



# INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY LESSONS FROM LESOTHO 2007-2013, BENCHMARKING AND EVALUATING TOWARDS FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF ICT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES.

**J.M. MAPHEPHE**

Independent ICT adviser

Electoral Projects

E-government & Forensic Audit

Maseru, Lesotho

[jmaphephe@msn.com](mailto:jmaphephe@msn.com) [jmaphephe@gmail.com](mailto:jmaphephe@gmail.com)

---

## ABSTRACT

This article examines whether there is a significant shift from traditional government practise to modernised Information Communication Technology project management approach. ICT can have a wizard effect on speeding of development process of the country. ICT make it possible to deliver information by means of *voice, text, data, video and graphics* faster and more efficiently than before. [5]The implementation of ICT policies, strategies and developments provide an enabling environment for Government to work with the private sector and civil society to improve and expand access to information for all its citizens. There are many challenges and obstacles that Lesotho as country is facing in the implementation of ICT policies and strategies. The key among these obstacles has been identified in various ICT professional reports as the lack of a unified approach through the entire Government ministries, agencies and public sectors. Lesotho Government has been identified as the key driver of these policies and strategies by actively engaging the public in the process. Lesotho has pronounced its dream which is to be fully incorporated member of the *Information Society*. Why obstacles? Can Lesotho achieve the ambitious dream in 10 years to come and regained the cost-effective developing world through the use of ICT as tool for growing Lesotho economic and if so, how? This paper looks into the processes by reviewing the Lesotho ICT policies and strategies between periods of 2007 to 2013. Benchmarking process as a supporting tool for policy and strategy implementation has been applied and the results are discussed. These lessons may have relevance to many developing countries, including those on the African continent. The paper concludes with a set of recommendations on how the policies and strategies review processes should be carried out.

**Keywords:** ICT, policy, strategy, benchmarking, Lesotho, Government.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As articulated [5] that integration of Lesotho into the global information society calls for development of an effective policy and regulatory framework for the implementation of such a strategy. (Twaakyondo.2011) stated that implementing of a national Information Communication Technology policy of a country is vital for the development of a nation. Lesotho like many states in the African continent recognized that (ICT) sector as a key accelerator for development, hence why the Government of Lesotho official adopted ICT policy in March 2005, and followed the policy implementation. So far tremendous progress has been made including national broadband strategy, Lesotho Government Data Network, good network connectivity from Maseru to all 10 Lesotho districts. Although it is more than 6 years the ICT sector has changed quite significantly; there is a need to review all stages of the ICT policies, strategies and finally come up with suggestions for improvements as necessary. The arguments will illustrate the analysis carried out and the results from three relatively successful African countries, namely South Africa and Kenya and Botswana, in ICT policy and strategy implementation. Besides the policy and strategy process and stakeholder's involvement, national goals, objectives and mission are discussed.



The institutional arrangements for the implementation from Maseru being the capital city to all 10 districts. It is important to note that Government of Lesotho has developed ICT policy that cognizant of converged technologies. It captures the Dynamic and pervasive nature of the technology. To further embrace the policy, Lesotho Government adopted an ICT strategy; The ICT strategy supports, underpins and aligned to the Government business objectives and priorities as well as the overarching vision of the Lesotho National ICT Vision and Mission statements, which have been stated as: To create a knowledge-based society fully integrated in the global economy by 2020, AND “To fully integrate information and communications technologies throughout all sectors of the economy in order to realise rapid, sustainable socio-economic development.”

## 2. BACKGROUND

[5] ICT strategy in the context of Lesotho is in effect a plan. It shapes the development work to be carried out in respect of ICT as a supporting business tool, and it gives context to that development work setting out the environment in which it can effectively be executed. It is crucial that the strategy is not viewed as a static document but, rather, becomes a dynamic management tool that is used to shape and evolve the delivery of information and services within Lesotho Government. In this respect, ownership of the strategy is paramount and leadership must be seen to be coming from the most senior management of Lesotho Government.[5] Claimed that the dream of a prospering Lesotho, fully integrated in the global economy cannot be realised without a well designed ICT strategy. In order for Lesotho to seize and obtain maximum benefits from the opportunities provided by ICTs, it needs a roadmap that clearly defines what is to be done, when and how it will be done and who is going to do it. The Government having developed the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy as a tool to enable Lesotho to achieve its development goals as articulated in the Lesotho Vision 2020 Policy Document and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is now in a position to set up the appropriate institutional framework for policy formulation, Regulation and operations in the sector. An ICT policy has been developed and declared as a channel and mobilisation to the investment required to accomplish its great ambitions.

In order to improve the effective contribution of ICT and optimise its business benefits, a coherent strategy has been crafted and adopted to ensure the Government of Lesotho (GoL) takes full advantage of new opportunities created by the exploitation of technology and organisational performance is improved through effective ICT investment. The potential impact of new ICT on the efficiency and quality of public services is significant; the ICT strategy that has been developed and published, to enable the entire Government ministry experts to have the systems and information they need to provide a responsive and proactive service to their clients and business partners locally, regionally and internationally. The strategy enables managers and staff to make informed and effective decisions in a timely and efficient manner. Any investment in systems and technology must be well managed and supported by robust business cases which can demonstrate a real benefit to Lesotho as the deployment of technology and systems in an unstructured way (technology for technology’s sake) will simply mean that GoL gains new hardware and software but that the underlying processes remain unchanged and no efficiencies are gained.

### 2.1 Context

The Government of Lesotho formulate the government’s budget annually for every financial fiscal year of the government business, taking into account the full impact of government spending on the way government services are delivered. The budget has to deal directly with the impact of ICT best practice and ICT government services deliveries, in addition to reliable Infrastructure-Government best practice that will help to take Basotho nation much further, faster and with greater efficiency, in parallel with economic growth. It has to be modelled around other countries around the world, African continent and institutions that have had successes, and yet be tailored specifically to Lesotho’s economy and culture. The ICT government services delivery should foster accuracy, efficiency, accountability, security, state-of-the art education, minimisation of fraud, and a healthy population, as well as easier, faster access to government provision for the entire nation. These should be supported by a robust and reliable infrastructure, which should have adequate speed, sufficient capacity, and secure networks and data centre, all of which can be maintained by qualified Basotho staff, and which will allow full access to all Basotho. Mr John Maphephe as an independent ICT advisor to Government of Lesotho has been part of both International, regional and local team of experts from 2006 to 2011 providing of ICT technical advisory support. It is against this

background that some of the interesting methodologies, project management challenging lessons and experiences are recorded for the future of Lesotho. These lessons may have relevance to many developing countries, including those on the African continent.

## 2.2 Document Structure

The remainder and initial headings of this report is structured as follows:

- 1.1 Introduction,
- 1.2 Background and
- 1.3 Context
- 1.4 Document structure
- 1.5 Describes the methodology adopted
- 1.6 Source of information
- 1.7 Regional benchmarking as guiding tool for successful implementation of ICT policy and strategy in Lesotho
- 1.8 Lesotho experiences from introduction to implementation of ICT projects 20007-2013.
- 1.8.1 Benchmarking ICT Policy Vision, strategy Missions and Objectives of selected countries compared to the Lesotho's
- 1.8.2 The overall ICT Policy Goals are
- 1.8.3 The overall ICT Policy Objective
- 1.9 Progresses in implementing the ICT policies And strategies to date
- 1.10 Conclusions and recommendations
- *ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*
- *REFERENCES*

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this exploratory research is to understand the extent and complete implementation of ICT policies and strategies in Lesotho from the perspectives of profit and business driven initiatives, Government driven Service delivery. When undertaking research, it is essential to make use of a structured research methodology to ensure the research has integrity (i.e. that it is reliable, valid and can be “reproduced”) [4]. The approach was more of a fact finding tasks to ensure that accurate and comprehensive data was available. Researching the current and future demand in Lesotho markets and across all market segments was the key on evaluating and benchmarking the recorded progress. According to [4], a research methodology is an operational framework in which the facts are placed so that their meaning may be seen more clearly. The region of interest for this study was Lesotho. The parameter of interest is perceived extent and perceived progress made out of ICT polices and strategies towards the complete implementation. Some data was collected using direct personal engagement through semi-structured interviews with more 15 stakeholders from Cabinet members, Principal Secretaries, Directors, Managers, Team leaders and departmental end users.

### 3.1 Source of Information

In this study, key documents reviewed and analysed included the following:

- ICT for Lesotho final version 04<sup>th</sup> March 2005,
- Consultancy to assist the NAO to perform a quality audit and to resolve issues concerning the IFMIS (Integrated Financial Management Information System)
- National Strategy broadband strategy final report 08<sup>th</sup> June 2012,
- Consultancy Review of the Management and Operation of all MFDP ICT Systems Final 15<sup>th</sup> August 2011
- Guide to ICT Policy in IST-Africa Partner Countries v2.2 20 April 2012
- Review of Lesotho Government ICT 30 November 2011,
- Lesotho Science and technology Policy 03-03-2006 – 2011

- Development of an MFDP ICT security policy 28<sup>th</sup> May 2007
- Lesotho 2020 vision Document
- Poverty Reduction strategy document.
- A Diagnostic Review to Determine the Status of ICT Development for Lesotho Government through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning May 2011.
- Final draft Information and Communication Technology Research & Development and Innovation Strategy by the Department of Science and Technology Republic of South Africa.( Version 71204 version 4A 2007).
- Science and Technology Policy for Botswana 2011
- Republic of Kenya Ministry of Science and technology science technology and innovation policy and strategy 2008.

Key stakeholders from Lesotho were consulted in order to gather ideas and recommendation on the review of the ICT policy implementation. The following stakeholders were consulted;

- Finance and Development Planning
- Statistics
- Central Bank of Lesotho
- Financial Intelligence Unit
- Communications, Science and Technology
- Independent Elections Commission
- Lesotho Communications Authority
- Public Works
- Traffic
- Health
- Defence
- Tourism
- Education
- Universities and Colleges
- Local Government
- National ID System
- Home Affairs – Immigration
- Public Service and Cabinet
- Police
- Correctional Services
- Anti-Corruption Unit
- High Court Registrar
- Natural Resources
- LRA

The desk survey was used to review the existing policies and strategies of the mentioned countries. In the final stage, the Benchmarking analysis of the ICT policy cycle (formulation, implementation and review process) in Lesotho was considered against experiences of three relatively successful countries namely Republic of South Africa, Botswana and Kenya. The originating aspects of this work are discussed within the context of:

- The policy and strategy development process and stakeholders involvement
- The ICT policy goals, strategy, objectives and mission
- ICT policy focal areas ,Institutional arrangements driving the ICT policy development and implementation ,African regional dimensions and implementation process made
- Policy monitoring, evaluation and review.

#### **4. REGIONAL BENCHMARKING AS GUIDING TOOL FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF ICT POLICY AND STRATEGY IN LESOTHO.**

[8]Benchmarking has recently achieved a major importance as a support tool for policy-making, in particular at the EU level and in the context of the Lisbon process. Benchmarking has become a common tool in policy support, especially in the most innovative policy fields where institutional learning is of outstanding importance. In the field of Information Society, policy-makers need data to measure the impact of the very significant investments in ICT infrastructure and applications which have become the norm across Europe. At the regional level, huge investments are common place but there are hardly any statistical data to evaluate them in the required depth. Benchmarking has different meaning depending on the institutional and organization set-up in which it is applied. It can be used to measure the success factors of a policy towards developing an ICT society [11].

There are several regional benchmarking options that includes the bottom-up approach, top down approach, horizontal approach etc. In the bottom-up approach, regions get together and agree among themselves on a set of common indicators. Since the region has different policy framework, it is not possible to apply the method initially. The choice of indicators is a result of a compromise among different regions without top-bottom coordination. This implies that the same indicator can measure different parameter in different regions for example a measure of policy output, results, and impacts, or a simple framework of readiness indicator could be adopted [8].

Benchmarking can have a very different meaning according to the institutional and political set-up where it is applied. When used in relation to target-related policies, such as the Lisbon strategy, benchmarking can be used to measure the success of policies towards developing the Information Society. On the other hand, where there are no quantitative targets defined by policy-makers, the role of benchmarking is much fuzzier. Furthermore, it makes much difference if benchmarking is a result of a top-down or a bottom-up effort. Benchmarking eEurope is coordinated by the European Commission as an “open method of coordination” to measure and stimulate activities of member states. In this case, benchmarking acts within the political scope of the eEurope action plan and in order to measure (and stimulate) eEurope policy objectives. Benchmarking eEurope does not address the relevance of the objectives of the eEurope action plan, but rather accepts them as given. This means that here, benchmarking is not a tool to evaluate the policy design but the policy implementation and the attainment of its objectives. Benchmarking in this case acts after policy vision and challenges have been developed, according to which indicators relevant to the policy are defined and agreed upon. [8].

A different situation applies if regional benchmarking is devised through a bottom-up approach, where regions get together to agree between themselves on sets of common indicators. In the UNDERSTAND initiative, partner regions have no common policy framework, so benchmarking is not applied in the way of an operationalisation of specific policy objectives. The choices of indicators are a result of a compromise among different regions without any coordination from top down. This approach also reflects the fact that EU regions have different powers in different domains, which is mostly a result of different national policy systems: Some regions can act on the education or health system where others cannot. That means that measurement of; for example, the availability of PCs in schools or the usage by citizens of E-health services can be highly relevant for policy-making in one region, while it is of little direct value in others. This also implies that the same indicator can measure different things in different regions: It can be a measure of policy output, results, and impacts, or it can be a simple framework / readiness indicator only. The fibre optics network’s length is an output policy indicator for Emilia-Romagna, which has a project to put down new fibre, but a framework[8].

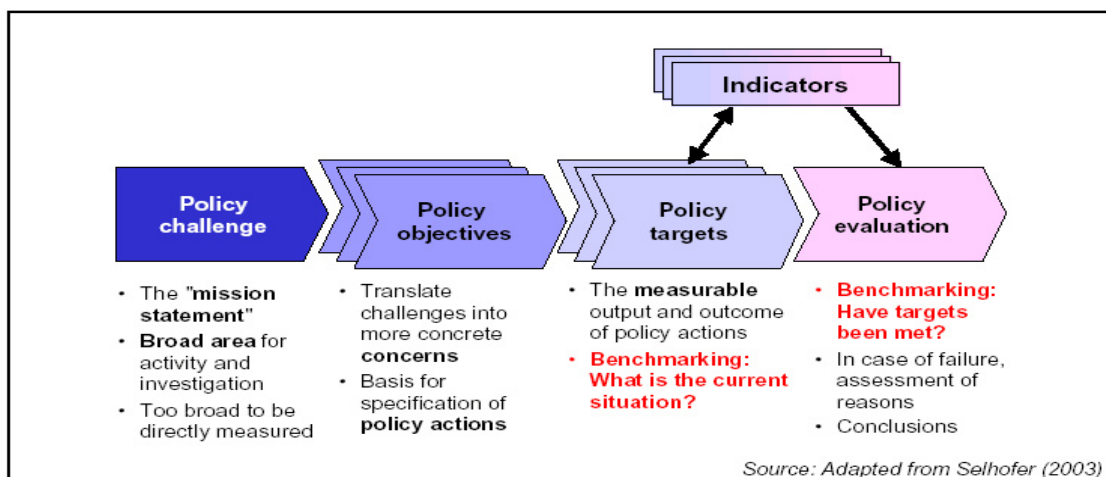


Figure: 1 The different roles of benchmarking in policy-making



This means that the role of benchmarking at the regional level is not simply to measure the attainment of policy objectives (policy evaluation), but it can also have a direct impact on the policy design (prescription) [11]. Ultimately, and paradoxically, it could lead partner regions to have not only common indicators, but similar policies as well! For example, if a region with no policy priority on broadband finds out that it has much less fibre optics coverage than other EU regions; it might find it necessary to introduce it as a new political priority

## **5. LESOTHO EXPERIENCES FROM INTRODUCTION TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ICT PROJECTS 2007-2013.**

The Government of Lesotho [5] with financial support from the European Union (EU) started in 2006 the process to acquire and install an Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS). Maphephe (2011b:3) to this end it is planned to integrate, migrate the local area network to the new national data centres within the entire government ministries. In May 2008- 2011, Lesotho government received an additional international funding to support the implementation of ICT development. There are many challenges that the country had experienced in the implementation of a policy of this magnitude[7].

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) between 2010- 2011 jointly used to be the central coordinating in charge of: directing Lesotho's overall economic and development policy; collecting and keeping a record of all revenues and expenditures; accounting to Parliament for the use of public funds; maintaining a record of all government assets; collecting population, social, economic and financial statistics, maintaining the national statistical database; and formulating national manpower policies and plans. [7]To this end the Government of Lesotho (GoL) through the two ministries (Minister of Communications, Science and Technology AND Ministry of Finance) executed an Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) and Lesotho Government Data Network (LGDN, to capture and process government financial transactions. The GoL commissioned and invested in a single, standardised, shared infrastructure, accessible, secure and inter-connected through a centralised management.

To this end the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology have embarked upon implementation ICT policy and strategy for Lesotho Government. This incorporates a large-scale work programme to support the GoL objective of providing world class ICT services to enable Government and citizens alike. For example the IFMIS system has now been implemented, Production of E-passport Service, albeit subject to final user acceptance testing in all GoL Ministries running across the Lesotho Government Data Network (LGDN). In addition, the Government of Lesotho have reorganised the support operations and are implementing their ICT Strategy[7].

[7]A number of operational procedures have been developed and the support is provided through a Help Desk within Ministries, functioning of email and Internet connectivity through the entire GoL, procurement of software & hardware and Data centre at Ministry of Communications Science and Technology. An Information Security Management System Policy (ISMS) is also being developed with (MCST) to ensure security of data through adherence to controls and the Plan Do Check Act requirements of ISO27001.[7] The current ISMS, still in progress, is the result of 5 years Information Security Consultancy provided to Ministry of Finance. It therefore represents a considerable investment in monetary and human resources input and this review was commissioned to advise on how to ensure the potential benefits as well as achievements to date are secured. Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology (MCST) is responsible for the management of the Government wide data network, data centres and a number of Government wide initiatives including the implementation of the Government e-mail system. However, there are opportunities within the entire Government ministries to improve their performances, as to attract the attention of the GoL Cabinet members, Parliament members, civil societies, International donor community, Private business sector and Lesotho Judiciary services.



The current communications network within Lesotho Government Data Network is found to be generally fit for purpose and more than capable of supporting a full range of Government service deliveries. The availability of dark fibre for the connectivity between government buildings in Lesotho provides a massive bandwidth capability. As articulated [5] that; A successful ICT strategy must be in line with the organisation's business strategy. In defining the strategy, the key requirements have been drawn from the Business and Information System Needs report which was produced during reporting phases of many ICT consultancy review, submitted to the Government of Lesotho ICT projects through consultations and input from all Government Departments. The ICT strategy supports and assists in the delivery of government's business objectives over the next 3 to 5 years.

The ICT Policy and strategy identifies the implementation roadmap by translating the business strategy and considering the three building blocks:

- Applications; Automating of business processes and production of quality reports
- Technology; Confidential, integrity, accessible, functioning and reliable infrastructure
- Organisation, Fully fleshed ICT organisational structure that support business objectives
- ICT as tool to grow Lesotho economy and Lesotho to become a knowledge society.

### **5.1 Benchmarking ICT Policy Vision, strategy Missions and Objectives of selected countries compared to the Lesotho's**

[5]The policy vision, strategy, mission and objectives of Kenya, South Africa and Botswana emphasize addressing citizen problems which are similar to those of Lesotho. Furthermore, countries like Namibia and Tanzania have provided milestones in the policy. In Malaysia, the State has a vision to utilize ICT to transform successively to an information society, a knowledge society and finally a values-based knowledge society [Malaysia ICTpolicy]. In Mauritius, the policy vision on making use of the ICT as the fifth pillar of the economy and transforming the country to a regional ICT hub [Mauritius ICTpolicy]. Lesotho's Roadmap to the Information Society is based on a number of guiding principles, including the need for high level of political commitment and proactive leadership if the necessary investment required to achieve policy goals and strategies is to be secured. Clearly good governance and a commitment to freedom of the press, freedom of information and an independent media are part of that commitment. It is worth noting that these principles are supported by the Media Policy (19 August 2009) and Communications Policy 2008, which builds on the Telecommunications policy of 1999 and 2005 ICT Policy.

#### **The overall ICT Policy Goals are to**

- Increase wealth creation and improve quality of life through adoption and use of ICT
- Promote ICT literacy and affordable, universal access to ICT products and services
- Coordinate national ICT implementation & development of human resource capacity
- Develop standard, practices and guidelines to support ICT deployment & exploitation
- Provide mechanisms for empowering local participation in the ICT sector

#### **The overall ICT Policy Objectives are to:**

- Achieve buy-in by all stakeholders of the importance of ICT for national development
- Facilitate deployment of national broadband backbone to enable ICT service delivery
- Mobilise resources and establish financing mechanisms to realise ICT policy goals
- Promote development of local ICT products & services, access to public domain data Strengthen existing ICT institutional, legal and regulatory framework
- Promote collaboration and coordination at national, regional and international levels
  - i. Eight key strategies have been defined to drive development of the Information Society and Knowledge Economy in Lesotho. The policy states that "Government, as a leader, in collaboration with other stakeholders, is committed to the following overall strategies Establishing legal and institutional mechanisms to ensure the successful implementation of the ICT policy
  - ii. Providing leadership in ICT development
  - iii. Investing in ICT education and human resource development



- iv. Encouraging the production and wide distribution of local multi-media content
- v. Promoting the growth of the private sector
- vi. Ensuring universal access to ICTs.
- vii. Guiding infrastructure expansion need to support the delivery of ICTs
- viii. Promoting regional and international cooperation”

The roles of each key stakeholder are then briefly defined. Government’s role is defined as providing “the vision and policy with a legal and regulatory framework that will guide the activities of all stakeholders”. However, it is acknowledged that government “must also play a key role in channelling resources to invest in supporting infrastructures for ICTs in partnership with national and regional businesses and development partners”. The Regulator is responsible for monitoring “market demand and supply capacity of service providers and shall intervene to correct imbalances or market distortions in favour of users”. While the Regulator (whose mandate is limited to regulation of Telecommunications, Information and [5]Communication Technologies, Broadcasting, Radio frequency and Postal Services) is accountable to the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology, it has statutory independence to ensure impartiality, flexibility and transparency. The Private Sector (Business and Industry) is responsible for developing and expanding ICT infrastructure and providing ICT services and products. It is also called upon to improve product and services quality to ensure global competitiveness (as this is key to attracting Foreign Inward Investment as well as achieving export sales which is critical for the Lesotho economy). The Private Sector is also seen as having a key role supporting the government in achieving wider digital literacy and development of ICT human resource capacity.

The Education Sector is responsible for including ICT literacy as part of core curricula in schools and universities, and leveraging ICT to both improve access to and improve quality of available education in Lesotho so as to develop an ICT literate society capable of producing local ICT products and services. Civil Society has the role of identifying societal needs for ICT products and services, improving access to these products and services and promoting ICT adoption in Lesotho. Finally International Organisations and Development Partners have been identified as having a key supporting role, working with the Government of Lesotho to secure necessary financial and technical support for ICT projects and programmes. The government will promote technology transfer and become actively involved in ICT international forums. Finally there are 10 cross cutting catalysts were selected by the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology to ensure ICT policy achieves the Government’s broader development goals, ICT and Supporting Infrastructure, Education and Human Resource Development Enabling Legal and Regulatory Framework, Rapid Delivery of ICT Services-Government, E-Commerce, Health, Agriculture and Food Security, Tourism, the Environment and Natural Resources and Gender and Youth

Lesotho is partial aligned to the following vision statement: ***The Vision “is to create a knowledge-based society fully integrated in the global economy by 2020”, This vision statement has the following limitation;***[5] The vision statement is directed towards the utilization of ICT for accelerating knowledge based society. It is too expensive for Lesotho to achieves this vision for now [6]. Stakeholders consulted during information gathering from information sources of the study had a common message that there is need for intervention on broadband pricing and regulation of wholesale market. Some of the Internet Service Providers felt that they were completely priced out of the market by the high wholesaler prices charged by the incubator operator which then competed directly with them in the retail market. From the regional benchmarking there is fair competitions, regulatory laws and private sector is leading the implementation while government being the main regulator.

Adherence to operational procedures the objective: was to confirm that operational procedures and change control processes are followed and that the operational procedures reflect current operational practice. The method: assess operational procedures being carried out including but not limited to observation of tasks and examination of logs and other relevant records. The detailed findings and information was obtained during interview. [2]The three countries namely Kenya, South Africa and Botswana demonstrated a very good record keeping and following operational procedures management and other supervising staff are mentored in respect of discharging their managerial and supervisory responsibilities.





Each distinct service head is assisted to identify their key performance indicators, understand their service deliverables and know who their customers are.[9] Once customers are identified, the relationship must develop. Essential that dialogue is established and the concerns of customers can be addressed to manage their expectations. A culture of management information should be fostered to ensure that management is routinely informed on a frequent, if not daily basis, of the Key Performance Indicators in their area of responsibility. Maintenance and Application support initial objective: Assess the local support provision; Effectiveness of change management; Responsiveness and resolution timescales of Third party external software supplier support; Future capability/capacity of Third party external software supplier support. [9] Perception of effectiveness of Third party external software supplier support. The Corporate and Information Governance management in this area must be improved. Responsiveness and resolution of third party external software suppliers is not being actively managed. It is one of the strongest pillars for South Africa and Botswana hence why there is a significant progress in the implementation of ICT policies and strategies. The future capability and capacity of third party suppliers is not being actively managed in Lesotho as there is no specialist ICT Contracts Manager to liaise with the external suppliers.

Implementation approach e.g. project boards, project management, Objective: Assess ICT stake holder's perceptions of key areas such as training effectiveness, project management, and user involvement in relation to system implementation.[3] Method of approach was on the site review of available documentation, staff interviews and workshops. Elements of good project management practice are being used in areas such as the implementation of OAS, and these should be encouraged. In particular the involvement of end users. Benchmarking with this three successful ICT policy in selected states in the region, user involvements, technical equipments, and adequate budget have been in place as part of project implementation. The adoption of a proven project management methodology will ensure that such areas as communication, training and risks are fully considered. Many staff has strong feelings about IFMIS and there needs to be a co-ordinated approach to address the concerns, myths and misconceptions expressed from various report [9].

## **6. PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE ICT POLICIES & STRATEGIES TO DATE**

(IST-Africa Consortium 2012:55) the Government of Lesotho has developed a comprehensive ICT Policy and good strategies, which when fully implemented will significantly impact on the socio-economic development of the country. There are clearly areas of overlap between the cross-cutting catalysts, whereby collaboration with the private sector on common policy measures, instrument and initiatives would have a very significant, positive impact on rolling out parallel initiatives more quickly. It also seems clear that addressing some problems at a cross-border level would offer significant advantages including potential cost savings when rolling out solutions at a national level. This is particularly the case for countries addressing common problems.

It is now over a period of 6 years after the adoption of the ICT Policy and strategy, the ICT government programmes were still largely stuck at the stage of static information provision, although limited progress has been made in the various spheres of government towards the interactive and transactional stages. An example of the interactive phase is that of enabling Business Suppliers and owners who have submitted for payments, Traders Licenses, private emails to senior government employees, tenders, ministry of educations and Land Administration to monitor progress on the approval of plans online and to interact with the responsible unit to address any obstacles in this process.[9] In general terms, the ICT policy leads to an implementation plan benchmarked by flagship projects, although the presence of an implementation plan may not guarantee the success of policy. A review of the situation of Lesotho shows that the implementation of the ICT policy is driven by external funding more than a well thought-out plan that addresses the key building blocks like infrastructure, regulatory functions and human resources development as envisaged and monitored.



## 7. CONCLUSIONS

[1] The effective uptake and utilisation of ICT have made a demonstrable impact on economic progress and there are clear indications of ICT's positive impact on development. Effective uptake requires investment in Research and Development, innovation and human capital development, both mid-level and high-level ICT skills, to create the requisite absorptive capacity in the economy, and requires that technology be created or adapted to address the specific challenges arising from Lesotho context [1]. The World Summit on the Information Society [12] identified the central role that science and the sharing of research results play in the development of the information society; the need for international and regional cooperation in creating an inclusive information society; and the role of education, knowledge, information and communication in relation to human progress, endeavour and well-being [12]. ICT has been identified as key tool towards Lesotho becoming a fully integrated member of the Information Society by the former **Minister of Communications, Science and Technology Dr. Motsotse Thomas Thabane in March 2005**. The analysis of the Lesotho national policy and strategy deployment and implementation has been carried out. Weaknesses were identified through the Benchmark approach taken to analyze and compare the Lesotho from other countries of similar nature but in the same regions. It is evident that from the start of the initiatives, drafting and development of the policy stakeholders took a backbencher role, thus leading to:

- Lack of ownership, direction, resources, and operational institutional framework
- Poor participation of key stakeholders
- Poor coordination during implementation
- Lack of coherent but integrated implementation strategies
- Lack of unified approach towards the implementation

[11] In order to correct the situation, the policy review process has to consider changes in technology, new national and regional developments and recognize the evolving of new acts and policies. A good policy with its implementation strategies and institutional framework has the potential of making ICT an effective tool in achieving countries development goals.

For an effective policy review process it is recommended that:

- The review of the ICT policy should involve all stakeholders emphasizing a multi-stakeholder participatory approach involving key ministries, private sector, civil society and international participation.
- The policy has to appreciate such other laws and regulations like cyber usage, e-transaction, confidentiality and privacy.
- The reviewed policy has to emphasize downstream issues like ICT Incubator to promote local entrepreneurial culture.

By using the benchmarking principals Lesotho was analysed and compared to other countries. The emerging issues from the work and the entailing findings are categorized in the following key elements summarized as:

- The policy process and stakeholders involvement
- The ICT policy goals, objectives and mission
- ICT policy focus areas
- Institutional arrangements for driving the ICT policy
- Regional dimensions ( Kenya, Botswana and South Africa)
- Implementation processes
- Policy review and monitoring

[10] Institutional framework for implementing the national policy implementation and monitoring was not described adequately in the policy; hence some roles were left hanging. It is observed that all the stakeholders consulted strongly feel that the policy left a serious governance gap. [10] Most of the stakeholders interviewed agreed that, coordination of the implementation strategy was inadequate and therefore created confusion on what have to be done and what should be the source of funding for the proposed activities.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author acknowledges the contributions made by Independent ICT consultancy firms namely, Capita Helm, Analysys Mason from UK, Soft Tech from Tanzania, and Mr Masiu Khiba who is Director of ICT from Ministry of Communications Science and Technology, Mrs Tholoana Masupha who is Information Systems Manager from the Ministry of Finance, Lesotho Senior ICT Experts, Lesotho ICT suppliers and IPS. Mr Ntoi Deputy Principal from the Ministry Planning and Development, Mr Pheko Lerotholi Principal Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Development and finally Lesotho Government throughout its entire resource.

## REFERENCES

- Chapter 1: Cohen, W. and Levinthal, D. (1990). Absorptive capacity: A new perspective on learning and innovation. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 35(1): 128–152.
- Chapter 2: Department of Science and Technology, (2007) Final draft Information and Communication Technology Research & Development and Innovation Strategy; Available [www.ist-africa.org](http://www.ist-africa.org) [accessed on the 05 December 2013].
- Chapter 3: Government of Botswana, (2011) Science and Technology Policy for Botswana. available [www.ist-africa.org](http://www.ist-africa.org) [accessed on the 02 December 2013].
- Chapter 4: Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, J.E. (2010). *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 9th ed. Boston: Pearson.
- Chapter 5: Lesotho Government ICT Policy, (2005). ICT Policy for Lesotho Government; Presented by the former Minister and member of Lesotho Parliament Dr. Motsoahae Thomas Thabane, Minister of Communications, Science and Technology 04<sup>th</sup> March 2005, Maseru Lesotho Available [www.gov.ls](http://www.gov.ls) [accessed 10 October 2013].
- Chapter 6: Murry, M. & Haigh, T. (2012) *Development of National Broadband strategy for Lesotho*, Analysysmason: Maseru.
- Chapter 7: Maphephe, J. (2011) Government of Lesotho Diagnostic review on the status of ICT systems.
- Chapter 8: OSIMO, D., AND GAREIS, K. 2005. The role of inter-regional benchmarking in the policy-making process: experiences in the field of information society, In proceedings of the Regional Studies Association conference, Aalborg, Denmark.
- Chapter 9: Republic of Kenya ministry of science and technology science, (2008) technology and innovation policy and strategy: available [www.ist-africa.org](http://www.ist-africa.org) [accessed on the 06 December 2013].
- Chapter 10: Remenyi, D and Williams, d. (1995) "Some Aspects of Methodology for Research in Information Systems," *Journal of Information Technology*, vol. 10(1) 191-201, 1995.
- Chapter 11: Twaakyondo, Hashim M. (2011) Key Issues in Information Communication Technology Policy Review Process: The Case of Tanzania. *Journal of Computing and ICT Research*, Vol. 5 (2) 46-58.
- Chapter 12: WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) (2003). Declaration of principles. Building the Information Society – A global challenge in the new millennium Available [www.itu.int/wsis/docs](http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs) [accessed 04 June 2013].
- Chapter 13: 04 June 2013].

---

## AUTHOR'S PROFILE

---



**John Maphephe is PhD research student at Durban university of Technology in South Africa. He specializes in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).** John has been working in ICT for over a decade on both electoral and non-election specific projects, specializing in ICT project management, voter registration and auditing of ICT systems for government agencies and others. John has in-depth knowledge and broad comparative experience of ICT use in civil/voter registration projects, ballot paper printing systems, results tabulations systems and nominated candidates' databases. A citizen of Lesotho, he has run his own ICT business and Construction since 1998. He

began working with the Lesotho Independent Election Commission in 1999 and was swiftly promoted to IT Systems and Service Manager – a position he held from 2002-2008. He has obtained two Master degrees in Business Administration and Good governance and Political transformation, also a Certified Accpac ERP consultant from Sage products. John has worked for ERIS, Interpeace, UN Missions Peace Keeping Operations, UNDP, Government agencies, ministries, and public companies. An effective and experienced ICT Advisor, Business Development Manager, Project Manager and Administrator with extensive political and commercial experience in the management of large diverse and complex programs with special projects mostly in post conflict areas. The programs have being executed in Africa, Sudan, Somaliland, Kenya, South Africa, Lesotho and has worked to build capacity within election commissions, set up data centres and financial systems, designed voter registration processes, and managed successful election projects

---