



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

BASIC EDUCATION

ICT POLICY 2024



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Foreword

Information and communication technology (ICT) is profoundly affecting every aspect of human activity. Its greatest potential lies in human resource development. To compete successfully in a fiercely competitive global economic environment, a highly skilled and educated workforce with aptitude and skills in the application of ICT in everyday life will be essential. Hence the need to build ICT competencies from early childhood and through the entire basic education system.

Research has shown that ICT can provide learners, parents, school governing bodies and administrators with new tools for increased communication for management efficiencies, and teachers and learners with improved learning opportunities. The greatest benefit is to be realised if ICT is integrated in the teaching, learning and assessment processes. Throughout the world, ICT is changing the face of education. Two fundamental and complementary factors are at work.

Firstly, ICT is changing the nature of work and the workplace, and education systems must respond to this in order to prepare learners for the jobs of today and the future. The world is edging into the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) which is marked by the fusion of the physical, digital and biological spheres, and mostly driven by ICT. This revolution, combined with economic globalisation, creates conditions which strongly reward those countries that focus growth on knowledge-based industries. A prerequisite for this is an educated labour force of digitally skilled individuals who themselves understand and can harness the power of the 4IR. More generally, every citizen in this and the next generation will

need to have some comfort level with technology to live in and contribute to a society; hence ICT is changing the objectives of education.

Secondly, ICT provides educators with a powerful new tool to enhance the learning opportunities for learners and the professional development opportunities for the teachers. Thus, ICT is also changing the methodologies through which educational services are delivered.

But, like all powerful tools, ICT can do as much harm as good. Bad pedagogy implemented on a computer may have its harmful effects multiplied manifold by the power of technology. Educational leaders and planners thus bear a heavy responsibility to ensure that the introduction and implementation of ICT into the classroom is managed with great care so that the very real benefits are realised efficiently and effectively, while the dangers are eliminated, or at least minimised. Careful planning, in the context of a long-term educational vision, is therefore essential.

Honourable Professor Ntoi Rapapa

Minister of Education and Training



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Mr Ratšiu Martin Majara

Principal Secretary Education and Training



Abbreviations and Acronyms

4IR	Forth Industrial Revolution
ARIA	Accessible Rich Internet Applications
CAO	Chief Accounting Officer
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DQA	Data Quality Assurance
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
ICT	Information and communication technology
LCA	Lesotho Communications Authority
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MICSTI	Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MoE	Ministry of Energy
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PS	Principal Secretary
REN	Research and Education Network
SABER	Systems Approach for Better education Results
SADC	Southern African Development Community
ODL	Open and Distance Learning

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme.
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
WBG	World Bank Group

Glossary of Key Terms

<i>Basic Education</i>	A fundamental educational framework encompassing Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), primary education, and secondary education, aimed at providing all individuals with essential skills and knowledge for lifelong learning.
<i>Primary Education</i>	The first stage of formal education, typically comprising two phases: Foundation Phase (Grades R-3): Focuses on basic literacy and numeracy skills. Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-7): Expands on foundational skills with a broader curriculum.
<i>Secondary Education</i>	The stage of education following primary education, divided into: Lower Secondary (Grades 8-9): Prepares learners for upper secondary education or vocational training. Upper Secondary (Grades 10-12): Provides advanced education and skills for higher education or employment.
<i>Digital Classrooms</i>	Learning environments that incorporate digital technologies to enhance educational delivery and learner engagement, fostering interactive and collaborative learning experiences.
<i>Digital Classroom Tools</i>	The technological infrastructure that supports digital learning, including hardware (computers, tablets), software, projectors, interactive whiteboards, and other resources that facilitate the teaching and learning process.
<i>Digital classroom seats</i>	Physical and virtual spaces designated for learners within a digital classroom, used to monitor attendance, engagement, and academic performance.
<i>Digital Schools</i>	Educational institutions that have fully integrated digital technology into their teaching and learning processes, encompassing digital classrooms, online resources, and digital libraries to enhance educational accessibility and quality.

<i>Information and Communication Technology (ICT)</i>	An inclusive term for the technologies used to manage and communicate information, integrating telecommunications, broadcasting, and computer-based systems to facilitate the creation, storage, exchange, and utilization of information.
<i>Mobile Technology</i>	The use of mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, to support educational activities, enabling access to digital learning materials and communication tools for learners and educators.
<i>Community Centres</i>	Public facilities that provide access to ICT resources and internet connectivity, serving as support hubs for learners, educators, and community members to access digital learning opportunities.

Background

In recent decades, significant transformations have reshaped the business landscape, driven by globalization, heightened competition, and advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The convergence of these technologies has not only fostered the emergence of new enterprises but also facilitated idea exchange and redirected numerous businesses toward economic growth.

In Lesotho, however, the full potential of the ICT sector remains largely untapped, despite notable progress by certain individuals and organizations. The Government is committed to implementing policies that target growth sectors of the economy, with a particular focus on ICT as a solution to unemployment challenges. The strategic initiative to introduce computers in schools aims to cultivate early ICT awareness and literacy among children, aligning with global technological advancements. To achieve practical results, in-service ICT training will be mandated for teachers.

Lesotho's public formal education system comprises four levels: early childhood care and development, primary, secondary, and tertiary education. While some primary and many secondary schools have integrated computer literacy into their curricula, these efforts have often lacked a coherent framework and guiding policies. Previous interventions have highlighted several challenges that must be addressed to enhance education quality through effective ICT integration, including: high teacher-learner ratios, insufficient digital facilities, such as computers, projectors, printers, and reliable electricity and low digital literacy skills among educators and the broader population.

Over the years, various initiatives from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the private sector, and school communities have sought to introduce ICT into the education system. Recently, secondary schools have begun using ICT in subjects such as computer studies and information technology within Business Education and, in some cases, Mathematics and Science. However, these initiatives have proceeded without a guiding policy framework.

It is imperative for MOET to develop a comprehensive policy to ensure the successful integration of ICT in the basic education system. This policy will standardize practices, reduce inefficiencies, and optimize technology use to enhance teaching, learning, and assessment outcomes across all educational levels.

1. Introduction

This policy aims to harness Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a vital tool for economic development and enhancing the quality of life in Lesotho. Recognizing the importance of ICT in education, the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) is committed to implementing this policy in alignment with international, regional, and national regulations to achieve meaningful outcomes for all citizens.

Key priorities include ensuring equitable access to ICT resources, maintaining high educational standards, and enhancing operational efficiency to maximize the effectiveness of technology in learning environments. The Ministry acknowledges the critical need to address potential challenges, such as the widening knowledge gap, by implementing targeted strategies that promote inclusive and quality education.

The scope of this policy encompasses basic education, including ECCD, primary, and secondary education. While it is centered on basic education, the Ministry recognizes the vital connections to vocational training, teacher education, adult and non-formal education, tertiary education, regional administration, and local government, as well as ICT initiatives in various sectors.

This document outlines the guidelines and strategies the Ministry aspires to pursue regarding ICT, in alignment with the National ICT Policy, with the goal of expanding lifelong learning opportunities for all Basotho and ensuring that every citizen can benefit from advancements in technology.

2. Strategic Vision

2.1. Policy Vision

By 2034, all learners will complete the basic education system equipped with the essential competencies to effectively use ICT as a tool for lifelong learning. They will be prepared to pursue careers in the 21st century and thrive as innovative entrepreneurs, fully participating in and contributing to the dynamic landscape of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

2.2. Policy Objectives

This policy establishes a comprehensive framework for the administrative, technical, and pedagogical integration of ICT in basic education, encompassing Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), primary, and secondary education in Lesotho.

The key policy objectives are as follows:

- I. **Prepare Learners for the 21st Century:** Ensure that the education system equips learners with the digital competencies necessary for success in 21st-century careers, which increasingly demand proficiency in technology.
- II. **Establish Robust Administrative Systems:** Implement a comprehensive administration system that guarantees all schools have the necessary facilities, safeguards against the misuse of resources, protects children online, and builds the capacity to effectively integrate ICT into teaching, learning, and assessment.
- III. **Empower Teachers:** Provide educators with essential skills and competencies to utilize ICT effectively, enhancing the teaching and learning process and fostering a more engaging educational environment.
- IV. **Enhance Educational Administration:** Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of educational administration, monitoring, and evaluation through the adoption of appropriate school management information systems and the streamlined sharing of data between schools and the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET).
- V. **Promote Equitable Access:** Ensure equitable access to educational resources, professional development opportunities, and lifelong learning through the strategic implementation of ICT.
- VI. **Facilitate Personalized Learning:** Leverage e-learning technologies to enable each learner to progress at their own level and pace, fostering greater autonomy in their education and providing tailored support for learners with special educational needs (LSEN).

2.3. Policy Linkages

This policy is interconnected with various ICT and education regulations established by governmental ministries, departments, and agencies, as well as broader frameworks concerning education, technology use, and economic development. The key linkages include:

- Constitution of Lesotho, 1993
- Public Service Act, 2005
- Education Act, 2010
- National Vision 2020
- National Strategic Development Plan II (2023/24 - 2027/28)
- Education Sector Strategic Plan (2016 – 2026)
- Lesotho Basic Education Curriculum Policy, 2018
- Inclusive Education Policy, 2018
- Research and Innovation Policy, 2021
- ICT Policy for Lesotho, 2005
- SADC Infrastructure Vision 2027

Furthermore, the structure, content, and objectives of this policy are informed by standard international norms, as outlined in the World Bank's SABER-ICT Framework Paper for Policy Analysis (2016) and the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (2011). These connections ensure that the policy aligns with both national priorities and global best practices, fostering a cohesive approach to ICT integration in education.

3. Funding, Oversight and Collaboration

3.1. Funding

The MoET requires regular and reliable mechanisms to introduce and support ICT in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), primary, and secondary schools, as outlined in this policy. As understanding of costs improves and the strategic importance of ICT access grows, financing for ICT initiatives will increasingly become an integral part of the budgeting process.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall establish an innovative funding strategy to facilitate the implementation of this policy across all ECCD, primary, and secondary schools. Implementation will prioritize schools that are prepared and equipped to effectively adopt the policy, ensuring a phased and focused approach to integration.

Strategies

1. **Conduct a needs assessment:** Evaluate the current ICT infrastructure, resources, and capacities within ECCD, primary, and secondary schools. Identify existing gaps and areas requiring investment to ensure effective policy implementation.
2. **Formulate an implementation plan:** Develop a comprehensive plan outlining necessary steps, timelines, and resources for policy rollout. Prioritize schools based on readiness to adopt ICT initiatives for a targeted and efficient approach.
3. **Establish a funding model:** Secure adequate funding for policy implementation through diverse sources:
 - **Establish a resource mobilisation strategy:** Identify local and international organizations, the private sector, and individuals as potential contributors, tailoring outreach efforts to engage them effectively.
 - **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Explore partnerships with private companies to leverage their expertise and resources for funding public initiatives.

- **Government and International funding:** Investigate government budget allocations and seek grants and loans from institutions such as the World Bank Group (WBG) and UN agencies for development initiatives.
- **Crowd funding and Donations:** Utilize crowdfunding platforms like Kick-starter and GoFundMe while welcoming donations from individuals and organizations to support infrastructure rollout.
- **Corporate social responsibility (CSR):** Engage with private companies that have CSR programs focused on education and technology to secure additional funding.
- **Fundraising Events:** Organize events and partnerships with philanthropic organizations to generate financial support.

3.2. Oversight (Implementation Authority)

Successful implementation of this policy requires specialised competencies and responsibilities to lead or oversee implementation and to support the use of ICT in teaching and learning.

3.2.1. Strategic Level

Policy Statement

The MoET Principal Secretary, manages all aspects of this policy, including resource mobilisation, resource allocation, strategic direction, and oversight as the Chief Accounting Officer (CAO). All contributions to the policy, whether financial, personnel, expertise, equipment or infrastructure must be clearly reported and channelled through the office of the CAO.

Strategies

1. **Strengthening Resource Mobilisation:** Establish structures and systems to support the CAO in identifying and securing the resources required for policy implementation.
2. **Streamlining Resource Allocation and Reporting:**
 - **Establish clear allocation criteria:** Define transparent criteria for allocating resources based on policy objectives and needs.
 - **Develop resource allocation plans:** Create initiative-specific plans outlining budget allocation, disbursement schedules, and accountability measures.
 - **Implement a robust reporting system:** Create a user-friendly system (online platform or forms) for contributors and recipients to report contributions across all categories (financial, personnel, expertise, equipment, and infrastructure).

- **Regularly track and analyse resource utilisation:** Monitor contribution trends, identify any gaps or inconsistencies in reporting, and conduct periodic audits to ensure efficient resource utilisation.

3. Enhance Policy Oversight and Coordination:

- **Form an oversight committee:** Establish a committee comprising relevant stakeholders (policy experts, government officials, donors) to monitor policy implementation and provide oversight guidance.
- **Facilitate interdepartmental coordination:** Organise regular meetings and communication channels between the CAO's office and other departments involved in policy implementation.
- **Develop risk management strategies:** Identify potential risks (misuse of resources, fraud) and implement mitigation strategies to ensure adherence to policies and procedures.
- **Conduct periodic policy reviews and adjustments:** Regularly review the policy's effectiveness based on feedback, reports, and audits, and make necessary adjustments to optimise its impact.

4. Invest in Capacity Building and Leverage Technology:

- **Capacity Building:** Train personnel involved in resource management and reporting to ensure efficient and transparent operations.
- **Leverage Technology:** Utilize digital tools to coordinate efforts, streamline workflows, and enhance data analysis.

5. Promote Transparency and Recognition:

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Regularly share information about resource mobilization, allocation, and utilization to build trust and stakeholder engagement.
- **Recognize Contributors:** Publicly acknowledge and celebrate contributions through awards, publications, or official communications.

3.2.2. Operational Level

Policy Statement

The MOET shall equitably increase staffing and build internal capacity within its Inspectorate, ICT department and other departments to drive implementation of this policy.

Strategies

- 1. Assess current capacity:** Evaluate the existing staffing levels and expertise within the Inspectorate, ICT department and other relevant departments. Identify gaps in skills, knowledge, and resources that need to be addressed.
- 2. Develop a capacity-building plan:** Create a detailed plan outlining the specific skills and competencies required to effectively implement the policy. Develop training programmes, workshops, or courses to enhance the technical and pedagogical skills of staff members.
- 3. Recruit and engage Inspectorate and ICT professionals:** Identify the staffing needs based on the capacity-building plan and recruit qualified Inspectorate and ICT professionals who possess the necessary expertise and experience. Consider both internal promotions and external hiring processes to assemble a competent team.
- 4. Provide professional development opportunities:** Invest in continuous professional development for existing staff members. Offer opportunities for training programmes, workshops, and certifications to enhance their ICT skills, knowledge of new technologies, and understanding of best practices in educational technology integration.
- 5. Foster collaboration and knowledge sharing:** Facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing among staff members within the Inspectorate, ICT department and across other relevant departments. Establish regular team meetings, create online forums or platforms for information exchange, and organise workshops to share success stories, challenges, and lessons learned.
- 6. Allocate resources appropriately:** Ensure that sufficient resources, including budget, infrastructure, and technology tools, are allocated to the Inspectorate, ICT department and across other relevant departments. This will empower the team to effectively drive the implementation of the policy.
- 7. Strengthen partnerships:** Collaborate with external organisations, institutions, or experts who specialise in educational technology. Foster partnerships that can provide guidance, support, and training opportunities to enhance the ministry's internal capacity.
- 8. Establish mentoring programs:** Implement mentoring or coaching initiatives where experienced Inspectorate and ICT professionals can guide and support junior staff members. This helps transfer knowledge, build skills, and develop a pipeline of talent within the ministry.
- 9. Develop a succession plan:** Create a succession plan to ensure continuity and sustainability in the Inspectorate, ICT department and other relevant departments. Identify and groom future Inspectorate and ICT leaders and develop plans for knowledge transfer to secure the long-term implementation of the policy.

3.3. Collaboration (Private Sector Engagement)

The private sector can play an important role in the implementation of this policy by providing funding, industry expertise and stakeholder engagement.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall take advantage of skills and resources available in the private sector by pursuing public-private partnerships and seeking discounts and contributions to infrastructure, equipment, software, content and skills from the private sector for successful implementation of the policy.

Strategies

1. Establish a partnership framework:

- Develop a framework that outlines the objectives, guidelines and expectations for engaging in public-private partnerships (PPPs) within the context of the policy.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of each party, including the ministry, private sector entities and potential development partners.

2. Engage potential partners:

- Identify and engage with private sector organisations that have expertise in ICT infrastructure, equipment, software, content development, and skills training.
- Collaborate with industry associations, technology companies, education technology providers and ICT service providers to explore partnership opportunities.

3. Incentivise private sector participation:

- Offer discounts, tax incentives or other benefits to encourage private sector companies to contribute infrastructure, equipment, software licenses, content or skills to support the policy implementation.
- Explore win-win strategies to showcase the potential benefits and returns on investment for private sector partners.

4. Engage in dialogue and negotiations:

- Initiate discussions with potential private sector partners to identify specific areas of collaboration and contribution.

- Negotiate agreements that define the terms, scope and expected outcomes of the partnership, including any financial or in-kind contributions from the private sector.

5. Leverage existing private sector initiatives:

- Identify ongoing private sector initiatives and projects that align with the goals of the policy.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration or integration with these initiatives to leverage their expertise, resources or reach.

6. Seek infrastructure and equipment support:

- Partner with private sector entities, such as telecommunications companies or technology providers to secure discounts or contributions for ICT infrastructure, network connectivity, hardware and equipment.
- Encourage private sector companies to provide support for the installation, maintenance and upgrading of ICT infrastructure in schools.

7. Foster content development partnerships:

- Collaborate with content developers, publishers or online learning platforms in the private sector to create or curate digital content aligned with the curriculum and educational goals.
- Seek contributions or discounts for educational software, interactive learning materials, digital textbooks and multimedia resources.

8. Facilitate skills training partnerships:

- Partner with private sector organisations to provide training and professional development opportunities for teachers, school boards, MoET staff and other relevant staff members.
- Seek contributions such as trainers, training materials or training facilities from private sector entities with expertise in ICT skills development.

9. Promote sustainability and knowledge-sharing:

- Encourage knowledge-sharing between the ministry and private sector partners through regular meetings, workshops and joint initiatives.
- Develop strategies to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the partnerships beyond the initial stages of policy implementation.

3.4. MDAs Collaboration

Ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) are institutions of government with specialised mandates. The MoET will invariably need to leverage on skills and resources built in these important institutions, given their mandates.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall collaborate with the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation (MICSTI), Ministry of Energy (MoE), and Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA) as key stakeholders and partners who contribute skills and resources and lay a foundation at policy and technical levels within their mandated areas for successful implementation of this policy.

Strategies

1. **MoU with Partners:** Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the MICSTI, MoE and the LCA outlining roles and responsibilities in implementing the policy.
2. **Joint Working Groups:** Form working groups with representatives from each ministry and the LCA to develop action plans, monitor progress, and address challenges.
3. **Regular Meetings:** Convene regular meetings to ensure communication, collaboration and coordination between stakeholders.
4. **Stakeholder Workshops:** Organise workshops to inform stakeholders about the policy, their roles and opportunities for collaboration.
5. **Joint Funding Initiatives:** Develop joint funding initiatives with partner ministries and the LCA to secure resources for policy implementation.

4. ICT Infrastructure

4.1. Power

Reliable and affordable access to power is a critical success factor for country-wide implementation of this policy.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall ensure electrification of all ECCD, primary and secondary schools by connecting them to the off-grid power or the grid as necessary to bridge the digital divide and enable all schools to use ICT equipment, which requires electricity to function.

Strategies

The MoET will use the following strategies to achieve this goal:

- 1. Conduct a Feasibility Study:** Begin by conducting a comprehensive feasibility study to identify the most suitable energy sources for each school. This study will assess crucial factors such as location, resource availability, and implementation costs, providing a solid foundation for subsequent steps.
- 2. Explore Alternative Energy Sources:** Following the feasibility study, focus on exploring alternative energy sources, including solar, wind, and hydro power. These off-grid solutions can offer reliable and sustainable energy options tailored to the specific needs of schools.
- 3. Adopt a Sector-Wide Approach:** Collaborate closely with the MoE by adopting a sector-wide approach. This partnership will help leverage the expertise and resources of both ministries, ensuring that electrification strategies are both feasible and cost-effective.
- 4. Engage with the Local Community:** To build a supportive environment for electrification, engage actively with the local community. Raise awareness about the significance of this initiative, fostering community involvement and encouraging contributions that can enhance the policy's success.
- 5. Develop a Funding Plan:** Recognizing that electrifying schools can be a significant financial undertaking, develop a robust funding plan. This plan will identify potential funding sources and ensure the initiative's long-term financial sustainability.

4.2. Infrastructure

The MoET and schools need access to ICT infrastructure, including reliable internet connectivity, computer labs, multimedia equipment and software in order to make use of ICT in education. The infrastructure should have adequate technical support and maintenance services to ensure smooth operations.

Policy Statement

The MoET will consolidate requirements and streamline investments in internet connectivity and ICT infrastructure to implement this policy effectively. By leveraging bulk purchasing power, the country will secure better pricing, ensuring equitable access to technology for all learners and aligning with global goals for digital inclusion and sustainable development. This initiative will enhance educational opportunities and empower communities.

Strategies

1. **Assess Current ICT Infrastructure:** The MoET will initiate the process by evaluating the existing ICT infrastructure and connectivity in schools to identify gaps and areas needing enhancement.
2. **Engage Stakeholders:** To facilitate effective policy implementation, the MoET will engage a diverse group of stakeholders, including teachers, learners, parents, and the private sector. This engagement will gather valuable input and foster support for the initiative.
3. **Collaborate with Key Ministries:** In partnership with the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation (MICSTI), the MoET will investigate the most feasible and cost-effective strategies for improving infrastructure, leveraging the expertise and resources of both ministries.
4. **Develop a Comprehensive Deployment Plan:** The MoET will formulate a detailed deployment plan that outlines timelines, budgets, and responsibilities for infrastructure enhancements, ensuring a structured and organized implementation process.
5. **Prioritize Deployment Based on Readiness:** The deployment of infrastructure improvements will be prioritized based on the readiness of schools to implement the policy, ensuring that those most prepared receive immediate attention and assistance.
6. **Provide Training and Support:** To maximize the advantages of the new infrastructure and connectivity, the MoET will deliver training and support to both teachers and learners, equipping them with the necessary skills to effectively utilize these resources.

4.3. Digital Teaching and Learning Spaces

Digital teaching and learning spaces are designed to support a range of activities, both online and offline, collaborative and individual. They should be adaptable to changing needs and agendas, while also motivating and inspiring learners. The spaces should afford citizens the opportunities to interact with the education system from the comfort of their homes, nursing centres or community centres and to learn at their own pace.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall support the establishment and utilization of digital teaching and learning spaces designed to inspire and motivate all learners. These spaces will not only enhance access to education beyond school premises but also ensure inclusivity by accommodating learners with special educational needs.

Strategies

- 1. Invest in Infrastructure:** The MoET will prioritize investments in robust infrastructure necessary for digital teaching and learning spaces. This includes reliable high-speed internet access, modern computers, and essential technology to create an effective learning environment.
- 2. Offer Comprehensive Professional Development:** The MoET will implement ongoing professional development programs for education administrators, teachers and learners, focusing on the effective use of digital tools and pedagogical strategies. Training will cover the use of specific software and design principles for engaging online courses.
- 3. Foster Collaborative Learning Environments:** Digital teaching and learning spaces will be designed to enhance collaboration, incorporating features such as discussion forums, group projects, and online chat rooms. This approach will promote interactive learning experiences that engage learners.
- 4. Ensure Inclusivity and Accessibility:** The design of digital teaching and learning spaces will prioritize inclusivity, ensuring accessibility for all learners, including those with special educational needs. This will involve implementing features like closed captioning, audio descriptions, and other accessibility tools to support diverse learning requirements.
- 5. Provide Ongoing Technical Support:** The MoET will establish a comprehensive technical support system for educators and learners utilizing digital teaching and learning spaces. This support will address troubleshooting of technical issues and offer guidance on the effective use of various tools and software, ensuring a seamless learning experience.

4.4. Information Security

Information security refers to the practice of protecting information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, inspection, recording, or destruction. This encompasses a range of strategies, technologies, and procedures designed to safeguard both digital and physical assets from various threats, including unauthorized access, data breaches, and cyber-attacks.

Policy Statement

The MoET is committed to implementing comprehensive measures to safeguard its information and data from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, inspection, recording, or destruction. These measures will include the development of robust security protocols, regular risk assessments, and ongoing training for staff to ensure the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of all information assets.

Strategies

1. **Risk Assessment:** Conduct comprehensive risk assessments to identify and evaluate potential vulnerabilities and threats to information and data, enabling proactive risk management.
2. **Access Control:** Develop and enforce stringent access control policies to ensure that only authorized personnel can access sensitive information, minimizing the risk of unauthorized access.
3. **Data Encryption:** Implement encryption techniques to secure data both at rest and in transit, safeguarding sensitive information from interception and unauthorized access.
4. **Software Updates and Patching:** Regularly update and patch software systems to address known vulnerabilities, thereby enhancing the overall security posture of the organization.
5. **Staff Training and Awareness:** Provide ongoing training and awareness programs to educate employees about best practices in information security, fostering a culture of security mindfulness.
6. **Robust Authentication:** Employ strong authentication mechanisms, including multi-factor authentication (MFA), to enhance security when accessing sensitive data.
7. **Continuous Monitoring:** Establish a continuous monitoring system to detect and respond to security incidents in real-time, ensuring swift action against potential threats.
8. **Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity:** Regularly back up data and implement comprehensive disaster recovery and business continuity plans to maintain operations and protect data integrity in the event of a security breach.
9. **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensure compliance with relevant data protection regulations and standards to uphold legal and regulatory obligations, thereby enhancing trust and accountability.
10. **Adapt to Evolving Threats:** Regularly assess and review security measures to stay ahead of evolving threats and technological advancements, ensuring that the organization's defences remain effective and up-to-date.

5. Skills and Competencies

5.1. Standards

To effectively integrate ICT in Basic Education, it is essential to establish clear standards that define the expected levels of ICT literacy and competency for learners, teachers, school boards, and MoET staff. A systematic approach is necessary to guide these users in meeting the established standards.

Educators must be equipped to foster collaboration, problem-solving, and creativity among learners through the use of ICT, preparing them to become effective citizens and valuable workforce members. As the demands on educators evolve with increasing ICT integration, competency standards for teachers will be regularly updated, and new certification schemes may be introduced.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall implement fully functional ICT competency frameworks for learners, teachers, school boards, and MoET staff, aligned with existing policies. This initiative aims to ensure that education and training effectively address digital competency needs, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education.

Strategies

- 1. Identify core digital literacy skills:** Strategically identify essential digital literacy skills for all stakeholders, ensuring these skills align with global frameworks and best practices. This foundational work will create a clear pathway for developing competencies that support overall learning objectives.
- 2. Conduct comprehensive competency assessments:** Implement rigorous assessments to evaluate the current ICT skills of educators and stakeholders. By identifying gaps and areas for improvement, targeted interventions can be developed to elevate overall competency levels.
- 3. Align policies with curriculum standards:** Undertake a thorough review of the Basic Education Curriculum Policy to ensure it reflects current digital literacy and competency requirements. By revising and updating policies in line with SADC and UNESCO frameworks, the curriculum can effectively prepare learners for a technology-driven future.
- 4. Integrate digital literacy across the curriculum:** Embed digital literacy into various subject areas within the Basic Education Curriculum. This strategic integration will provide learners with practical applications of digital skills, enhancing their overall educational experience.
- 5. Foster Stakeholder collaboration:** Build strategic partnerships with teacher training institutions and relevant stakeholders to support the implementation of ICT competency frameworks. Collaborative efforts will leverage shared resources, expertise, and best practices, driving successful outcomes across the education system.

5.2. Teacher Training

Professional development for teachers must include ICT-related training, both technical and pedagogical, to effectively incorporate ICT into teaching methodologies. Comprehensive training programs are required to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall ensure that teacher training programs produce educators with strong ICT literacy and pedagogical skills. In-service ICT training will be provided to teachers who did not receive ICT training during their initial education, alongside pedagogical skills training for ICT subject teachers lacking formal teacher training.

Strategies

1. **Develop Targeted Training Programs:** Create systematic training programs based on the domesticated SADC and UNESCO frameworks to build teachers' ICT competencies. Training modules should address technical skills, pedagogical strategies, and digital citizenship to ensure comprehensive development.
2. **Implement Diverse Training Methods:** Execute a range of training sessions utilizing various methods, such as workshops, online courses, and peer collaboration. This approach will cater to different learning preferences and enhance engagement among teachers.
3. **Encourage Continuous professional development:** Establish a culture of lifelong learning by providing ongoing professional development opportunities. This commitment to continuous improvement will ensure teachers remain adept at integrating new technologies into their teaching practice.
4. **Provide access to relevant ICT tools and resources:** Provide teachers with the necessary tools and resources to enhance their ICT literacy and pedagogical skills. Access to online courses, webinars, and current training materials will empower teachers to stay informed about technological advancements.
5. **Promote collaborative learning environments:** Encourage collaborative practices among teachers to facilitate peer learning and the sharing of best practices. Structured mentoring and coaching will enhance teachers' ICT literacy and pedagogical skills, fostering a supportive professional community.

5.3. Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is a self-initiated approach to education centred on personal development, encompassing both formal and non-formal education. It is characterized by voluntary participation aimed at achieving personal fulfilment. This form of learning is crucial not only for enhancing individual competitiveness and employability but also for promoting social inclusion, active citizenship, and overall personal growth.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall ensure that learners are trained in ICT as a fundamental component of the curriculum, enabling them to utilize these skills beyond the basic education system. This will enhance their knowledge, diversify their skill sets, and improve their competitiveness and employability.

Strategies

1. **Develop a Comprehensive ICT Curriculum:** Design a robust ICT curriculum that addresses all aspects of ICT for learning. The curriculum will emphasize engaging and interactive methodologies, focusing on practical applications to enhance learners' skills.
2. **Ensure access to ICT infrastructure:** Provide essential ICT infrastructure in schools and educational institutions, equipping them with the necessary hardware and software to facilitate effective ICT-based learning experiences.
3. **Train teachers in ICT for learning:** Implement targeted training programs for teachers to enhance their ability to integrate ICT into their teaching practices. This training will empower educators to effectively utilize technology as a tool for learning.
4. **Foster collaboration and peer learning:** Promote collaborative learning environments through group projects and activities that encourage knowledge sharing and skill development among learners. This approach will strengthen their ICT competencies.
5. **Provide incentives for learners to use ICT engagement:** Introduce incentives to motivate learners to utilize ICT for their educational growth. These incentives may include recognition for achievements, access to additional resources, or other rewards that encourage active participation.
6. **Promote lifelong learning opportunities:** Encourage learners to extend their use of ICT beyond the basic education system, emphasizing the importance of continuous skill development. By leveraging ICT skills, learners will enhance their employability and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving job market.

5.4. Support

Teachers and learners require robust support in utilizing ICT for educational purposes. This support can be delivered through both online and offline channels, leveraging a network of educators and learners, as well as through inspection services.

Policy Statement

The MoET, in collaboration with the MICSTI, shall provide first-level support for teaching-related systems and infrastructure to empower teachers and learners in their ICT usage.

Strategies

1. **Establish a comprehensive help-desk system:** The ICT Unit, with assistance from the Inspector - IT of MoET, will establish and maintain a collaborative help-desk system to enable teachers and learners to report issues, seek solutions, and support one another. The user-friendly help-desk system will offer first-level support for MoET-provided teaching-related systems. This system will include a searchable knowledge base, a ticketing system, and a discussion forum to facilitate collaboration among teachers.
2. **Provide training and support for teachers and learners:** Provide comprehensive training sessions, online tutorials, and user manuals to ensure that teachers and learners can effectively navigate the help-desk system. This training will empower them to report problems and find solutions proactively.
3. **Establish clear guidelines and procedures:** Implement clear and accessible guidelines for using the help-desk system, detailing how to report issues, search for solutions, and assist peers. These user-friendly guidelines will ensure effective engagement with the system.
4. **Promote collaboration and peer learning:** Foster a culture of collaboration among educators by encouraging them to share experiences and best practices within the help-desk discussion forum. This forum will be moderated to maintain a safe and respectful environment for all participants.

6. Teaching and Learning

6.1. Digital Teaching and Learning Resources

Digital teaching and learning resources encompass electronic tools such as applications, software, and websites designed to engage learners and support educational objectives. These resources enhance the learning experience and provide access to a diverse range of educational materials.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall ensure access to high-quality digital teaching and learning resources that align with the curricular objectives of the Basic Education system. This includes open educational resources and materials curated under Open and Distance Learning (ODL) frameworks.

Strategies

1. **Identify the digital teaching and learning resources:** Conduct consultations with curriculum experts, inspectors, educators, learners, and relevant stakeholders to identify digital resources that align with curricular objectives. This collaborative approach will ensure that the resources meet the needs of all users.
2. **Volume licensing:** Establish open access or volume licensing agreements with resource providers to make high-quality digital materials available to all schools at an affordable price.
3. **Zero rating:** Negotiate zero-rated internet access for schools and MoET staff with ICT providers to facilitate unrestricted use of digital resources.
4. **Provide training and support:** Provide comprehensive training for teachers and learners on effectively utilizing digital resources. Ongoing support will ensure that all users can maximize the benefits of these tools.
5. **Ensure the creation of digital teaching and learning materials:** Encourage and support teachers and learners in creating their own digital teaching materials. Engaging in research, problem-solving, and local content development will promote higher-order thinking and relevance.
6. **Ensure accessibility:** Ensure that all learners, including those with special educational needs, have access to digital resources by providing necessary hardware, software, and adaptive technologies.

6.2. Digital Learning Assessment

Digital assessment involves administering evaluations, such as tests, surveys, and examinations, through digital devices and platforms. This method streamlines grading and feedback processes, providing timely insights into learner progress and informing educational decisions.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall adopt digital assessment methods to enhance educational outcomes and support individual learner achievement.

Strategies

1. **Teacher Training and Support for Digital Assessment:** Equip teachers with the necessary training and support to effectively use digital assessment tools. This training will cover tool utilization, data interpretation, and integrating insights into teaching practices.

2. **Ethical Data Use:** Ensure that data collected through digital assessments is used ethically and transparently. Learners will be informed about how their data will be utilized, safeguarding their privacy and rights.
3. **Continuous improvement of Assessment Tools:** Regularly evaluate and enhance digital assessment tools based on feedback from educators and learners. This iterative process will ensure the tools remain effective in achieving the policy's goals.

7. Research and Innovation

7.1. Local Research and Innovation

Local research and innovation involve developing and applying new ideas, methods, and technologies tailored to specific community contexts. This process generates knowledge and solutions that address local educational challenges, empowering communities to create innovative teaching and learning methods.

Policy Statement

The MoET, alongside its stakeholders, shall allocate resources to explore innovative approaches and remain open to contributions from society and the private sector, while ensuring the protection of intellectual property rights for proposed innovations within the basic education system.

Strategies

1. **Establish an innovation fund:** Establish a dedicated fund to financially support individuals and organizations proposing innovative solutions for the basic education system. This fund will facilitate research, development, and pilot initiatives that promote educational innovation.
2. **Create an innovation hub:** Develop an innovation hub as a collaborative platform for community members and private sector representatives to share ideas. The hub will provide access to resources such as funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities.
3. **Foster private sector partnerships:** Collaborate with private sector organizations to leverage their expertise and resources in advancing educational innovation. These partnerships can offer funding, mentorship, and support for innovative proposals.
4. **Foster collaboration and peer learning:** Promote collaboration among individuals and organizations to facilitate skill and knowledge sharing. This can take the form of mentoring, coaching, and sharing best practices to foster a culture of innovation.

5. **Establish clear guidelines for intellectual property rights:** Develop clear, accessible guidelines for intellectual property rights to protect the contributions of those proposing innovations, ensuring their rights are respected.

7.2. Regional and Global Networks

Regional and global networks consist of interconnected individuals and organizations that share common interests and goals across geographical boundaries. These networks promote collaboration, information sharing, and resource exchange on a broader scale.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall actively participate in regional and global research and innovation networks to leverage collective efforts and enhance educational outcomes.

Strategies

1. **Actively participate in relevant networks:** Identify and join pertinent networks, such as the Research and Education Network (REN), to focus on education research and development. Actively participate in meetings and conferences to share knowledge and collaborate on interventions aligned with MoET priorities.
2. **Leverage network resources and expertise:** Access online databases, research repositories, and expert directories within networks to support policy implementation. Engage with experts for guidance and participate in training programs to enhance skills in education research and innovation.
3. **Disseminate Findings and Recommendations:** Share research findings and recommendations from networks with policymakers and stakeholders to inform decision-making. Organize workshops and develop materials that highlight the impact of network participation on policy effectiveness.
4. **Foster a culture of evidence-based policymaking:** Encourage the integration of network research into policy formulation and review processes. Embed evidence-based findings into curricula and teacher training, fostering a culture of continuous improvement in strategic planning.
5. **Monitor and evaluate network engagement:** Establish objectives and performance indicators for network involvement, regularly assessing the impact on policy implementation and educational outcomes. Use evaluation findings to refine engagement strategies and share best practices with network partners.

8. Equity, Inclusion, Ethics and Safety

8.1. Equity

The MoET recognizes the diverse needs of learners and the systemic inequalities that impede access to ICT resources. This policy mandates the empowerment of all learners within the basic education system, with a strategic focus on bridging the digital divide, particularly in rural and remote areas, to ensure equitable access to essential ICT resources and training.

Policy Statement

The MoET will actively address systemic inequalities and empower marginalized groups by implementing measures that guarantee equitable access to ICT resources and training for all learners in schools. This policy will establish an inclusive educational landscape that enables every learner to succeed.

Strategies

1. **Develop a comprehensive equity plan:** Create a plan that outlines steps to address systemic inequalities, developed in consultation with stakeholders, including marginalized groups. This plan will be regularly reviewed and updated.
2. **Provide targeted support for marginalized groups:** Provide focused assistance to marginalized communities, including additional funding and training to ensure access to necessary resources and opportunities.
3. **Promote inclusive education:** Ensure that all learners receive high-quality education tailored to their needs. This includes additional support for learners with special educational needs and promoting diversity in the curriculum.
4. **Empower marginalised groups:** Involve marginalized communities in decision-making processes, providing leadership opportunities and ensuring their voices are heard to create policies that effectively address their needs.

8.2. Inclusion

Inclusion ensures that all individuals, regardless of their differences, are valued and provided equitable opportunities to participate meaningfully. It focuses on creating an environment that celebrates diversity and fosters a sense of belonging for everyone.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall ensure that all hardware, software, and digital content used in Basic Education are accessible and support the educational success of all learners, in line with their needs.

Strategies

1. **Conduct a needs assessment:** Perform assessments to identify the specific needs of learners with disabilities, evaluating the accessibility of existing resources and identifying gaps.
2. **Provide training and support for accessibility:** Provide training and support for teachers and staff to ensure they can create and deliver accessible content, including the use of assistive technologies.
3. **Ensure compliance with accessibility standards f:** Guarantee that all educational resources meet established accessibility standards, such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) or the Accessible Rich Internet Applications (ARIA).
4. **Promote Assistive technologies:** Actively support the adoption of assistive technologies and implement necessary modifications to existing educational resources.
5. **Engage with stakeholders:** Collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including learners with special educational needs, to ensure their needs are met and to involve them in policy development.

8.3. Digital Ethics

Digital ethics encompasses the principles guiding responsible technology use and decision-making in the digital space.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall actively promote digital ethics, set rules and principles that guide responsible use of technology and impart digital ethics training to all users.

Strategies

1. **Develop a comprehensive digital ethics policy:** Develop a comprehensive digital ethics policy that outlining responsible technology use. This policy will be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including other MDAs and will be reviewed and updated regularly.
2. **Provide digital ethics training:** Offer training to all users on responsible technology use, covering topics such as data privacy, cyber security and online safety.

3. **Collaborate digital ethics initiatives:** Work with other MDAs to promote digital ethics and responsible use of technology. This will include sharing best practices, developing joint initiatives and engaging in ongoing dialogue.

4. **Model responsible technology use:** Lead by example by demonstrating responsible use of technology in its own operations. This will include implementing strong data privacy and cyber security measures, promoting transparency and accountability, and ensuring that all users are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

8.4. Digital Safety

Digital safety involves practices to protect users from online threats while safeguarding personal information.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall promote digital safety by implementing mechanisms to identify, manage and monitor cyberbullying and other forms of online harassment, ensuring learners are protected from harmful content.

Strategies

1. **Develop a comprehensive digital safety policy:** Develop a comprehensive digital safety policy outlining safe technology use, developed in consultation with stakeholders and regularly reviewed.
2. **Provide digital safety training:** Educate all users on safe technology practices, including data privacy and cyber security measures.
3. **Collaborate on Digital Safety Initiatives:** Partner with other MDA's to promote digital safety, sharing best practices and developing joint initiatives.
4. **Implement content filtering and monitoring:** Partner with other ministries to promote digital safety, sharing best practices and developing joint initiatives.

9. Enhancing Education Policy Implementation

9.1. Policy Communication and Dissemination

Effective policy communication involves conveying information and recommendations to specific audiences while disseminating broader messages to stakeholders and the public.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall tailor its communication strategies to ensure relevant audiences are informed about policy developments, facilitating decision-making and promoting accessibility to the wider public.

Strategies

1. **Develop Communication Materials:** Develop clear and concise materials, such as brochures and info graphics, to explain the policy to stakeholders and the public.
2. **Diverse Dissemination Channels:** Utilize various channels, official websites, social media, media briefings, and stakeholder meetings, to disseminate policy information widely.
3. **Training and Capacity Building:** Provide training for stakeholders on the policy's provisions and implementation procedures, clarifying roles and responsibilities.

9.2. Education Management Information Systems (EMIS)

Supporting the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of education-related data to relevant stakeholders is crucial to support management of the basic education system and decision-making at national and individual school levels.

Policy Statement

Robust Education Management Information Systems support the collection, processing, and dissemination of education-related data, facilitating informed decision-making at all levels.

Strategies

1. **Collaborative design and development:** Involve stakeholders, teachers, learners, parents, and MoET staff, in the design of EMIS to ensure systems meet diverse needs.
2. **Decentralisation:** Establish a structure that supports decentralized EMIS operations at the district level for greater responsiveness.
3. **Training and support for users:** Provide comprehensive training and support to all stakeholders to ensure effective use of EMIS, including data interpretation for decision-making.
4. **Implementation:** Clearly define roles for all stakeholders during EMIS implementation, supported by a core team within the MoET.
5. **Maintenance and support:** Build internal capacity for first-level support and establish communication channels for escalating maintenance issues to service providers.

6. **Operations:** Ensure that EMIS facilitates smooth learner enrolment, tracks learner progress, and monitors resource allocation effectively.

9.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation are essential for improving the education system's performance, leveraging data for results-based management.

Policy Statement

The MoET and its stakeholders commit to implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track policy progress and impact.

Strategies

1. **Develop a Comprehensive Policy Implementation and M&E Plan:** Create a detailed implementation plan that outlines objectives, timelines, and responsibilities for executing the policy, integrating key performance indicators (KPIs), data collection methodologies, and reporting protocols to ensure alignment with overall goals.
2. **Establish an Integrated M&E System:** Design a cohesive M&E system that facilitates real-time monitoring and evaluation. This system should integrate data collection, analysis, and reporting processes to enhance accountability and inform decision-making.
3. **Establish a dedicated M&E team:** Assemble a specialized M&E team, led by the Inspectorate and supported by the planning department, to oversee the implementation of the M&E system. Ensure that all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities within this framework.
4. **Enhance Training and Capacity Building for M&E Stakeholders:** Provide targeted training programs to equip M&E team and staff with essential skills in data collection, analysis, and reporting standards. This training should enhance data literacy and ensure effective implementation of the M&E plan.
5. **Leverage technology for efficient data management:** Utilize advanced digital tools, such as mobile data collection apps and data visualization software, to streamline data processes. Ensure that these technologies are user-friendly and accessible to all relevant stakeholders.
6. **Foster collaboration and peer learning:** Encourage a culture of collaboration among M&E teams and experts through regular knowledge-sharing sessions, mentoring, and coaching programs. This will enhance skills and promote best practices in monitoring and evaluation.

7. **Implement Data Quality Assurance Measures:** Establish robust DQA protocols for data collection and analysis, including clear guidelines, regular audits, and stakeholder feedback mechanisms to ensure data integrity and reliability.
8. **Utilize Feedback for Continuous Improvement:** Incorporate mechanisms for ongoing feedback from stakeholders to continuously refine the M&E system. Use insights gained to make data-driven adjustments to policy implementation and M&E processes, ensuring responsiveness to evolving needs.

9.4. Sustainability

Sustainability is critical for the long-term impact of policy initiatives, requiring ongoing reviews and adaptable strategies.

Policy Statement

The MoET shall develop strategies for sustainability of this policy beyond the initial implementation phase in order to ensure its effectiveness and lasting positive change.

Strategies

1. **Develop Comprehensive Sustainability Strategies:** Formulate robust strategies that extend beyond initial implementation. This includes budget planning for ICT maintenance, establishing capacity-building programs for ongoing teacher professional development, and conducting periodic reviews to update policies in response to technological advancements.
2. **Forge Strategic Partnerships for Resource Sharing:** Cultivate partnerships with local communities, private sector organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to share resources, expertise, and financial support. These collaborative efforts will enhance the sustainability of initiatives by pooling resources and fostering a sense of shared ownership among stakeholders.
3. **Integrate Sustainability Principles into Curriculum and Training:** Embed sustainability concepts in the education curriculum and teacher training programs to equip future educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable practices in their classrooms and communities. This will help establish a culture of sustainability within the education system.
4. **Establish Regular Evaluation and Adaptation Frameworks:** Create a systematic approach for periodic evaluation of policy initiatives to assess their relevance and effectiveness. Use findings from these evaluations to adapt strategies and practices, ensuring responsiveness to changing needs and contexts. This proactive framework will help maintain alignment with long-term educational goals.