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Ikamva National e-Skills Institute

e-skilling the nation

National e-Skills
Plan of Action 2013

executive summary

extract from the Second e-Skills Summit held in Cape Town from 22–25 October 2012

continuing to e-skill
the nation for equitable prosperity
and global competitiveness

The second e-Skills Summit of South Africa 2012 and the International Telecommunications Union's (ITU) Global ICT Forum on Human Capital Development 2012 was held from 22-25 October 2012 in Cape Town. It brought together local and international delegates from more than 50 countries, resulting in productive discussions with information willingly shared. This type of information sharing is essential for developmental states to inform planning and implementation of approaches for an ICT-enabled world.

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NeSPA 2013 executive summary

The National e-Skills Plan of Action (NeSPA 2013) advances the base laid by NeSPA 2010. The latter was created after the first e-Skills Summit in October 2010. NeSPA 2013 continues to be aligned to national goals and to the Millennium Development Goals.

Recommended actions include: e-astuteness; increased collaboration, integration and aggregation; a funding mechanism; a changing education environment and community learning centres, among other actions for impact.

Equitable prosperity and global competitiveness is essential to building human capacity.

Socio-economic challenges must be dealt with in a sustainable manner.

e-Astuteness needs to be developed so that people socially appropriate all forms of ICT for local benefit. People also need to adapt to rapidly-evolving technology.

Alignment to NDP

NeSPA 2013 recognises and valorises the premises of the 'National Development Plan – Vision 2030' (NDP). This refers to building capabilities as the core of developing increased equitable prosperity and global competitiveness within the South African socio-economic platform, one that is increasingly dominated by new forms of information and communication technologies (ICT).

The NDP recognises that the South African economy is too reliant on resources to build a sustainable future – one in which its people can create more equitable opportunities and a cohesive society that is proud of its culture, resourcefulness, innovation and global recognition.
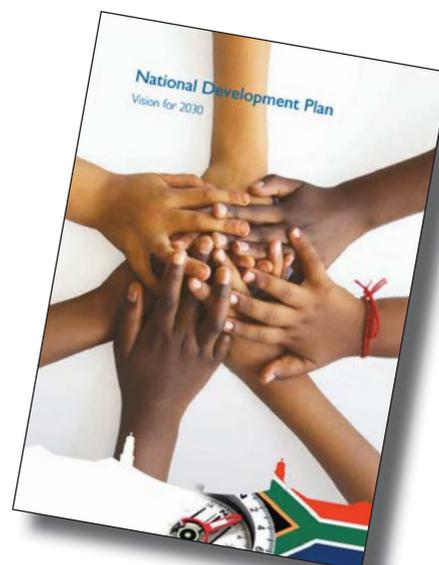
e-Astuteness is essential

NeSPA 2013 recognises that any sustainable approach to addressing poverty and in building self-reliance, self-respect and a more cohesive society, cannot be achieved without the social appropriation of ICT for local benefit.

It is essential to build an ICT-related astuteness – e-social astuteness – across the full spectrum of South African society: as consumers, clients, customers, entrepreneurs, businesses, workers, learners, communities and families. e-Social astuteness, an integral part of e-skills, moves beyond getting people to merely use devices.

Greater coordinated national skills building

The Word Economic Forum (WEF) Global e-Readiness 2012 rankings show that South Africa has dropped from 47th (2007) to 72nd place (2012). Previous South African efforts, while well intentioned, have failed to adequately prepare South Africans for a socio-economic reality dominated by new forms of powerful mobile ICT devices.

In explaining the rapid drop in South Africa's ranking, the WEF e-readiness report identifies lack of appropriate skills as a major contributor. This is not because South Africa has not applied genuine effort but because other nations have applied a greater coordinated national effort. They have also made e-skills a national priority in dealing with inequity.

National Development Plan
Vision for 2030

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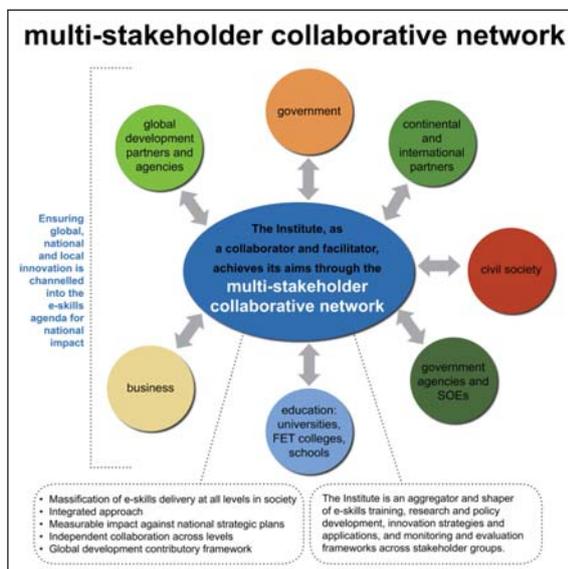**NeSPA 2013 executive summary**

e-skilling the nation

Technology for equitable prosperity

ICT devices are now rapidly increasing capacity, mobility, accessibility and affordability. They also add in a vision base in ways which overcome impediments of language and literacy. Currently, developmental states are the biggest market in the world for devices which are increasingly socially based, do not recognise nation state boundaries, develop new value propositions and aggregate effort into increasing economies of scale that challenge national influence.

On the other hand, without national leadership and intervention, the natural tendency of this new technology is to scale into centralised hubs of decision making that increase inequity and, thus, poverty.

All people and environments need to be included, such as the unemployed, those in informal education and those within rural and peri-urban areas.

An internationally-recognised model and planned approach

NeSPA 2013 provides the model, identifies a planned approach, and calls for the emergence of a national entity that commands the support, resources and respect of all government departments, state-owned enterprises, business, education, civil society and organised labour.

The approach, outlined in this document, has been informed by in-depth investigation of approaches used in Mexico, Cuba, the United States, Kenya, Rwanda, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and Northern and Eastern Europe. The model, which has been developed and tested across the above-mentioned stakeholders since 2008, was endorsed by the ITU Global ICT Forum on Human Capital Development (Cape Town, October 2012) and recommended for adoption by the 55 nations in attendance.

Integration, aggregation and collaboration

The NDP identifies two major reasons why previous major national interventions have not met their worthy expectations: "firstly, the government had an overly optimistic view on the capacity of the state which in reality was based on a lack of coordination across and within government, the private sector, education and civil society, and; secondly, the country did not appreciate the impact of external shocks and changing international conditions on its fortunes" (NDP, p4).

NeSPA 2013 embeds responses to the above issues into the essence of its approach. It provides the means for a single point of entry for national and international interactions in dealing with a matter that is at the core of its future prospects, namely building e-social astuteness across the full spectrum of society. It calls for and provides the approach for integration, aggregation and collaboration "within and across government, the private sector, education and civil society" in e-skilling South Africa.

An integrated collaborative approach is a key success factor in major socio-economic initiatives.

NeSPA 2010 and NeSPA 2013 have at their core the development of an integrated, collaborative and responsive approach across all stakeholder groups.

Need for funding and resources

NeSPA 2013 recognises the need for a mechanism to ring-fence and second resources into a new vehicle. This will provide the means for all agencies to better align their efforts in building a societal e-astuteness that is essential to achieving success in any developmental agenda in the 21st century.

Community-aligned education environment

NeSPA 2013 recognises that the environment surrounding education, particularly higher education and training, is irrevocably changing. Furthermore, the government must provide the mechanisms for education to be more directly aligned to and engaged with community in ways that can deliver on the goals of the NDP.

New vehicles for embedding ICT

New vehicles involving government, education, business, civil society and organised labour must be established with and at universities. This will provide a means for stakeholders (national and international) to develop and apply their skills to build and evaluate capabilities for embedding new forms of ICT into every facet of South African life.
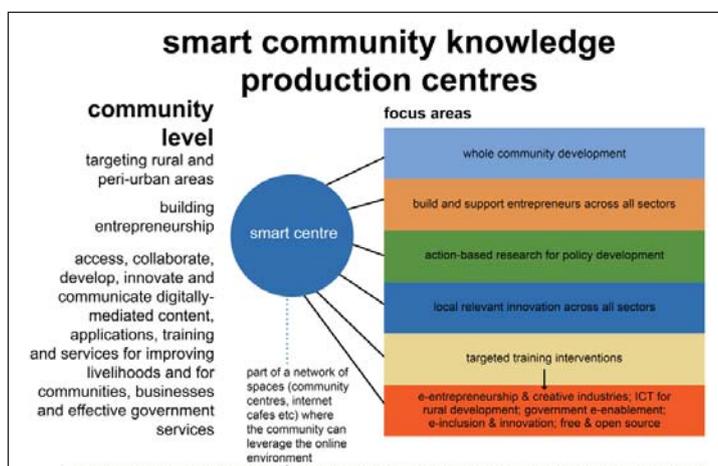
Mandated integrated approach to community learning e-centres

A myriad of existing e-centres and community e-learning centres have been established by government, private enterprise and civil society. NeSPA 20113 recognises the need for these centres to be aggregated into a system that provides a collaborative focus and leadership support in ways that harness the best knowledge directly into local development. This aggregated network of the community learning centres must harness the skills, energy and interests of formal and informal learners – as a component of formalising and embedding e-astuteness in social capacity development.

These centres need to be redesigned, reinvigorated and developed into providing the means to harness local innovation and create opportunities that can feed into incubator centres and accelerator centres. The latter will allow for the creation of new value propositions. This simply cannot happen without a concerted, mandated and integrated national approach.

NeSPA 2013 recognises the need to develop an architecture that can spearhead a focused approach for innovation, research, monitoring and evaluation and policy development specifically aimed at building a societal e-astuteness (e-social astuteness). It recognises that – despite the best efforts of the existing distributed system largely 'operating in silos' – South Africa's capability development for the social appropriation of ICT for local benefit has not worked.

International experiences clearly demonstrate that putting more money into the existing structures will not address the matter and, in fact, often increases insular efforts and unnecessary competition. It also fails to align effort to address national goals in visible ways.

Recommendations

The aim of NeSPA 2013 is to redress South Africa's slippage in the global e-readiness rankings and to build a sustainable base in South Africa for more equitable prosperity and global competitiveness in a socio-economic environment that is increasingly dominated by new forms of ICT. Beyond what is mentioned above and in more detail in the document, NeSPA 2013 recommends:
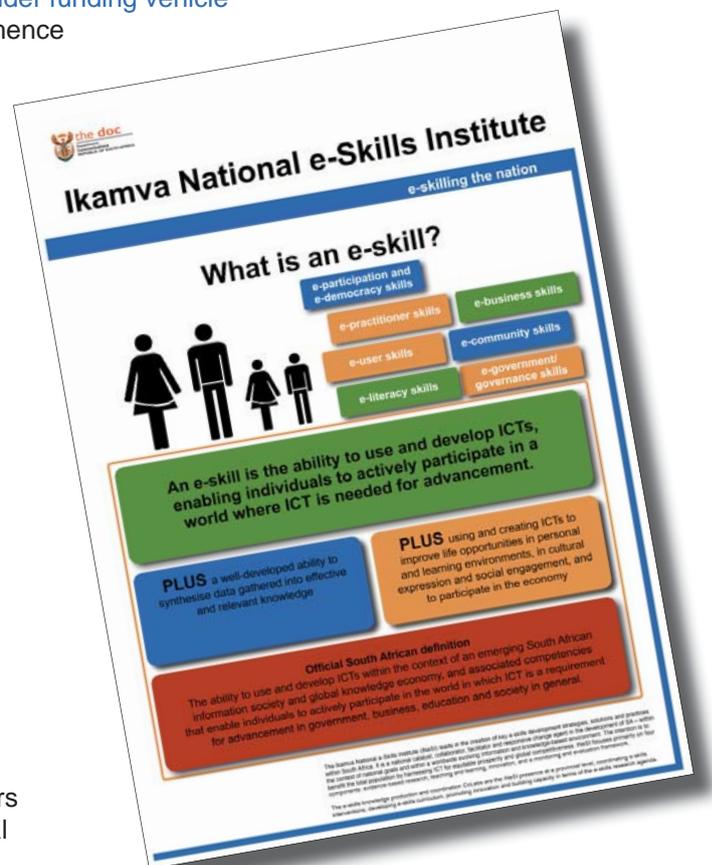
- Providing the mechanism to aggregate and integrate efforts across government, business, education, civil society, organised labour and with the international community. The mechanism must develop capabilities for an active e-astute citizenry that can grow an inclusive economy within a capable developmental state.
- The increasing of policy development, research, monitoring and evaluation capacity through:
    - strengthening the Research Network for e-Skills (ResNeS) with the allocation of funds and resources from existing government provisions
    - requesting a policy intervention to allocate 12 South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) to e-skills, e-astuteness and e-readiness initiatives with the relevant adjustments to the selection criteria to account for emerging national needs aligned to the NDP
- The establishment of a collaborative multi-stakeholder funding vehicle to commence

The NeSPA 2013 provides a clear path that needs to be supported, driven and owned by all stakeholders.

coordinating a multi-stakeholder approach to addressing South Africa's e-readiness slippage.
- The reinforcing of the mandated legitimacy and increasing awareness of the e-Skills Knowledge Production and Coordination CoLabs across all levels of government (especially local and provincial), state-owned companies, business and education by instigating project engagement supported by correspondence from relevant coordinating mechanisms of the South African Government.
- The establishment and delivery of a national curriculum and competency framework (NCCF) for e-skills across the full education, training and social learning landscape.
- The building of capacity for e-astuteness through the establishment of a 5 year program of e-capacity building sabbaticals for senior representatives in business, government, education and international exchanges for post-graduate, undergraduate and high school learners in a coordinated approach across its international partnerships.

Photos from the second e-Skills Summit of South Africa 2012 and the International Telecommunications Union's (ITU) Global ICT Forum on Human Capital Development 2012, held from 22-25 October 2012 in Cape Town.

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