Republic of Namibia

MINISTRY OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HOUSING AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

SUB-NATIONAL e-GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

November, 2008
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Foreword

One of the key priorities of the Government of Namibia is to create sustainable communities - places where people want to live and that promote opportunity and a better quality of life for all. Regional and local government has a vital role to play in achieving this.

Sustainable communities require an environment of good governance, public participation, partnership working and civic pride. Effective regional and local government is at the heart of each of these and has a vital part to play in working with their customers to create the conditions necessary for creating a sustainable community. These conditions are:

- A flourishing local economy;
- Good quality public services;
- A diverse, vibrant and creative local culture; community cohesion; and
- A sense of place and pride.

This new approach to sub-national government will improve the delivery of services, will increase public engagement in the decisions that affect them, and will lead to better outcomes for people and places. This is a big prize, and one that will make this strategy worthwhile.

This strategy document is the result of numerous workshops and input from various experts. A special word of thanks must go to The University of Namibia (UNAM) for the contribution of their expertise and guidance in the development of this sub-national e-Government strategy, in collaboration with the University of Tampere (UTA), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU).

Other stakeholders included the City of Windhoek, the Association of Local Authorities in Namibia (ALAN), the Association of Regional Councils (ARC), the Namibia Association of Local Authority Officers (NALAO), the Polytechnic of Namibia, and last but not least, the Local Authorities and Regional Councils that were consulted during regional workshops held all over the country.

This strategy document was drafted under the overall guidance and supervision of the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development (MRLGHRD). The strategy-development process itself has been organised within the Capacity Building for Regional and local authorities (CABLE) Project, established by the Namibian and Finnish Governments.

Windhoek, November, 2008
Ministry of Regional and local Government, Housing and Rural Development
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1 Introduction

Sub-national structures of government must continually modernize the way they work to provide the optimum level of service to the community. E-Government continues to offer ways to allow elected leaders and staff to communicate effectively across scattered locations as well as introducing fast, efficient and comprehensive access to information in order to work effectively. These include:

- Providing electronic support for elected leaders including modern equipment, desktop software, connection to other sub-national as well as national government networks and links, via electronic mail, the internet and other private networks
- Streamlining Council processes and internal communications by general use of electronic mail
- Reducing interdepartmental barriers by shared access to data and systems over the intranet
- Introduction of document image processing as well as electronic archives
- Exploring shared network facilities with other sub-national and national government bodies including possible participation in regional or central government private data networks

Who should read this strategy?

This is a strategic document and not a technical blueprint. It is therefore written for individuals entrusted with the responsibility to improve regional and local government, embrace decentralization and foster the realisation of vision 2030 at a sub-national level. These include councillors as well as officials.

This strategy document recognises the fact that the leadership, decisions and actions of Councillors and their officials over the next two or three years will determine whether Namibia can seize the opportunity to transform the way sub-national structures of government work for – and with – their citizens. This strategy sets out briefly and clearly the issues that should be taken into consideration, a checklist of tasks to be undertaken and the national framework that is being created by the Ministry to support the sub-national structures of government in this regard.

e-Government is not an end in itself. It is at the heart of the drive to modernise government. Modernising sub-national government is about enhancing the quality of local services and the effectiveness of local democracy. E-Government includes:

- *Transforming service delivery* – making them more accessible, more convenient, more responsive and more cost-effective. E-Government has the potential to join up local services (within councils, between councils, and
between councils and other public as well as private agencies). E-Government can help improve the customer ’s experience of dealing with public services.

- **Enhancing local democracy** – making councils more open, more accountable, more inclusive and better able to lead their communities. e-Government can enhance the opportunities for citizens to debate with each other, to engage with elected leaders as well as officials, and hold them to account. It can also support councillors in their executive, scrutiny and representative roles.

- **Promoting economic development** – a modern communications infrastructure, a skilled workforce and the active promotion of e-business can help local councils and regions promote employment in their areas and improve the employability of their citizens.

**Who has the mandate to deliver sub-national e-government?**

E-Government can only be realised by elected leaders and their officials. E-government is more than a technology project and technology alone cannot deliver it. Leadership is vital. There is therefore a need to identify senior councillors and officials to assume the role of “e-champions”. These champions will need the whole-hearted commitment of their political and managerial colleagues.

But councils cannot deliver sub-national e-government alone. To get the best of e-government, there is a need for sub-national structures of government to work with central government departments and agencies within a common framework and be able to share information over secure common networks.

**The case for a sub-national e-government strategy**

It is the intention of the line ministry to ensure that e-government makes a real difference to the experience of people dealing with sub-national structures of government.

The strategy aims to:

- Create a common framework within which local strategies can be planned with confidence; describe what needs to be put in place to help this happen; and

- Identify common priorities for developments in technology and joined-up services that will reduce the cost to sub-national structures of government. It is the intention of the ministry to foster local innovation and use it to build solutions that can be shared widely;

**What is the target?**

Central and sub-national government have adopted the target of making all services available electronically by December 2015. This does NOT mean that all services should be provided on the web, to the exclusion of other ways of delivering them. It means that we should use internet technologies to make services available in people’s
homes, on websites, over the telephone and at council offices and one stop shops in ways that are convenient and helpful to the public. But availability is not enough. Services must be offered in ways people will use and must provide value for money. Yet e-government is about more than services – it is also about community leadership, democratic engagement and economic development. This strategy sets out a framework within which sub-national structures are expected to set, monitor and report on local targets for each of these areas. In return, the ministry will coordinate the national framework to ensure success.
2 Sub-national e-Government and why it matters

1.1 e-Government as a tool in the national reform agenda

e-Government in a nutshell

e-Government is about exploiting the power of information and communications technology (ICT) to help transform the accessibility, quality and cost effectiveness of public services, and to improve the relationship between the customers, businesses and other public/government agencies that work on their behalf.

e-Government can be described as one of the most essential stepping stones required to realise Namibia’s vision of being recognised as a modern nation that is able to compete successfully in a global economy. To succeed in this, regional and local authorities do not only need the highest quality of public services attainable, but also need a vigorous civil society and an empowered population, at ease with - and able to exploit - the opportunities that using modern technology will bring.

Decentralisation in Namibia

In 1997 Namibia adopted decentralisation as a national policy with the overall aim of ensuring economic, cultural and socio-economic development and providing people at the grass root level the opportunity to participate in their own decision making and extending democracy to them as a right based on national ideas and values.

Some of the responsibilities and functions that have been identified to be transferred from Central Government to Regional and Local Authorities are:

- Community Development and Early Childhood
- Administration of settlement areas
- Rural Water Development
- Management and control of communal lands
- Primary Health Care
- Pre-primary and Primary Education
- Conservation
- Forest Development and Management
- Physical and Economic Planning
- Emergency Management
- Resettlement and Rehabilitation
- Regional Council Personnel Management
- Regional Asset Management
- Etc.

Decentralisation in Namibia is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- To extend, enhance and guarantee participatory democracy;
- To ensure, enhance and safeguard rapid sustainable development
- To transfer real power to the Regional Councils and Local Authorities based on national ideas and values
To improve the capacities of Regional Councils and Local Authorities to plan, implement, manage and monitor the delivery of services to their constituents

Decentralisation, in its various stages of delegation and devolution, is being implemented in line with the abilities of regional and local authorities to respond to the challenges and responsibilities of decentralisation. While the regional and local authority acts are clear on their respective functions and responsibilities, these authorities are faced with a number of challenges in development matters, which are not being dealt with in these legislative documents. Sub-national authorities and government often have to act on a trial and error basis to respond to these challenges.

Capable regional and local authority management means the capacity to fulfil public responsibility with knowledge and skills, resources and procedures that draw appropriately on partnerships. An essential element in this process is the way how the authorities and citizens will interact with each other, what type of allies is created and how well the various players are connected.

Information Technology can be seen as a very important agent for decentralisation, because it can free organisations and people from the constraints of geography. The development and deployment of ICT must be customised within the context of the decentralisation processes and procedures, taking into account the specific needs of regional and local authorities. Through this strategy the regional and local authorities will share technological expertise and resources, which will also enable consistent and standardised planning, training, skills development, maintenance and support.

Decentralisation therefore constitutes an important motivation for a sub-national e-government strategy, as the success or failure of the decentralisation process will be determined by:

- Efficient and effective regional and local administrative and service delivery capacity, and
- The management of information and knowledge processes within regional and local authorities; and between them and the line ministry, Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development (MRLGHRD).

1.2 Readiness of Namibian regional and local governments

Problem Definition

The Government of Namibia, and in particular the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development, are striving to improve access to, and the equality of, services for all citizens through, among other efforts, the implementation of the decentralisation process. This initiative is based on the assessment of the capacity of regional and local government to effectively implement the reform vision and agenda of Government. The assessment however revealed considerable inadequacies in the existing processes including the challenges faced by Government in responding promptly and efficiently to the needs of its citizens.
The Major Challenges

This strategy suggests that there are primarily two dimensions that underline the utilisation of ICT in local authorities and regional councils. The first dimension includes the challenges that local administrators face as service providers. The second dimension is the experiences of citizens as the users of these services. Some of the major issues identified during the assessment are:

- Inter-ministerial and interdepartmental cooperation was found to be a major issue contributing to effective ICT implementation. Every Ministry, Department, Regional Council and Local Authority has a tendency towards handling its own acquisition and management of ICT. This trend relates directly to a lack of cooperation as discussed above and the difficulties that sub-national structures are faced with when attempting to implement ICTs in their organisations.

- Local administrators have limited ICT skills and comprehension which has proven to be a contributing factor to the lack of effective utilisation, development and deployment of ICT in regional and local authorities. There is also no standardised system for decision making when it comes to the investment, development and management of ICT resources within regional and local authorities. These standard processes are critical within the context of inter-governmental relations and where government agencies, local authorities and regional authorities work together to provide information and services to the public.

- Local administrative offices are open for restricted hours and days of the week. While this traditional practise may be administratively appropriate, it presents several challenges. The most important challenge is the one of long queues experienced by citizens seeking a government service. Citizens are required to leave their homes, work or studies during normal working hours to seek a government service, simply because government services are only available during working hours and only from Monday through Friday. Suffice to say that this situation affects the productivity of other sectors as well.

- Local administrative offices and human and financial resources are primarily situated in urban centres making it increasingly difficult for the majority of people living outside these centres to access government services.

- Local administrative services and functions are predominantly offered through the traditional “face to face” interactions, which require citizens to travel to specific locations to access services. These services are then also not always available resulting in a wasted trip.

**Case study:** The City of Windhoek is already offering some of their services through automated machines and the Internet, which means that these services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This goes to show that this type of problem can be limited or even completely eliminated given proper thought.
• The total cost of access to services for people living in poor and rural communities are very often higher than that of people living in urban centres.

• Internal and external government processes remain largely paper based. In a few instances where systems have been automated, in particular when it comes to accounting and financial management, there is no system compatibility and inter-operability. Individual local authorities are running a variety of different systems that create tremendous training, support and maintenance problems.

• The utilisation of ICT in service delivery remains limited. However, a significant number of local administrations have started using ICT as a tool for financial management. In several local administrations ICT is also being used for the provision of services such as water and electricity.

• Different regional and local authorities are implementing ICT initiatives with little or no coordination with other regional and local authorities. This results in every local authority and regional council developing and implementing its own system, while the target audience and service remains the same. This leads to wastage and duplication of scarce financial resources.

• ICT readiness varies significantly between the different local authorities, regional authorities and even government ministries. As a result information sharing among private and public shareholders is severely hampered.

• ICT planning and implementation is not effective at regional and local councils, primarily because of local administrators having limited experience and knowledge. In some cases ICT services to local authorities are actually being performed at the supplier’s terms.

• Because of the limited experience and difficulty in comprehending the costs and benefits of ICT, local administrators rarely allocate resources to the development of ICT. This makes it difficult for local authorities and regional councils to recruit and retain the services of properly qualified ICT staff.

• Local administrators face multiple development challenges, which result in ICT becoming a very low priority. This is evident in the low provision of financial resources related to ICT when compared to other organisations.

• Case study: The City of Windhoek has the biggest ICT infrastructure of any of the local authorities in Namibia, yet only allocates an estimated 1% of their annual budget to ICT. The recommended international standard for ICT is however a minimum of 3% of the annual budget.

• None of the local authorities in Namibia has developed any ICT policy or ICT master plan with the exception of the City of Windhoek. This can mainly be attributed to the lack of proper guidelines to regional and local authorities. There is generally limited information available related to network infrastructure, system platforms, security management and recommended
service providers. Local authorities and regional councils currently implement ICT based on their individual needs with little regard or consideration for the needs and responsibilities of the national government, in particular related to the decentralisation process.

- Local authorities often negotiate contracts as a single entity without the full exploitation of collective bargaining. Should there, for instance be a central procurement facility, it would be possible to negotiate from a collective base of power, promoting reduced costs and the use of standardised equipment.

- Very often consultants that do not reside in Namibia are utilised to develop ICT policies, frameworks and guidelines for local authorities, regional councils and ministries. This normally happens because the funding and manpower utilised for this purpose is donor funded. While the quality of the work of these consultants are often of a very high standard, one must ask the question if the vision for Namibia is that of the consultant and whether it takes into account the unique problems faced by regional and local authorities in Namibia.

- Namibia is a country that has invested heavily in IT infrastructure. The country’s optic national fibre network that is owned and operated by Telecom Namibia, rates as one of the best in Africa. Namibia also has the fourth highest tele-density in Africa. All in all, the overall impression of the ICT situation in Namibia is relatively positive. Having said that, however, Namibia still falls short of the computing and telecommunications infrastructure required for successfully developing a widely accessible e-government, especially outside the bigger towns of the country.

- One of the biggest concerns for regional and local authorities is the lack of computer support companies outside the major urban centres. This can primarily be attributed to the fact that up to now computer activity outside the major towns remain relatively low. The majority of computer support companies outside the major towns closed down simply because they were not sustainable.

- Access to the Internet should be much more affordable than is currently the case. This issue must be addressed as soon as possible.

**Case Study:** The Ministry has extended its network to include the thirteen Regional Councils in Namibia. The total lease cost for connectivity to the thirteen Regional Councils (128Kbps) comes to N$480,000 per annum. This represents an average cost of about N$3,100 per month for each of the thirteen Regional Councils. To connect all 107 constituency offices to the various Regional Councils will cost an additional estimated N$2.3 million per annum.
Summary
There is evidence of success stories in some of the local authorities in as far as the planning, development and implementation of ICT is concerned. There are also examples on how local authorities have identified and addressed the challenges offered by the new information society. The City of Windhoek is a good example of this.

At the same time there are many examples of mistakes, most of them resulting from a lack of information and cooperation, limited comprehension of the importance and possibilities of ICT, techno phobia and of course, poor planning or the lack of it.

Nonetheless, the challenge facing the Ministry and regional and local authorities is to acknowledge both the successes and the failures. The lessons learned over the past few years will prove invaluable if Namibia is to benefit from the opportunities offered by ICT. The development and successful implementation of this sub-national e-Government strategy therefore has a high priority, as its successful implementation will definitely improve the current situation, while taking into account the longer-term impact and implications of ICT strategies, development and implementation.

1.3 Benefits expected from e-government

e-Government is a reform agenda that provides additional and new tools to improve the performance of public administration and, thereby contribute to the overall development of a society. The assumed benefits of locally embedded e-government are:

- Improved quality of public services and speed of public service delivery.
- Better interaction between government, citizens and various stakeholders.
- Increased administrative efficiency and effectiveness.
- More accountable, transparent and responsive governance.

The main beneficiaries of e-government include:

- **Citizens**
  Citizens will benefit from much improved accessibility to public services, a higher availability of public services, a higher quality of public services and easier access to information they require.

- **Businesses**
  Businesses will benefit through the lower cost of doing business, an increased pool of resources and partnerships, the greater amount of relevant information available to them and the much higher accuracy of that information.

- **Governments**
  Governments in their part can greatly improve their efficiency, effectiveness and higher esteem in the eyes of constituency, civil society, and businesses, and also gain international recognition as a developed information society with reliable and efficient government.
The most important condition required to realise these benefits is to transform the entire existing sub-national government system and use ICTs intelligently to re-engineer the core processes of government. This requires a strategy that is both community-based and citizen-centric in design.

1.4 The guiding principles for developing e-government

The following principles are applied in the e-Government development process:

- **Inclusiveness**: Citizens and business enterprises must be at the centre of the design of online services that is easily accessible by all. Service delivery must take a variety of forms: online, cell phone and traditional (paper based) ways with citizens having the option to decide which channels of service delivery they want to use.

- **Good governance**: ICT can be a powerful tool for good governance. Six key operational principles are to be respected. These are openness, transparency, responsiveness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence.

- **Organisational change**: As much as e-government serves as a tool for organisational reform, the utilisation of its full potential requires internal reorganisation, i.e. changes in structures and work organisation, training and required skills, as well as in employment conditions. Therefore, change management and reengineering becomes an integral part of any successful e-government strategy.

- **Added value**: Special emphasis must be placed on what the added value of e-government will be to citizens, customers and other stakeholders. This is needed to prioritise and assess the relevance of actions and to materialise the potential of ICTs.

- **Trust and security**: Appropriate levels of trust and security are needed for the successful introduction of e-government services. Cooperation needs to be strengthened to ensure the security of networks and to guarantee safe access to online services.
2 Models, vision and goals for e-government

2.1 Vision and goals for sub-national e-government
Given the core objectives contained in the National Development Plans and the Policy on Decentralisation and the stages outlined in the 2001 implementation plan, and considering the state of e-readiness and the potential of e-government at sub-national level, the following local and the regional e-government can be envisioned.

SUB-NATIONAL e-GOVERNMENT VISION 2015

Namibia envisions having, by 2015 cost-effective, secure, sustainable and high-performing regional and local authorities that can fully utilise the potential of ICTs. This vision can be broken down into three core elements that characterise the future regional and local e-government:

(1) Full utilisation of the potential of e-government at regional and local levels.
(2) Capability to perform administrative, political, service and development functions of administrations in a cost-effective and reliable manner.
(3) Multi-channel access to e-services at any time and from any place through the effective and sustainable use of tools of e-government.

This vision is broken down into the following eight goals:

Goal 1: Contributing to national development
Goal 2: Creating learning regional and local authorities
Goal 3: Creating cost-effective and efficient e-administration
Goal 4: Providing easy and low-cost access for all
Goal 5: Providing customer-centred and value-adding e-services
Goal 6: Strengthening e-democracy and inclusion
Goal 7: Improving local content production and innovation capacity.
Goal 8: Compatible foundation for deploying inter-governmental ICT applications
VISION 2015
Cost-effective, secure, sustainable and high-performing sub-national institutions able to
- utilise the potential of e-government
- perform governmental functions cost-effectively and
- provide multi-channel access for all

Goal 1
Contributing to national development

Goal 2
Learning authorities

Goal 3
Cost-effective and efficient e-administration

Goal 4
Easy and low-cost access for all

Goal 5
Customer-centered and value-adding e-services

Goal 6
e-Democracy and inclusion

Goal 7
Local content production and innovation capacity

Goal 8
Compatible foundation for deploying inter-governmental ICT applications

Figure 3. Vision and goals for sub-national e-government.

2.2 Development phases of e-government

The vision and goals show the way forward. The development of e-government follows a kind of logical sequence of development phases, which have conventionally been presented as a four-fold scheme:

1) Web presence and one-way information services
2) Interaction and communication
3) Advanced interaction and transaction services
4) e-Transformation (integrated and reengineered service systems)

Thus, development of e-government goes through subsequent phases, from a simple web presence (i.e. to have a web site with simple general information) through interaction and advanced transaction services all the way to transformed e-government system that is based on integrated and seamless solutions and with advanced services capable of utilising the full potential of e-government. Connections between vision, goals and development phases are presented in Figure 4.
Figure 4. e-Government vision, goals and development phases.
3 Objectives and strategic actions

What follows is a brief description of the goals for regional and local e-government. They are broken down into objectives or outcome areas, which will help identify the actions to be taken. After each goal and objective follows a brief commentary on the development phases of e-government, which in turn will assist in identifying the steps and the sequence of actions that will have to be taken when proceeding from the current situation towards the vision.

The goals and objectives and related development phases of Namibian regional and local e-governments are discussed in chapters 3.1 through 3.7.

3.1 Contributing to national development

Goal 1 aims at securing the contribution of sub-national authorities to national development. It is broken down into following objectives:

- Regional and local authorities contribute to the development of the Namibian information society through the adaptation of innovative e-government practices.

- Regional and local e-government is utilised in improving the reputation of the country as an attractive location for people and business.

- Regional and local e-government will be anchored on national standards and nationally recommended solutions in order to ensure compatibility, interoperability and easy access to government services.

- Regional and local authorities contribute to the formation of inclusive information society by taking active role in reducing the gap between governments and people.

Four schematic development phases to attain goal 1:

1. Phase 1: Introduction of web sites as an entry point to government and of new access solutions (such as Community Information Centres at each Constituency Office).

2. Phase 2: Introduction of interactive and communication services, thus contributing to the decentralisation process and setting an example to other authorities.

3. Phase 3: Providing advanced interaction and transaction services, thus contributing to overall transformation towards advanced e-government.

4. Phase 4: Reaching the point of transformed e-government, thus contributing to the international and national reputation of the country attractive to people and businesses/investment internationally.
3.2 Creating learning regional and local authorities

Goal 2 aims to create learning authorities, communities and regions capable of utilising the opportunities of e-government. This goal is broken down into following objectives:

- Regional and local authorities will improve their services and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations through extensive collaboration, communication, and data sharing between government agencies and other stakeholders at all levels.

- Overall development of human and social capital will be enhanced along with widely shared knowledge management practices.

- e-Government will contribute to enriching the local media environment and enhancing local communication processes via interactive portal solutions, Community Information Centres and content production.

- Regional and local e-government will utilise the cultural diversity at local, regional and national level, and root its content production in local conditions and culture.

Four schematic development phases to attain goal 2:

1. Phase 1: Facilitating information and knowledge processes of officials, politicians and community members.

2. Phase 2: Communication and learning tools and targeted courses for interested people and groups.

3. Phase 3: e-Learning option for certain user groups within an integrated system of education.

4. Phase 4: Highly supportive media environment, communicational services and e-learning opportunities for all the citizens and the business community with close connections to and agreements with relevant educational service providers.

3.3 Creating cost-effective and efficient e-administration

Goal 3 Emphasise the need to create cost-effective and efficient e-administration, which, in turn contributes to the provision of relevant and accurate information and cheaper and improved public services. Following objectives relate to this goal:

- Regional and local e-government will improve operational efficiency and reduce, over the long haul, the cost of doing business to both government and citizens.

- Agencies will reassess and reorganise their internal operations and work flows to arrive at cost-effective e-government applications and solutions. Manual
operations will gradually be replaced with automated systems as and when applicable.

- Intergovernmental relations will be facilitated by ICTs.

- Regional and local authorities will collaborate with other public agencies to provide integrated access to information and services to citizens, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, businesses, employees, and governmental agencies.

- Administrations pool their resources and co-ordinate their activities in order to achieve cost-effective e-government solutions.

Four schematic development phases to attain goal 3:

1. Phase 1: Basic data processing in finance and a few other areas.

2. Phase 2: Wider application of information systems and databases for internal procedures and administrative functions.

3. Phase 3: Highly developed information and communication systems that support efficient political, administrative and service processes, and facilitate horizontal and vertical information exchange within a system of multi-level government.

4. Phase 4: Integrated service delivery and information management systems capable of utilising all the available electronic information generated by different departments and units of an authority.

3.4 Providing easy and low-cost access for all

Goal 4 expresses a need to provide easy and low-cost access for all citizens and other stakeholders to public information and services. It is broken down into following objectives:

- Regional and local authorities will be accessible to all citizens 24 hours a day and 7 days a week from home, work or public access points, the emphasis being on the latter solution.

- Each regional and local authority will encourage the public to access their information and services through the local e-government portal.

- Information kiosks and public terminals dedicated to e-government will be available to all citizens for free or at low cost.

- One-stop shop or integrated service point solutions for easy access and for a comprehensive collection of information and services are to be designed. Initially, in regional and local council offices (e.g. Community Information
Centres). Part of the access solutions may be based on partnerships or private sector solutions, such as internet cafés.

- The citizenry will be able to interface with regional and local authorities via user-friendly regional and local e-government portals on the Internet. Access to other government agencies and to private service providers will be provided through such local portals.

Four schematic development phases to attain goal 4:

1. Phase 1: Access points and web presence for regional and local authorities.

2. Phase 2: Supportive Community Information Centres that provide communication tools and simple interactive elements on the web sites of regional and local authorities.

3. Phase 3: Various access points (including home and workplace) with occasional customer support, which provide access to public information and services through regional and local e-government portals.

4. Phase 4: Highly developed access points and solutions with permanent customer support that provide access to advance and user-friendly e-government portals designed on the basis of user needs and backed by an integrated e-government system.

3.5 Providing customer-centred and value-adding e-services

Goal 5 aims at providing customer-centred and value-adding e-services to all relevant user groups and stakeholders. Following objectives are set within this goal area:

- Regional and local e-governments will provide convenient and reliable e-services, thus improving the quality of service and providing added value to citizens and customers.

- Anyone that wishes to interact with a local or regional authority will easily find the required information or service from the e-government portal or related web sites, and when needed, be able to conduct all procedures electronically, including payments and other transactions. Advanced e-services will be developed in close collaboration with public and private service providers.

- In the communication, interaction and transaction processes, concerns for privacy and confidentiality are recognized and addressed.

- In order to guarantee the quality service and trust in the system, the appropriate government agency will respond promptly and provide timely feedback to citizens’ questions submitted via the e-government portal, e-mail, fax, telephone or other means.
• Citizens will be provided with a tool to submit their ideas, comments and concerns to be considered by the appropriate government agency without requiring prior knowledge of the organisational structure of the authority concerned.

• Customer support will be available to help users as they utilise the services provided by e-government.

Four schematic development phases to attain goal 5:

1. Phase 1: Web presence with one-way information services.

2. Phase 2: Communication tools and interactive e-services.


3.6 Strengthening e-democracy and inclusion

Goal 6 aims at enhancing e-democracy and to guarantee inclusion in the information society, to be broken down into following objectives:

• Transparency and access to legislation and government decisions will be guaranteed as an overall precondition for democratic e-government.

• Greater participation by citizens in government will be encouraged and facilitated by e-government applications, emphasis being on e-mail-based two-way interaction, feedback systems and citizen consultation with the help of ICTs.

• Citizens will be provided with an electronic means of expressing their opinions and making suggestions regarding current policy issues via e-government.

• Regional and local governments will inform and notify citizens of issues concerning them or their community directly via electronic means.

Four schematic development phases to attain goal 6:

1. Phase 1: Provision of relevant information that guarantees citizens awareness of relevant local political issues and strengthens their capacity as political actors.

2. Phase 2: Two-way communication and feedback options available to support democratic process.
3. Phase 3: Interactions and transactions (e-petitions, e-consultations etc.)

4. Phase 4: Advanced transactions within a transformed political system (e-citizen juries, e-voting etc.).

### 3.7 Improving local content production and innovation capacity

Goal 7 focuses on local content production and related innovation capacity, which are prerequisites for the success of e-government. Related objectives are:

- National, regional and local governments provide relevant, reliable and up-to-date information, thus utilising the information and knowledge assets possessed by public sector organisations.
- Governments encourage and support local content production of businesses, public bodies and civil society and integrate it into sub-national e-government when ever possible.
- Regional and local authorities support organisational principles and practices that encourage knowledge sharing and innovativeness within their organisations and in their external relations.

Four schematic development phases to attain goal 7:

1. Phase 1: Local content provided by local authorities on the Internet.

2. Phase 2: Increased communication and interaction with local stakeholders in content production via the Internet and also by utilising community centres, Community Information Centres or other access point solutions.

3. Phase 3: Range of tailored and locally embedded interactive and transaction services provided and consumed in a networked and functioning multi-channel environment, with a special view to strengthening the innovation capacity of local authorities in content production.

4. Phase 4: Fully transformed e-government system that supports local content production, learning, knowledge sharing and innovation creation within local authorities and a wider community.

### 3.8 Compatible foundation for deploying inter-governmental ICT applications

Goal 8 seeks to facilitate the establishment of compatible ICT infrastructure capable of supporting the various ICT applications from various government ministries and agencies. Through this goal, the line ministry would encourage other ministries and agencies to share their regional ICT deployment plans to eliminate duplication, while encouraging sharing of resources.
There is tremendous scope for cooperation in deployment of technology across the sub-national sector to gain best value for the citizens. Some of the possibilities include the development of a common communications network between the decentralizing ministries, regional and local authorities as well as other public sector institutions at both national and sub-national levels.

The 13 regional councils and the various local authorities in Namibia have essentially similar responsibilities but diverse local interests. There are opportunities for sharing the costs of technology research and development, even though final deployment may be different.

Across Namibia, there are a number of technology initiatives led by ministries and agencies such as the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education.

It will be important to build on work already done when considering new projects and the ministry is ideally placed to bring about such coordination of efforts.

**Proposed Steps:**

**Establishment of an e-Government Project Office**

It is recommended that a *Sub-National e-Government Project Office* should be established within the Ministry, staffed by a number of properly qualified ICT and Public Administration professionals. This office would specifically be tasked with the implementation of the sub-national e-Government strategy and will be instrumental in implementing the above-mentioned recommendations. It is recommended that a specialised Project Manager be appointed to oversee the overall implementation of the Sub-National e-Government Strategy.

- **Standardization** – one single body deciding on the hardware, software and network standard, backup strategy, contingency plan, ICT policy, master plan, etc. for all regional councils and local authorities.

- **Controlled budgeting** – one body is responsible for advising on ICT budgeting and payment for equipment and services rendered

- **Shorter implementation timeframe** – because all systems being implemented are standardized, it is only fair to comment that the e-Government implementation timeframe will be drastically shortened.

**The Project Office will also serve as an** Action Advisory and Consulting group during the implementation of the e-Government strategy. Technology changes daily with new technologies becoming available and old technologies disappearing. The Project Office will be responsible to keep abreast of technology advancements and to identify how best to integrate it into the existing infrastructure.
Establishment of Regional Shared Service Centers

It is recommended that the establishment of a Shared Service Center in each region of Namibia receive the highest priority. These Shared Service Centers should be interconnected and will provide essential services to the region such as HR, Payroll, S+T, Fleet Management, Procurement, IT Support and Helpdesk, etc. The Shared Service Center should be established under the Regional Council.

Shared Service and the benefits

Through the proposed shared services, functions that are frequently duplicated and inconsistent across departments/organisations will be brought together, and provide these services at a lower cost and more efficiently, through a Shared Services Centre.

The focus is on delivering customer satisfaction using the benefits of centralisation, such as economies of scale, standardisation of process based on best practice and the provision of a single technology based on maintenance and improvement.

Some of the compelling reasons why other governments are going down this route is the prospect of realising the tangible and intangible benefit that a shared service centre is promising:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TANGIBLE</th>
<th>INTANGIBLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure/Cost reduction</td>
<td>Enhancement customer services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased Productivity</td>
<td>Standardised processes and pooled resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economies of Scale</td>
<td>One enterprise approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leveraged Technology</td>
<td>Improved accuracy and consistency of information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved span of control</td>
<td>Better leverage of learning curve</td>
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</table>

These will be achieved without much effort, as some of the attributes have already been outlined as part of this Sub National e-Government Strategy. Other indirect benefits that are achieved through shared services, is the overall improvement of efficiency and effectiveness of services that are provided through the centre.

With shared services there is a renewed focus and effort on achieving efficiency, by pooling resources, leveraging on technology using e-commerce and integrated systems (Enterprise Resource Planning type systems), and creating economies of scale, effective utilisation of purchasing power of the organisation. A shared service also encourages standardisation of processes and sharing of expertise with a view of enhancing service delivery. In fact, a shared service environment moves beyond the notion of efficiency and effectiveness to one of value.

When applied appropriately, shared services have the potential to reduce the cost of providing support services by a significant amount of between 20 to 50 percent.
**Shared Service Centre Approach**

- Customer driven approach
- Business processes managed together
- Agreed performance standards
- Supports the Regional Council and all local authorities in the Region
- More linkages
- More interaction cross sites;
- Greater business awareness;
- Common systems;
- Access to wider resources/expertise
- Improved services; and
- Leverage best practices.

**Linkages**

- Single System network
- Common system platforms
- Shared internet, and
- Communities

**Virtual Offices**

It is recommended that Ministries, Regional Councils and Local Authorities should invest in technologies that support the concept of virtual offices. A virtual office means that an employee no longer need to work in a physical office with four walls and a desk, as we currently know it. The employee can work from any location in the world, as long as he/she has access to the Internet.

### 3.9 Human resource management

Human resources need to be developed to secure the necessary skills to embrace and support e-government. Special attention needs to be paid to maintenance of ICT-based systems, effective utilisation of e-learning tools and upgrading the e-government skills among elected leaders and staff, as well as general public awareness on the various e-government initiatives.

**Technical training, operation & maintenance**

It is recommended that technical support and backup of ICT systems of sub-national authorities will be organised by initially recruiting two IT professional per region to serve all regional and local authorities within defined jurisdiction. At local level SMEs, civic associations and trained and skilled individuals can serve the authorities in developing the capacity of regional and local authorities. These activities can be organised under e-Government Project Office referred to above (section 4.2.).
3.10 Knowledge management

Knowledge management (KM) is the key to any e-government strategy. It ensures the framework for managing information and knowledge processes, sharing knowledge and building the capacity of the organisation for learning and innovation.

Utilisation of knowledge management has several advantages. In particular, it ensures knowledge sharing and innovativeness in any development process and plays a role in all aspects of organisational and managerial practice. The need of KM as a part of e-government development agenda is obvious, not least because of limited capacity at sub-national level to access, process, create and share data, information and knowledge. In the same way the inadequate human resource capacity, ICT infrastructure and policy and procedural framework, require that KM is integrated in the e-government development agenda.

3.11 Local content production and innovativeness

It is important to strengthen local content production and innovativeness in order to be able to utilise the ICTs in internal and external relations of administrations. The ideology on which to rely may be called ‘extended open source’, which supports the freedom of ideas, information and innovations. The other emphasis is on local content and local interests, which are vital for getting added value out of e-government.

The availability and extensive use of electronic documents and forms is an important factor in this regard. It is recommended that MRLGHRD begin to publish and disseminate relevant information, services and policies in electronic form so that they are available to all key stakeholders.

3.12 Economic aspects of e-government

The e-government reform agenda should provide economically viable and sustainable solutions, which means that the benefits and added value should in the long run exceed the overall costs. Yet, in the transitional phase the costs and benefits of individual e-government projects must be assessed on the basis of wider information society framework. In this regard, regional and local e-government special attention should be directed to decreasing telecommunications costs and focussing on value-adding aspects of e-government, which will help to make e-government an economically viable development concept.

A key factor for any e-government strategy must be cost-benefit assessment. To start with, the costs and benefits for e-administration and e-procurement can be identified more easily than those for e-services and e-democracy. This leads to the conclusion that e-government development process should start from e-administration and evolve through different stages towards interactive and transaction services.
### 3.13 Implementation Plan

Appendix A outlines plans for the implementation of the e-Government strategy over the next three years. The chart shows indicative time lines for projects which aim to fulfill the e-government strategic goals and the line Ministry’s Key Objectives. The nature of the projects demonstrates that for the line Ministry, e-Government is not mainly about technology but about changing the way that Government works.

Strategy development and consultation are continuing activities as technology and services change. In addition to the activities outlined in the chart, the e-Government family of documents will continue to be reviewed and updated, within this context, monitoring and evaluation will be embedded throughout the implementation of this strategy. During 2008-2009 a number of pieces of work will be undertaken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sept</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of an e-Government Project Office</td>
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<td>Stakeholder awareness and information dissemination with regard to the</td>
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<td>strategy document</td>
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<td>Stakeholder engagement, agreeing on the implementation plan and the</td>
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<td>overall funding of the strategy and the various elements herein</td>
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<td>Stakeholder engagement with regard to implementation phases, timeframes</td>
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<td>and datelines for specific deliverables</td>
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<td>Enhancement of current workflow and document management systems as well</td>
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<td>Development of Regional Council websites and a portal for the MRLGHRD</td>
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<td>Establishment of one Shared Service Centre in each region</td>
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<td>Develop and launch an ICT and e-government training program for elected</td>
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<td>officials and staff</td>
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</table>
# Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALAN</td>
<td>Association for Local Authorities in Namibia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>Association of Regional Councils</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBS</td>
<td>Bulletin Board System</td>
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<tr>
<td>CABLE</td>
<td>Capacity Building for Regional and local authorities</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Base Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCICT</td>
<td>The Cabinet Committee on ICT</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCC</td>
<td>Directorate of Decentralisation Co-ordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Electronic (as in e-government, e-democracy, e-office, eBBS etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>eBBS</td>
<td>Electronic Bulletin Board System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM</td>
<td>Human Resource Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>Information Society (or Information System)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISD</td>
<td>Information Systems Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>Internet Service Provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISSC</td>
<td>Information Systems Steering Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KM</td>
<td>Knowledge Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAN</td>
<td>Local Area Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MITU</td>
<td>Ministerial Information Technology Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRLGHRD</td>
<td>Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NALAO</td>
<td>Namibia Association of Local Authority Officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDI</td>
<td>National Democratic Institute for International Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>National Development Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPM</td>
<td>Office of Prime Minister</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Personal Computer</td>
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<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSCOIT</td>
<td>Public Service Committee on IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSITM</td>
<td>(Department of) Public Service Information Technology Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>Regional Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SME</td>
<td>Small and Medium-sized Enterprise(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAM</td>
<td>University of Namibia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTA</td>
<td>University of Tampere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLAN</td>
<td>Wireless Local Area Network</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix A: Frame for actions and responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Key measures 2008-2015</th>
<th>Actions in the early phase 2008-2008</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1: Contributing to national development</strong>&lt;br&gt;→ high-performing and interactive institutions</td>
<td>• Improving electronic connectedness, accessibility and interactivity through web presence, access solutions and new organisation culture  &lt;br&gt;• Planning and implementing e-government strategy</td>
<td>Web sites  &lt;br&gt;Access points</td>
<td><strong>Key actors:</strong> LAs and RCs  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Key support:</strong> MRLGHRD  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Key interest groups:</strong> ALAN, NALAO, ARC  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Overall national co-ordination and support:</strong> CCICT, PSCOIT, PSITM  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Economic support and expertise:</strong> Development co-operation, public agencies and sponsors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2: Creating learning regional and local institutions</strong>&lt;br&gt;→ learning and communicative institutions</td>
<td>• Designing knowledge sharing systems by electronic and other means  &lt;br&gt;• Civic and community-based training and e-learning  &lt;br&gt;• Developing new forms of interaction between administrations and stakeholders</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing and learning systems and practices</td>
<td><strong>Key actors:</strong> LAs and RCs  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Key support:</strong> MRLGHRD  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Professional support:</strong> UNAM and other educational institutions  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Co-ordination and pooling of resources with the help of associations:</strong> ALAN, NALAO; ARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3: Creating cost-effective and efficient e-administration</strong>&lt;br&gt;→ efficient and effective institutions</td>
<td>• Developing systems of e-administration (documentation, archives, work flows etc.)  &lt;br&gt;• Digitalisation of data interchange within the system of multi-level governance  &lt;br&gt;• Pooling administrative resources via e-administration</td>
<td>Utilising ICTs in developing administrative data processing  &lt;br&gt;Digitalising data interchange between governments</td>
<td><strong>Key actors:</strong> LAs and RCs  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Key support:</strong> MRLGHRD  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Co-ordination and pooling of resources with the help of associations:</strong> ALAN, NALAO; ARC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Key measures 2008-2015</td>
<td>Actions in the early phase 2008-2008</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 4: Providing easy and low-cost access for all</td>
<td>• Organising public access points</td>
<td>Physical access sites</td>
<td>Key actors: LAs and RCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access and skills for LA and RC staff</td>
<td>Cost-effective access solutions</td>
<td>Key support: MRLGHRD and other ministries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access and skills for LA and RC staff</td>
<td>User-friendly interfaces</td>
<td>Sponsorship: International development agencies and corporations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ accessible and approachable institutions</td>
<td>• Planning e-service portfolio that fits in local conditions</td>
<td>Basic information available in the Internet (designed for tourists, visitors, businesses and citizens)</td>
<td>Key actors: LAs and RCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Publishing basic information in the Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td>Key support: MRLGHRD</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing communication tools in the Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td>Co-ordination and pooling of resources with the help of associations: ALAN, NALAO; ARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5: Providing customer-centred and value-adding e-services</td>
<td>• Providing information on policies and matters of local political interest</td>
<td>Information provision on local policy issues</td>
<td>Key actors: LAs and RCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Designing new forms of citizen consultation with the help of ICTs</td>
<td>Awareness campaigns on democratic rights, procedures and forms of citizen participation</td>
<td>Key support: MRLGHRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ value-adding and responsive institutions</td>
<td>• Providing information on policies and matters of local political interest</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stakeholder involvement: citizens, local media, local associations etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6: Strengthening e-democracy and inclusion</td>
<td>• Provision of attractive materials and information in the Internet</td>
<td>‘Official’ content by LAs and RCs.</td>
<td>Key actors: LAs and RCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ transparent and democratic institutions</td>
<td>• Support local content production</td>
<td>Promoting local content production through civic journalism and community-based interaction</td>
<td>Key support: MRLGHRD</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Designing multi-channel solutions</td>
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<td>Operational support: educational institutions and development organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 7: Improving local content production and innovation capacity</td>
<td>• Provision of attractive materials and information in the Internet</td>
<td>Providing ‘official’ content by LAs and RCs.</td>
<td>Key actors: LAs and RCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ creative and community-oriented institutions</td>
<td>• Support local content production</td>
<td>Promoting local content production through civic journalism and community-based interaction</td>
<td>Key support: MRLGHRD</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Designing multi-channel solutions</td>
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<td>Operational support: education institutions and development organisations</td>
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<td>Initiatives and resources: media, local associations and business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Key measures 2008-2015</td>
<td>Actions in the early phase 2008-2008</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
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</table>
| Goal 8: Compatible foundation for deploying inter-governmental ICT applications | • Standards set and adherence enforced within the entire sub-national level of government  
• Remote support and administration of regional ICT infrastructure | Workshop and circulate common application as well as security standards  
Implement a secure VPN connecting all regional council offices and constituency offices | community Key actors: LAs and RCs  
Key support: MRLGHRD and OPM  
Operational support: educational institutions and development organisations |