



SITA engages with the ICT industry to find workable solutions to enable service delivery through ICT

TSHWANE – Today (26 July 2016), The State Information Technology Agency (SITA), as a lead agency in government ICT implementation embarks on a series of provincial engagements with the ICT industry to deliberate and find feasible solutions to a speedy and sustainable ICT service delivery which will in turn benefit ordinary citizens and especially those in rural areas.

Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services, Dr. Siyabonga Cwele, officially launched the industry engagements, on Friday, 15 July 2016 at the Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg. This launch was attended by captains of industry, business owners and experts in the ICT sector, under the theme: Transforming the Lives of Citizens through ICT.

In light of the current economic decline, cost reduction in public sector expenditure, improved technology, eradication of corruption and ensuring a fair and transparent government Information and Communication Technology (ICT) procurement process will come a long way in the alleviation of the economic downturn currently experienced in the country. The National Development Plan emphasizes the need for the ICT sector to contribute positively to economic growth by means of job creation, entrepreneurial opportunities, and investment in sustainable ICT infrastructure.

In his address, Minister Cwele encouraged the audience to increase industry participation, spark the spirit of innovation among industry players and to create a competitive environment where all role players can thrive. He further urged them to contribute to transforming ICT industry to be service oriented and find workable solutions that can help with reducing the cost of bringing ICT solutions to the public.

Practical means to ICT cost reduction is key and there is a need for government to consider bulk buying and consolidation of ICT solutions. In its bid to engage its service providers, SITA appeals to the ICT industry to provide technology relevant to citizens' needs to eradicate poverty and enable service delivery as well as to seriously consider innovation and the localization of manufacturing of ICT products; as that will help grow the industry and create the much needed jobs.

It is a known fact that the Government is the biggest consumer of ICT products and with consolidated and bulk buying of these products and services it stands to save millions of Rands that can be directed towards other critical services such as healthcare and housing. SITA is strategically positioned at the heart of driving the modernisation and digitalization of government through e-Government.

Of importance, the role of SITA remains critical in acquiring better and affordable technologies to reduce cost and produce savings; whilst upholding procurement processes that are characterized by integrity and fairness. The Agency continues to send a strong message that corruption by officials and collusion by the industry would not be tolerated.

The engagements seek to also create harmonies between the ICT industry, SITA and the Government.

In providing the strategic overview, the SITA CEO, Dr. Setumo Mohapi echoes the same sentiments and believes that SITA is poised to deliver on the expectations of its clients – the Government; however the role played by its service providers, suppliers and vendors remains crucial in ensuring that this is achieved, recognizing the importance of partnerships and acknowledging that the Agency cannot do this alone.

He also indicated that new and different ICT practitioners are required to make this work. These include developers who are agile, innovative, driven and ready to respond to the call of government for improved service delivery.

Benefits for the Industry

SITA has a Small, Medium and Micro sized Enterprises (SMMEs) development plan which aims to empower service providers with one of the proposals being to ensure that SMMEs actively take part in the economic landscape by breaking down big projects into sizeable chunks which will not completely close out opportunities for SMMEs to compete when bidding for new business. The SMME development plan has a direct link and impact on job creation, cost reduction and strengthened economy.

SITA also considers methods for which to ensure the service providers remain sustainable. Whilst looking at reducing the costs by providing cost effective solutions to its clients, it is also important that service providers are not squeezed out of business and that both SITA and its vendors still remain financially sustainable. The proposed costing and pricing model promises to ensure that this becomes a reality.

The consolidated buying approach, having more open bids as opposed to sole source supplier sourcing strategy and launching the procurement portal which will also assist, especially SMMEs with the savings of costs when bidding for new business.

It remains the responsibility of everyone in the ICT industry to do better with the money that is available by redirecting government ICT spend, using ICT effectively and by managing the lifecycle of the products as these surely promise to be great building blocks to ensuring that the industry grows and remains sustainable for everyone including the Government, SITA as well as all the suppliers, service providers and vendors.

These stakeholder engagement sessions were held throughout the provinces.

- Mpumalanga Province
- North West Province
- Free State Province
- Western Cape Province
- Northern Cape Province
- KwaZulu-Natal Province

- Eastern Cape Province
- Limpopo Province

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