

AGILE AND RESILIENT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

43rd AAPAM Roundtable Conference

Digital Transformation- Kingdom of Lesotho Case Study



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Background and Country Context

Kingdom of Lesotho is a small constitutional monarchy landlocked by Republic of South Africa

The kingdom covers 30,350 km² of which 60% represents range lands, 9% arable land.

The population stands at 2.2 million as per 2016 census with a high level of unemployment which is 13.6% of the employable population.

The country is ranked high in literacy level which was registered at 86.2% in 2016.

Official Languages are Sesotho and English

Coalition Governments started in 2012. Current Coalition Government came into office in October 2022

Rationale for Study and Methodology

To share past and current interventions engaged by Lesotho Government to harness ICT to enhance service delivery

To share experiences, challenges and solutions in embracing ICT to improve public administration and governance

To share new plans on embracing technology as a vehicle for service delivery and enabler of new opportunities

Desktop research, reports, bulletins, interviews with stakeholders, observations and published statistics.

Situation Before Digital Interventions

- Manual paper-based systems
- Absence of digital legal frameworks and policies
- Uncoordinated Stand-alone Systems by various institutions and government ministries
- Fixed line transmission networks for communication
- Teller based banking transactions that used cheque books and saving books etc.
- Cash payments and issuance of paper-based receipts resulting in theft and fraud
- Absence of governance structures to lead digital interventions
- Lack of awareness and skills in digital technologies

Digital Transformation

Initial Interventions

- Development of Laws and policies - Lesotho Telecommunications Policy of 1999, ICT Policy of 2005, Lesotho Communications Policy of 2008 and the Communications Act of 2012, Data Protection Act 2011.
- Establishment of Lesotho Communications Authority in 2000 to coordinate and regulate communications technologies.
- Hybrid of fixed and wireless networks by Mobile operators (Vodacom & Econet).
- eGovernment Project that developed digital infrastructure including Government Data Network across the country.
- Establishment of data centres and server farms

Digital Transformation

Digital Services

National Identity and Civil Register System

- Registration of live events
- Issuance of Identity cards
- Integration for verification of Identity through dedicated web portal
- Online services not yet available

National Livestock Databank

- Registration of livestock
- Issuance of stock markings
- Online services not yet available

Digital Transformation

Digital Services

Human Resources Management Information System (Oracle EBS)

- Human Resources functions
- Government Payroll Processing for Public Officers
- Integrations with other systems- NICR, CDAS, CBMS, Epicor

Company Registration and Business Licensing system

- Online registration of companies and businesses
- Database of registered companies
- Enable updates of data
- Issuance and renewal of business licences

Digital Transformation

Digital Services

Examination Council of Lesotho (EcoL) online Service Portal

- Provides full fledge online service
- Registration of candidate for examinations
- Verification of results
- Evaluation of results
- Reprint of results

Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) online Service Portal

- Tax registration
- Tax return filing
- Issuance of tax clearance certificate
- Integration with other systems for tax filing e.g. IFMIS

Digital Transformation

Digital Services

E-Service Outlet Model

- Implemented to improve accessibility to online services where citizens are assisted to access online services by outlets.
- Internet café, mobile money agents, print shops – 38 outlets countrywide
- Outlets are certified and branded
- UNDP & ICSTI initiative to reach out to grassroots levels

Digital Transformation

Digital Money

- Use of mobile money is now the fastest growing means of payment for small and medium businesses
- Easy facility using Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) payment that allows users without smartphones to perform mobile money transactions using codes e.g. *200# for activating Mpesa
- Facility is affordable, convenient and a reliable digital wallet
- Majority of the population use mobile money for money transfers, payment of bills and services such as school fees, social grants, utilities and others
- Some organizations are using the facility to pay wages to employees.

Digital Transformation

Digital Money

- Digital money service has boasted economic empowerment for small scale businesses, financial inclusion and accessibility.
- Introduction of Mobile Apps to cater for smart phones users
- Vodacom Lesotho introduced Mpesa in 2013 while Econet Telecom Lesotho started Ecocash in 2012
- The other emerging partner in the digital money space is Pay Lesotho which provides gateway for various online payments
- Number 7 Restaurant in Maseru CBD is one example of the business that has gone cashless using digital money for transactions which in turn secures the business from cash related threats and robberies.

Digital Transformation

Digital Money

Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development introduced mobile money facilities for payment of Old Age Pension grants in November 2023. The project is ongoing and aims to reach a greater population.

Pensioners receive Money through Mobile money and Cash	Number of Pensioners
Mpesa	13 410
Ecocash	1 205
Total pensioners receiving mobile money (Mpesa & Ecocash)	14 615
Pensioners receiving hard Cash	67 128
Grand Total	81 743

Source – *Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development*

Digital Transformation

Status of Digital Money Usage

Mobile Money Service statistics as per State of ICT in Lesotho -ICT Demands 2017

Service	Percentage
Mobile money	43.2%
Mobile Banking	2%
Internet Banking	9.8%

Source: LCA (2017)

Digital Transformation Journey

Status of Internet Connectivity in 2017

Statistics on State of ICT in Lesotho Internet Access and Connectivity

Type	Percentage
National Internet Connectivity	3.6%
Fiber ADSL	2.5%
Modem	13.9%
Mobile Phones	83.7%
Internet usage in urban areas	67.5%
Smartphone ownership	55.5%

Source LCA (2017)

Digital Transformation

Status of Internet Usage

Statistics on State of ICT in Lesotho Internet Access and Connectivity

Education Sector Internet usage	
Education Level	Percentage
Tertiary	88%
Secondary/High School	66%
Primary School	32.7%

Source LCA (2017)

Population Internet usage	
Reasons for Using Internet	Percentage
Social Networking	46.7%
Education & learning	23.9%
Messaging	14.7%
Entertainment	8.2%

Status of Digital Skills and Competencies

- Inadequate digital literacy- ability to use digital tools and applications by all citizens.
- Low use of internet in education and learning reveals the possibility of limited skills and competencies to embrace digital services.
- Focusing on capacitating ICT personnel alone is not enough to realize utilisation of digital services.

Opportunities in Digital Skills and Competencies

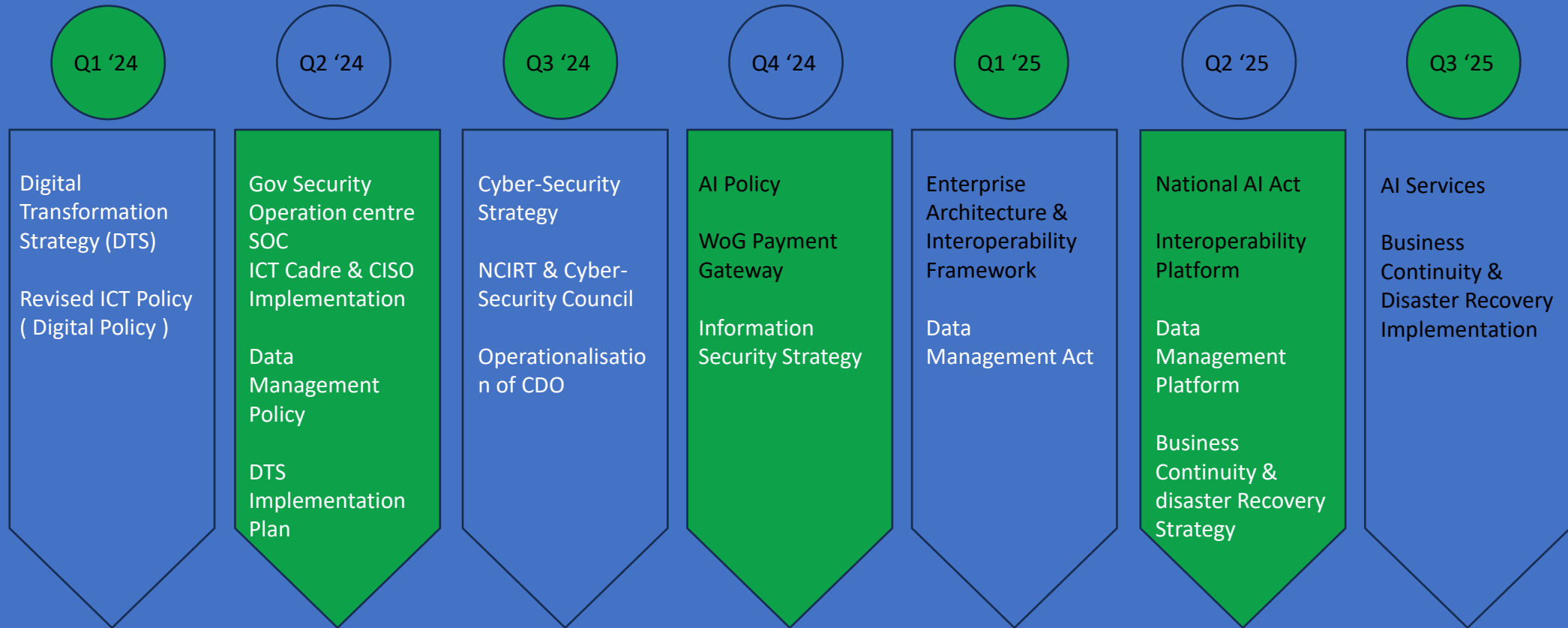
- Vodacom Foundation supports digital skills capacity through bursaries in ICT innovation, telecommunications and cybersecurity.
- Vodacom Innovation park provides incubation in the form of skills sharing, provision of office space, connectivity, facilities and office equipment to young emerging entrepreneurs

Challenges in Digital Transformation

- Internet connectivity penetration is difficult due to mountainous terrain of the country.
- Inadequate laws, regulations, and institutions necessary for development and functioning of a digital economy.
- Limited interoperability of systems remains a huge challenge to both service providers and citizens
- Absence of payment gateway for government services defeats the very same need for digital services.
- Lack of critical ICT skills, competencies and knowledge such as software development, robotics, Artificial Intelligence which are needed for service improvement
- High rate of vandalism of equipment at network towers where solar panels and electric cables are stolen

Next Steps in Digital Transformation

MICSTI Plan and Timeline



Electronic transactions, Consumer protection, Competition management , Cybercrime, Cybersecurity, Digital government, Open government data, Critical Infrastructure Protection, Digital ID, National Digital Addressing system , Digitization of records

Conclusion

- The digital transformation can transform the economic landscape of the country
- Stakeholder engagement essential in implementation of the strategy, policies and legal frameworks
- Inclusive technologies such as satellite technology can bridge the digital divide
- Emerging technologies should form part of curriculum in all levels of education to empower students and to prepare them for digital world
- Digital literacy should be accessible to all citizens to enable them to access digital services
- Huge potential for the country to solve and overcome the numerous challenges of today, such as climate change and its impact on Agriculture, Healthcare services, escalating crime and service delivery in general.
- Willingness and commitment of the government of the day to make transformational and difficult decisions will accelerate digital transformation initiatives.
- Job opportunities for small and medium businesses to sell their products internationally through digital tools.

