

Chapter 17

Assessment of the South Africa Presidential Commission on Fourth Industrial Revolution Implementation of Integrated National Strategy and Plans

Nkholezeni Sidney Netshakhuma

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0673-7137>

University of South Africa, South Africa

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the role of the South Africa Presidential Commission on the fourth industrial revolution implementation of integrated national strategy. This study is based on a qualitative research technique. The chapter only assesses literature reviews on the fourth industrial revolution published in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. The study found the absence of the records management specialists in the commission has implications on the systematic implementation of an integrated national strategy to respond to the fourth industrial revolution. The successful implementation of an integrated national strategy requires the inclusion of a records management programme as the central key of the fourth industrial revolution.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Fourth Industrial Revolution and records management are inseparable as access to records can be managed. The fourth industrial revolution propagates inclusivity, interlinkage/ interconnection, the interdependence and blending of smart technologies, knowledge, people, services, and access to the extent that is blurred to achieve the requirements of the time. The inclusion of records management professionals in the South Africa Presidential Commission of the Fourth Industrial Revolution Commission has the potential to elevate the status of records management. This is because of the high level of neglecting paper-based

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records in South Africa (Netshakhuma 2019a). It seems that the establishment of the Commission may lead to the adoption of electronic records management filing because open data and e-government require the provision of information online. A records management system should enable a government institution to locate and retrieve information. Therefore, any institution which seeks to provide access to information has to improve its management of records (Netshakhuma, 2019e). An assessment of the Presidential Commission is therefore important; it could be the start of a journey towards developing an overall national records management strategy. This is because of very little if any current study on the assessment of the South Africa Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution implementation of an integrated national strategy.

The South Africa government established the Presidential Commission on the fourth industrial revolution in 2019 to implement an integrated national strategy. It appears that the records management function is the pillar to implementing the integrated national strategy. The advent of information communication technologies has ushered changes in the way records managers collect and manage records. The transition to the Fourth Industrial Revolution is reshaping the paper-based system of government business processes (Nalubega and Uwizeyimana 2019). This statement is acknowledged by Majore, Yoo, and Shon (2014) who indicated that technological advancements transformed records management creation, authentication, use, and records disposal. Records are generated by various technological devices as a result of the emergence of the fourth industrial revolution which is considered to be the outcome of the convergence of several technologies in industrial operations (Frederick, 2016). These information and communication technologies include robotics, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, big data, linked data, 3D printing, biotechnology, and the integration of technology with the human body.

It appears that the President of the Republic of South Africa established the Presidential Commission because South Africa lagged behind other developing countries in the implementation of an integrated national strategy. Countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina also lack the strategy to migrate to the electronic environment (Gavric and Mlakic 2019). The lack of a national strategy posed a risk of readiness for developing countries to adopt electronic records management systems. The implementation of an integrated national strategy requires the adoption of electronic communication technology to enhance the provision of access to information (Netshakhuma, 2021) . The integrated national strategy of the Presidential Commission on the fourth industrial revolution can be viewed as a high-level policy that should cascade down to the professionals in government through advice and guidance that the Commission is legally bound to provide to the government departments. The researcher is of the view that the inclusion of records management professionals in the Commission can be central to the implementation of an integrated national strategy. However, the Commission is not, yet, clear in terms of how those on the ground working in records management across the government will manage to migrate paper-based records to the electronic environment. The President appointed 30 people with skills and knowledge in Finance, Information Communication Technology, and procurements. However, archives and records management skills were hardly mentioned.

The Presidential Commission was assigned to develop policies, strategies, and innovation plans on the Fourth Industrial revolution. The Commission was established with the view of taking advantage of information communication technologies. The Commission aims to develop an integrated national response strategy. According to the South Africa Government Gazette (2019) the mandate of the Commission is as follows:

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