

Information and Communications Technology

8 Policy Recommendations

*For the advancement of Knowledge Societies
across Africa*



A Product of the African Leadership in ICT Course



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These recommendations represent the opinions of a cross-section of mid-to-senior level managers from ministries and public sector organizations in Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia.

While participating in an intensive leadership course run by GESCI, for the advancement of knowledge societies, these future leaders gained a deeper understanding of the critical interplay between Education, ICT, and Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in the development of emerging economies across East and Southern Africa. The African Leadership in ICT course, which uniquely combines key elements of leadership, knowledge society and futures thinking into six *action learning* modules, is delivered online and face-to-face over the course of seven months, culminating in a final policy coherence workshop, at which these recommendations were produced.

With a focus on the dynamics of developing ICT policies and plans that take account of emerging trends in infrastructure development, regulation, and affordable access to ICT services, participants were able to identify common policy gaps that need to be filled in order for their governments to create, with foresight, the ICT futures that best serve their societies and economies.

We hope that the following summary of ICT policy recommendations will be considered an important indication of the gaps in the policy, planning and implementation processes across the ICT sector, as perceived by those who are engaged in policy development and implementation in Kenya, Mauritius,

1. Build a solid National Telecommunications Infrastructure

Supporting a National Communication backbone infrastructure that will connect all areas of the country is essential to the advancement of knowledge societies. Individual efforts and initiatives by telecommunication companies need to be coordinated by the Government to ensure that duplication of effort is eliminated and to increase the pace of roll-out.

- ⇒ Develop clear strategies on the deployment of broadband.
- ⇒ Ensure there are competitive, and open telecommunications markets.
- ⇒ Develop shared infrastructure through various means, such as unbundling local loops and establishing mobile labs.
- ⇒ Protect the rights of consumers.
- ⇒ Optimize national and regional connectivity.
- ⇒ Follow international telecommunication standards.

2. Ensure Access for All

- ⇒ Create universal access funds to ensure that geographically and socially disadvantaged areas have basic access.
- ⇒ Ensure access to broadband for each household through universal access schemes and policies targeting all population groups and ensuring fairness and equity.
- ⇒ Provide access and training to socially disadvantaged groups, like mothers, farmers, and disabled people etc.
- ⇒ Provide cheap or free shared access resource initiatives such as community telecenters.



3. Provide a Proper Cyber-legal Environment

- ⇒ Enact legislation on data and information protection which governs access and production of information systems.
- ⇒ Ensure that the identities of individuals and organizations are recognized by digital signatures.

4. Integrate e-Governance across all Citizen Services

- ⇒ Integrating e-Government service delivery across all citizen services will positively affect the lives of citizens.
- ⇒ Ensure harmonization of initiatives across government services.
- ⇒ Ensure e-Government services are easy to use and in the local language where necessary.

5. Strengthen the ICT4D Value Chain

- ⇒ Ensure initiatives are supported by clear policy objectives and are implemented to ensure that investment in ICT infrastructure creates the desired impacts.
- ⇒ Increase competition between telecom operators to increase affordability through various means like attracting investors, updating regulations and sharing infrastructure.
- ⇒ Promote research and innovation through the elaboration of a national research and development policy and encourage collaboration among actors in conjunction with the innovation system.
- ⇒ Reinforce existing e-Government policies related to data sharing, open access, and the setting up of a National Authentication Scheme for trusted electronic transactions.
- ⇒ Create incentivisation schemes to attract greater investment in the ICT sector.
- ⇒ Partner with industry for focused skills development, seed funding and stimulation of innovation for ICT entrepreneurship.

6. Build ICT Ecosystem Resilience

Against threats like economic instability, political and social challenges and climate change, it is recommended that governments review their policies to create resilience to respond to the challenges of these global drivers and national trends which are shaping the future.

- ⇒ Fully implement a Green ICT Policy.
- ⇒ Develop effective e-Waste management policy and guidelines.
- ⇒ Establish a framework for regulating social media utilisation.

7. Promote ICT Literacy to all Citizens

⇒ The Government should put measures in place that will increase ICT literacy levels among citizens, such as: making ICT studies a compulsory subject in schools and subsidizing training in ICT at colleges and universities. Skills include software development, database administration, networking and security issues; including disaster recovery skills.

8. Ensure Policy Coherence

Create a common vision of the Knowledge Society across all government departments to secure support from the highest levels of government as well as academia, research communities, industry and with the public.

⇒ Ensure greater internal consultations are incorporated in the policy development process to promote more coherence and planning that takes into account medium and long-term social-economic trends in the country and globally.

⇒ Set up an Inter-Ministerial committee to spearhead KS initiatives.

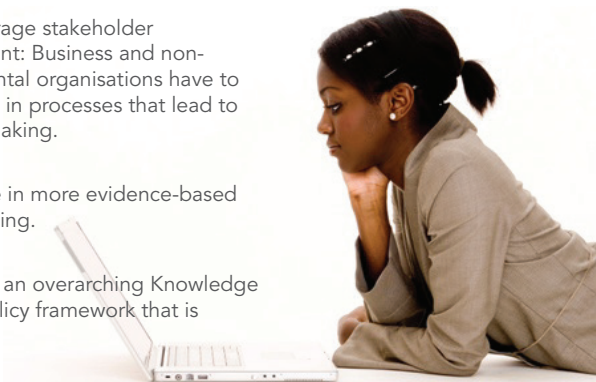
⇒ Evaluate departmental policies and implementation strategies through an overarching institution that acts as a catalyst for determined implementation of plans.

⇒ Establish a mechanism to align financial resource allocation with KS goals within the ICT pillar.

⇒ Encourage stakeholder engagement: Business and non-governmental organisations have to participate in processes that lead to decision making.

⇒ Engage in more evidence-based policy making.

⇒ Create an overarching Knowledge Society policy framework that is



About the African Leadership in ICT Course

ALICT is an African Union Commission initiative, supported by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and implemented by GESCI.

Course Vision

Work with future African leaders in ministries and organisations to advance knowledge society development across Africa.

Course Objectives

- Equip future African leaders with a commanding understanding of the key elements in the development of knowledge societies.
- Build future leaders' capacities to be agents of change in their ministries, organisations and regions for the development of knowledge societies.

Course Delivery

Blended Learning Approach whereby participants learn in both online and face-to-face settings.

Course Structure

- Orientation
- Leadership in the Knowledge Age
- New Strategies for Science Technology and Innovation
- Communications Infrastructures and Quality Internet
- ICT Applications and the role of Government
- Education in the Knowledge Age
- Knowledge Society for Africa

Target Countries

The course has been delivered to participants in Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania, Zambia and South Africa. A second round of the course is currently being delivered to participants in Rwanda, Mozambique, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Malawi, Botswana and Namibia.

What past participants are saying about the course.....

"I am now a better leader thanks to ALICT. Through the 360 analysis, I was able to identify my strengths and my weaknesses. I have also been able to identify opportunities and go for them. I am now a better communicator with my bosses and my peers. I have learnt how to build networks necessary for the knowledge society and that I can make a difference as an individual."

Esther Gacicio, Assistant Director, Kenya Institute of Education

"The ALICT course has the content any leader needs for the future. It indeed prepares a leader to think beyond today. Organisations have a vision and to accomplish it requires a futurist. This is some of the

Merenia Makombe, Assistant Director, Examinations Council of Zambia

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