

## INPUT FOR MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR NORMAN MOKOENA, MPL: ICT ROUND TABLE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Ladies and gentlemen;

The Province has limited ICT infrastructure and this has affected the uptake and usage of ICT by government, SMMEs, individuals and communities. The ICT sector in Mpumalanga has seen slow growth over the years due to a number of factors which include a combination of the following:

- The lack of a more competitive telecommunications landscape that offers reduced, competitive pricing to consumers;
- The lack of ICT skills development in the province;
- The lack of access to infrastructure by all citizens of Mpumalanga;
- The lack of collaboration to enhance efficiencies and ensure cost effectiveness;
- The lack of sustainability of SMMEs;
- The lack of ICT innovation and research and development; and
- The lack of positioning the ICT sector as a global competitor.

The main purpose of the ICT Strategy is therefore to encourage strategic investment in ICT and to chart a roadmap to the future for the effective deployment of ICT in Mpumalanga Province to meet the following strategic objectives:

- To Increase the use of ICT as an enabler for socio-economic growth;
- To eliminate the digital divide in the province;
- To enhance service delivery;
- To improve the competitiveness of existing industries; and
- To improve the South African education system.

Our Province has therefore identified five key imperatives through which various ICT projects will be implemented. The key imperatives will also assist the province to address national government priorities. Our major focus - the key imperatives emanating from our provincial ICT strategy, will thus be on **infrastructure development; skills Development; public service efficiency; industry sector development; and SMME development.**

These imperatives are covered in detail in the strategy, together with recommended actions for the proposed ICT projects. A key initiative underpinning many of these projects is the deployment of a Broadband access initiative (“Installation of the Provincial Broadband”), without which the Province will be unable to fully realize the benefits of ICT.

The ICT Implementation Plan further directs the implementation of the ICT strategy. Specific implementation activities are proposed which will serve as guidelines to initiate and facilitate the implementation process. This further presents the strategic implementation framework with a number of identified projects. These projects are categorised in terms of the key imperatives as identified in the ICT Strategy.