

E–Africa Initiative for Good Governance

Gianluca Misuraca

African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development - CAFRAD, Morocco

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the need for all around improvement of performance is very urgent for African governments and that ICT is valuable in decision-making, planning and management support in all sectors of the economy. In this regard, in Africa, there is a clear recognition of the opportunities than can be exploited using ICT within the framework of enhancing governance. As underlined by the United Nations Development Programme—Human Development Report 2001, “*Making New Technologies Work for Human Development*”, technology networks are transforming the traditional map of development, expanding people’s horizons, and creating the potential to realize in a decade progress that required generations in the past.

E-GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: CHALLENGES AHEAD

The integration of ICT in governance in Africa would have a strong impact on the life of all citizens. It can be a powerful engine for growth, competitiveness and jobs, while at the same time improving citizens’ quality of life. But, of course, the scenario for integrating ICT in Africa’s governance is difficult, and there are a number of technological and human barriers that threaten the exploitation of ICT. In short, the barriers against such initiatives are summarized by the weakness of the ICT infrastructure in Africa and the low rate of ICT penetration in administration. A number of initiatives and projects on ICT development in Africa are already under way. Many of the projects on ICT development led by International Organizations focus on financing technological infrastructure and providing assistance oriented to lower tariffs. New approaches aim to incorporate socio-cultural dimensions “placing the individual at the centre of development objectives” (UNESCO, 2001).

The centrality and importance of strengthening the political and administrative frameworks in African countries is therefore pivotal. Recent developments in ICT have however opened Africa up to exciting possibilities for public administration, in particular, and governance in general. The appropriate use of ICT in managing public services and governing state affairs has therefore become

a necessity. This is well recognized by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and in particular by African Ministers with responsibility for the public service. The establishment of the e-Africa Commission of NEPAD, focusing on a range of areas pertinent to ICT implementation, from policy to e-applications, as well as the identification of good governance as a focus area for capacity-building within NEPAD, reflect the importance given to building the capacity of African states to function more effectively through the use of ICT.

As identified by the e-Africa Commission of NEPAD, the main challenges for integrating ICT in Africa can be summarised as follows:

- **Leadership:** Need for a clear e-vision; Capacity and will to lead change; Management and accountability structures.
- **People:** Appropriate skills and attitudes available at all levels; Availability of training programmes; Entrenching a culture of increased information access and transparency; Commitment to high level team work; Support for public service wide collaboration; Change management initiatives.
- **Policy:** Liberalised telecommunications sector and effective regulation; Policy environment supportive of growth of ICT adoption and use; Policy frameworks that secure freedom of information, privacy, security, intellectual property and copyright; Arresting the “brain drain”.
- **Processes:** Identification of critical processes as well as improvement; Process adaptable, integrated and open to innovation; Monitoring and evaluation; Identification and adoption of best practices.
- **Technology:** Access to ICT networks, services and equipment; Development of local content in local languages; Ensuring that programmes drive ICT; Standard approaches to ICT infrastructure, to ensure scalability and interoperability; Privacy and data sharing; Authentication; Building user trust.
- **Stakeholders and Access:** Support for the need for “e”; Ownership across the board; Making information widely available to citizens; Utilising a variety of channels, including those owned and managed by the commercial and voluntary sectors (such as Kiosks and Call centres); Consideration of people with disabilities; Ensuring that any new channels

live up to high consistent standards of trust, confidentiality, security and accountability (PCs, interactive TV, cell phones, telephones/letters, etc.).

E-AFRICA INITIATIVE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE: BUILDING E-GOVERNANCE CAPACITY IN AFRICA

In view of the overall commitment of the NEPAD Heads of State to stimulate the use of ICT as a driving force to foster social and economic development of the continent, and in respect of its mandate to support the improvement of the governance systems and the performance of the public service in Africa, in 2002, the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD), in partnership with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and under the banner of NEPAD, launched the “e-Africa initiative for good governance: building e-governance capacity in Africa”, with the aim to raise awareness and propose a way to find solutions on how to operationalize the role that ICT can play in the development process.

The “e-Africa initiative” focuses on drawing on the strengths in both good governance and ICT and wishes to provide an important contribution to the success of NEPAD’s overall vision on Africa’s development. Following the successful “e-Africa 2002: First Regional Workshop on Building e-governance capacity in Africa” (Johannesburg, October 28-31, 2002), organized by CAFRAD in partnership with UNDESA and under the auspices of NEPAD, the partners agreed on an overall Framework for Action, which was also presented to the 4th Global Forum on Reinventing Government (Marrakech, December 10-13, 2002). According to the e-Africa proposal and Framework for Action, the e-Africa initiative is composed by the main elements reported as follows.

- **Vision:** Inclusive and participatory African systems of good governance that are capable of exercising their powers and functions, delivering public goods and services efficiently and effectively in a transparent and accountable manner using ICT, to reduce poverty, redress inequality, promote sustainable development, foster security and fulfill social, economic, cultural, civic and political rights.
- **Mission:** To strengthen the institutional capacity of the African governance systems, especially that of regional, central and local government institutions, to improve policy making, coordination and delivery of public goods and services using ICT, in partnership with all stakeholders, complying to

high standards of integrity, efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and responding to the needs expressed by their constituencies.

Strategic areas of support:

- E-Readiness;
- Enabling environment;
- Public participation and private sector engagement;
- Institutional capacity building; and
- Monitoring, learning and knowledge management.

Strategic objectives:

- Government as a catalytic force of social and economic development, empowering its institutions through the use of ICT to work together with civil society and private sector to meet the needs expressed by their constituencies.
- Accountable, efficient and effective processes for performing government administration, reducing transaction costs and enhancing policy coordination between the different government entities.
- Effective delivery of public services through efficient administrative and financial systems, ensuring quality, accessibility, affordability and sustainability.
- Increased capacity of government to engage in participatory and consultative decision-making processes with individuals, communities and organizations, by simplifying and increasing the interaction and transaction through the provision of online services and channels of participation.
- Reduction of space and time constraints between providers of public services and goods and those that make use of these through application of ICT.

Given the leading role of CAFRAD on e-governance activities, within the framework of the Pan African Programme on Public Administration and Governance, approved during the 4th Pan African Conference of Ministers of Public Service (Cape Town, May 4-7, 2004), CAFRAD, NEPAD and UNDESA, convened the “e-Africa 2003 Expert Meeting on building e-governance capacity in Africa” (Tangier, October 20-22, 2003).

The output of the meeting, organized with the financial support of the government of Italy, was the conception of the draft e-Africa Plan of Action, which outlines the set of realistic activities that can produce positive impact on political, economic and social governance in Africa, as specified in the “Framework for Action”, and in pursuit of NEPAD priority programs. It is guided by the following strategic principles:

2 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/africa-initiative-good-governance/11379

Related Content

Service Learning for the Community College Student

Roch Turner (2017). *Student Experiences and Educational Outcomes in Community Engagement for the 21st Century* (pp. 174-195).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/service-learning-for-the-community-college-student/166389

"Smart City": The Concept of Resolving the Contradiction Between Production and Urban Life

Vardan Mkrttchian, Yulia Vertakova, Yuri Treshchevsky, Natalya V. Firsova, Vladimir Plotnikov and Dmitry Y. Treshchevsky (2019). *Industrial and Urban Growth Policies at the Sub-National, National, and Global Levels* (pp. 300-319).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/smart-city/222084

GML-Based nD Data Management With a Big Geo Data Semantic World Modeling Approach

Juergen Rossmann, Martin Hoppen and Arno Buecken (2018). *Contemporary Strategies and Approaches in 3-D Information Modeling* (pp. 191-223).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/gml-based-nd-data-management-with-a-big-geo-data-semantic-world-modeling-approach/204295

Social Networking and Knowledge Transfer in Collaborative Product Development

Katariina Ala-Rämi (2008). *Creative Urban Regions: Harnessing Urban Technologies to Support Knowledge City Initiatives* (pp. 65-79).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/social-networking-knowledge-transfer-collaborative/7249

The Impact of Digital Media on Urban Discourse: The Journalists' Perspective

Lukasz Damurski, Virginia Arena, Yannick Drijfhout, Carlos Mendez, Pawe Pach and Kasia Piskorek (2023). *International Journal of E-Planning Research* (pp. 1-20).

www.irma-international.org/article/the-impact-of-digital-media-on-urban-discourse/326059