage
	15) Wireless Access Providers Association
	16) Walkin-IT-Solutions
	17) Lusoti Technologies
	18) Sollywood

However, the invitations were not only limited to the above-mentioned organizations, some institutions submitted apologies for not attending.

5. APPROACH TO THE SESSION

In order to achieve the strategic objectives of the session, the following themes were identified:

- Government's policy on ICT
- ICT infrastructure development
- Job creation and business development
- Priority skills for development in MP

The Department of Communications and the DEDET made presentations on national and provincial governments' positions with regards to the ICT. This has outlined government's intention or directive of reducing cost of business in Mpumalanga in order to attract investments into the province.

Furthermore, the collective presentations by the industry were made in order to identify key challenges in the ICT sector, areas where government's interventions are needed and explore areas for synergistic implementation of ICT initiatives.

6. KEY ISSUES RAISED BY GOVERNMENT

- Province raised issues of high telecommunication costs as a challenge that needed to be discussed with the 4 network operators present in the meeting.
- High cost of doing business in the province with a lack of ICT deployment as a contributor to this situation
- Connectivity of public places such as schools, hospitals, libraries, community centres was a major challenge and needed the stakeholders to work with province in dealing with this aspect.
- SMME/Coops is a major challenge and their sustainability in the industry
- ICT Infrastructure across the country is varied, untargeted, unstructured and uncoordinated
- Limited participation from industry in community development especially rural development
- The DOC has an e-schools connectivity plan and in the process of finalizing the Broadband master plan.
- TV wide space: this is the new technology which CSIR has developed to address challenges of spectrum. As such work needs to be done in creating the readiness for such technology and awareness.
- High number of under-serviced local municipalities as published by ICASA
- Lack of local content
- There are gaps in coverage

7. KEY ISSUES RAISED BY OPARATORS

With reference to the presentations and discussions, the following key issues emanated:

- delays to issue the site permits by government, this result in the delayed construction of base stations (it takes about 2 years to obtain one)
- Theft and vandalism property, especially copper
- Clear with government the health concerns of base stations
- Government lacks facilitation activities for ICT initiatives throughout the province
- Education system is not producing required skills and sufficient number of people for advancing SA's knowledge economy and government can work with private on training.
- Lack of collective partnership and support from government
- Absence of central coordination of demand and supply and aggregation of data for building e-skills capacity. Therefore difficult to make policy decisions.
- There are issues in network deployment such as delayed approvals and capacity uptake
- Non-utilisation of Universal Services Fund
- Collaborate with government in connecting schools and government to sort out bureaucratic processes around approval for school connectivity, as well as other critical infrastructure like electricity which is a prerequisite for connectivity.
- Conflict between cloud technology versus broadband

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

- There are opportunities for SMME's/coops in the area of innovation and local entrepreneurs are encouraged to bring their innovations. SMMEs and Cooperatives are encouraged to engage the mobile operators to gain access to information.
- There are opportunities for cooperatives in the development of applications, content for email.
- Province and municipalities to reign fence procurement budget to SMME/Cooperatives

8. KEY ISSUES RAISED BY ENTERPRISES

- ICT initiatives not planned for in municipalities' IDPs. To this effect municipalities to budget for ICT initiatives.
- Local SMMEs not recognised in the mainstream especially by the bigger players in industry-industry players to give opportunities to small enterprises in the value chain
- Government not facilitating and providing ICT opportunities
- Government must take the initiative by laying their own fibre, thus ensuring participation of local companies. Currently the operators employ big companies to lay fibre and these companies are not subcontracting local companies but companies from outside the province.
- Government should also take ownership of the ICT infrastructure in order to generate own revenue and avoid expensive leasing on their own land.

9. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ICT DEVELOPMENT

- Draft Broadband policy has been developed by DOC and to be presented to the Cabinet for approval. The policy contains the Broadband Plan for deployment of ICT infrastructure to the under-services areas.
- The operators announced procurement and entrepreneurial opportunities they offer, which in some instances in .
- Department of Communications aimed at developing SMMEs through DTT in manufacturing, installation and distribution of set top boxes. Province to work with DOC to Identify ICT graduates to be trained on set top box installation and antennae.
- The Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) provides opportunities for local content in regional TV station.
- SALGA in collaboration with Microsoft is implementing an ICT programme Ubunye Initiative with three projects, namely; skilling graduates on ICT, up-skilling local municipalities to use and manage technologies, and Windows 8 to build applications for government utilization. There are opportunities for training which Microsoft would like to discuss with province

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following key recommendations were made:

- Local content development: development of films and documentaries in local languages will be important to take advantage of the spectrum as a result of DTT. The creation of the internet content in local languages and cultures
- Provincial government have to assist the industry in facilitating discussions with USSASA to channel the funds paid to Universal Service Fund to support ICT initiatives in province.
- The Department of Communications need to ring fence a percentage of the available market in the development of Set Top Boxes to be procured locally.
- The government must ensure that the SMMEs are not limited to ground digging only but also be involved in fibre cables roll-out. This would also ensure appropriate skills transfer.
- SMMEs and Cooperatives can be instrumental in developing the websites.
- There are needs for skills incubation and SMME recognition in Mpumalanga Province.
- The establishment of a Research Network for e-Skills (ResNeS) across Education, Government, Business and Civil Society to develop research, evaluation, policy and international benchmarking.
- There is a need to link e-skilling with university for long distance learning, research and technologies. In the light of the envisaged Mpumalanga University, preparations with regards to access to e-courses and appropriate skilling have to be made.
- Negotiations and agreements between the DOC and the province on synergising budget for e-skilling implementation must take place.
- There is a need to avail budget in the provincial and local municipalities for e-skilling.
- The MPG need to plan on how to transform established centres in the province and how their budget can be effectively allocated for establishing knowledge production hubs and learning centres for its communities. The MP has to improve its ICT section more specifically for maintenance and support.

11. THE WAY FORWARD

- Government to coordinate an urgent meeting with network providers to discuss a broadband rollout plan for all municipalities in the province (this can be done through the money contributed by network providers to the universal access fund, with participants MPG, DOC INFRACO, and SENTECH.
- Province to meet with Microsoft to discuss opportunities for training and SMME/Cops offered by the windows 8 recently launched.
- A need for province to pronounce the Mpumalanga University as an ICT in the country and the ICT industry is willing to enter into negotiations with government on how to support the university
- Operators are willing to sign MOUs with province and conclude areas of cooperation and provinces really need to follow up.
- Establish ICT Cooperatives in the province

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

- Aggressively inculcate the development and generation of local content as there is a lot of money in this area of work-DTT provides a platform for locally generated content.MPG to conclude an MOU with DOC on a number of areas including such as broadband, e-skills, post office services, rural development, DTT, content development etc
- Engage DOC immediately on Mpumalanga Entrepreneurs on the opportunities provided by DTT, from installation, distribution, content development, training as well as manufacturing of set top boxes.
- It was agreed that the MOU should include the establishment of content hubs in Mpumalanga as well as to include the exploration of rolling out community broadcasting in the province. The MOU will indicate the modalities of the project and the process to be followed.
- An environmental scan on existing infrastructure development especially on ICT is recommended. Consultations with all social partners throughout the province and bringing them together are necessary for greater impact. Other provinces where the e-SI has initiatives and Knowledge Production Hubs, those provinces have established own Human Resource Development Councils for enhanced management.
- DEDET should take a lead in resuscitating the previous established Forum dealing with ICT issues for continuity and implementation of ICT programmes jointly with industry. The participants in the forum (USSASA, DOC, MPG, Entrepreneurs and Network Operators).
- DEDET is to put together an implementation plan that will include all interventions discussed in this session.