

The Journey to Digital Transformation in Government [The Need for Flexible, Connected and Agile Public Officials]

Public Sector Innovation Conference

**Department of Communications and Digital
Technologies (DCDT)
Mlindi Mashologu, DDG – ICT Information Society and
Capacity Development**

24 August 2021

“Future outcomes will most likely be influenced by our choices in the present” (John Voros, 2011)

- Even though we can't determine which future of an infinite possible variety will eventuate, it is possible to influence the shape of the future which does eventuate by the choices we make regarding our actions in the present.

Digital Transformation leverages on the advances in technologies and relies on the use and reuse of data and analytics to simplify transactions for end users (citizens, businesses and government agencies) by:

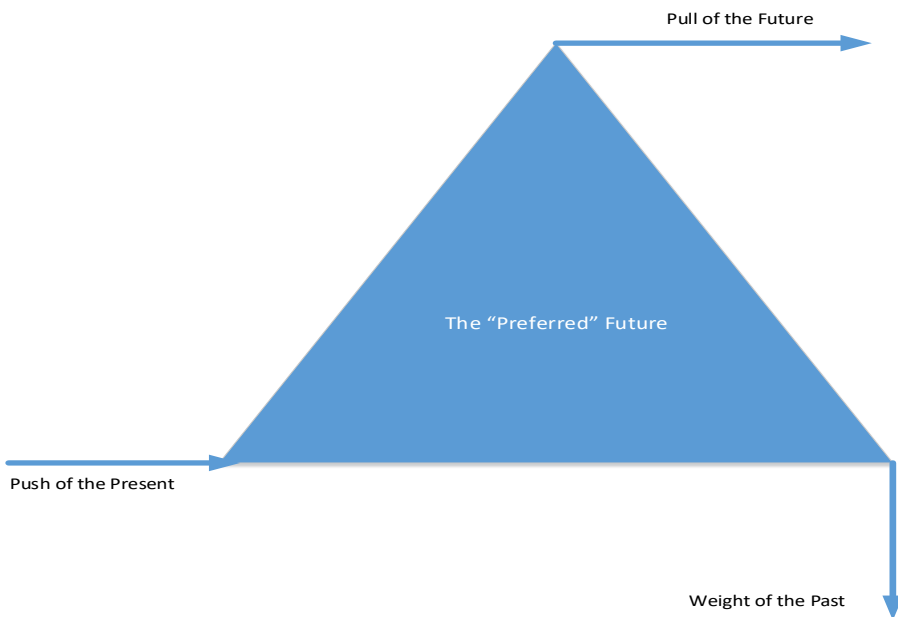
- Creating reliable information from the use of available data to support and enhance decision making of government
- Fosters the creation of new, collaborative and more efficient service delivery models.
- Redesigning and re-engineering of current underlying service models

Why Digital Transformation

- Technology is rapidly changing the way we work, interact, communicate and do business
- There is a poor communication channel between government and the citizens resulting in citizens getting frustrated
- Current service delivery model has long lead times for services to be delivered.

The main reasons we need to seriously consider a deliberate, systematic, large-scale transition from analogue systems to digital systems in government and society:

- Paper-based, analogue government is ineffective, inefficient & largely fail in addressing complex societal needs (Covid Pandemic is a clear example);
- New types of information technologies available at different levels in public sector organisations;
- Increased and new flows of information requiring new processes;
- These technologies are more efficient and effective, but cause changes in the organisational structures, processes and outcomes of the public sector; and
- **Need an entirely new type of expertise in public sector and new ways of looking at public management and interaction with the public.**



The “**preferred future**” pulls the us (Government, citizens) into the future. To define the preferred future, is nothing else than making a normative statement about the future; “We must have a Digital Government supported by Connected, Agile and Flexible Public officials in 10 years time.

Pull of the Future

It is important start analysing what factors are pulling the South African Government to the future; which contain one or more dominant visual image or vision: 4IR, big data, connected systems, IoT etc.

Push of the Present

The present state contains many forces that are currently pushing change forward. These pushes are trends, drivers, technologies and decisions or acts of agents that make new things happen. (Covid is pushing us to change how we do things)

Weight of the Past

The past contains weights which are structural barriers that inhibit change and prevent us from achieving a particular pull or push of the future. These historical weights can be understood as being, policies, laws, regulations, procedures, knowledge (skills) structures or historical narratives that limit or prevent us from moving forward.

- The three dimensions discussed above facilitate critical factors that are need to be considered which include:
 - **Hindsight:** Into the past or the weight of history which represents the deep patterns that are resistant to change.
 - **Insight:** Into present-day trends or the push of the present which represents trends, technology, globalization etc.
 - **Foresight:** About the future or the pull of the future image which represents the dominant and contending images of the future

The emergence of new digital technologies to enable Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) which include:

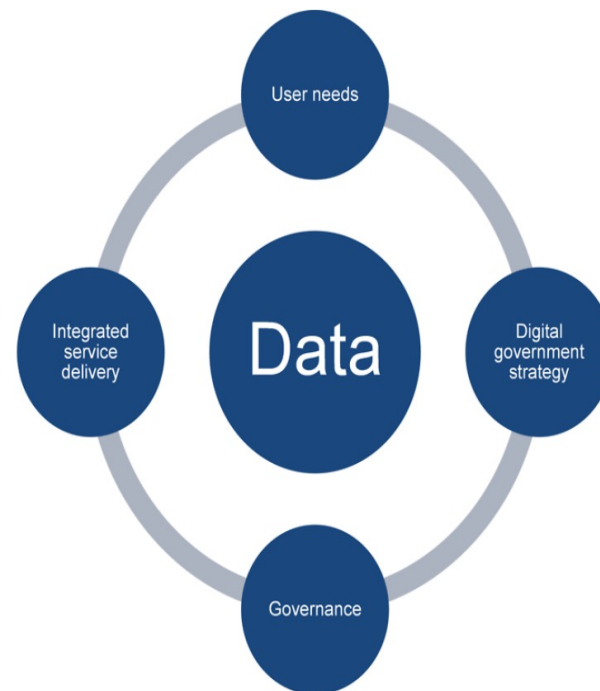
- ✓ plethora of smartphones,
 - ✓ social media platforms,
 - ✓ Big Data,
 - ✓ Internet of Things (IoT),
 - ✓ Artificial Intelligence (AI),
 - ✓ Robotics and
 - ✓ Machine Learning (ML)
-
- ❖ Offer diverse collaborative ways of working within and across Government Departments, systems, machines and better ways for citizen engagement.
 - ❖ This approach would be able to help our government to become not only more effective and efficient, but also more open, accountable and transparent to its citizens.

Digital Government is the use of digital technologies, as an integrated part of government's modernisation strategies;

- ✓ To create public value which relies on a digital government ecosystem comprised of government systems and processes, businesses, non-governmental organisations and citizens which supports the production of (and) access to data, services and content

The digital government concept represents a fundamental shift in the way any government is embracing the service delivery imperatives from setting measurable administrative goals to improving public service delivery looking on the following critical aspects:

- Making use of data-driven decisions to passing evidence-based policies;
- Ensuring greater transparency and accountability within government to build greater public trust.



BENEFITS OF MUNICIPAL BROADBAND

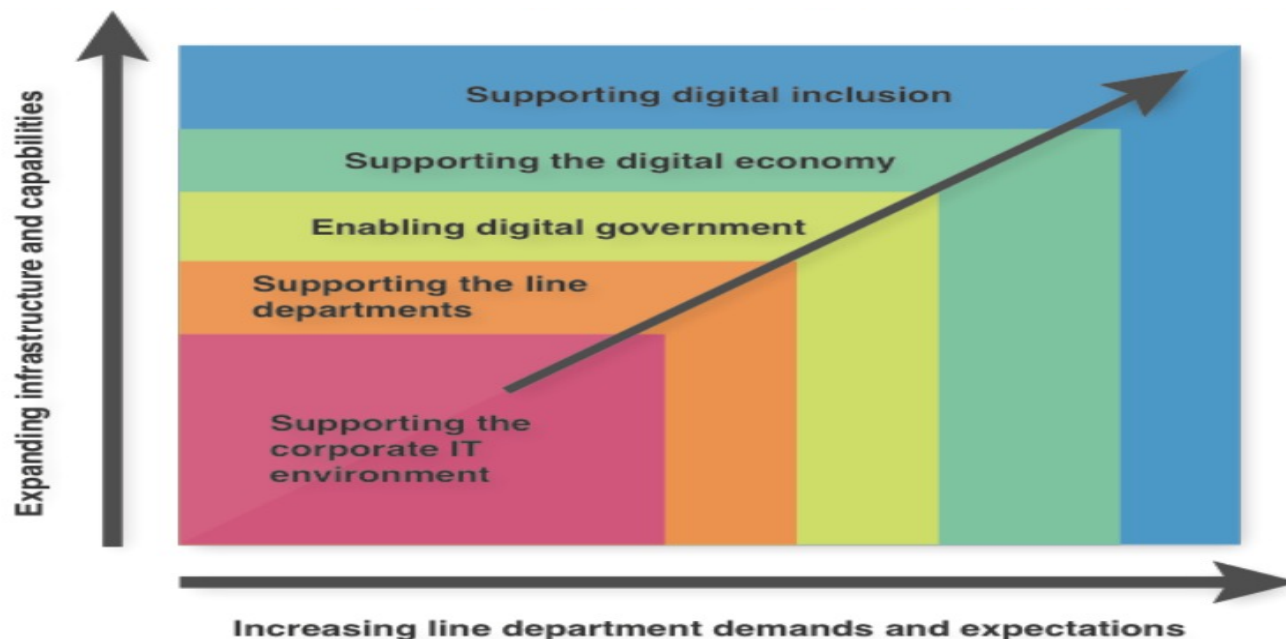
- Increased administrative efficiencies
- Ability to leverage economies of scale through technology (shared services)
- Improved efficiency of service delivery through the use of technology
- Enhanced citizen interaction with municipal authorities through eGovernment initiatives
- Provision of effective e-services to citizens

INITIATIVES FOR MUNICIPAL BROADBAND

- Municipal WiFi Hotspots
- Community Owned Networks

Broadband as a Public Good

FRAMEWORK FOR MUNICIPAL BROADBAND ENABLEMENT



PROPERTIES OF AGILITY:

- ✓ **Adaptability** – the ability to adjust and meet changing requirements
- ✓ **Innovation** – the ability to generate and use new ideas, methodologies and technologies
- ✓ **Collaboration** – the ability to leverage internal and external knowledge and resources to enhance the mission
- ✓ **Visibility** – the ability to create and maintain transparency to enhance fact-based decision-making
- ✓ **Velocity** – the ability to recognize and respond with the requisite tempo to new circumstances and events

- Skills development is one of the most critical building blocks considered by governments as part of their efforts to enhance the digital transformation.
- Given the widespread use of digital technologies across the administration, competencies are needed to properly drive the digital change.
- Technologies are increasingly complex, diverse and with a fast-paced evolution that requires governments to increase efforts to keep the skillsets of public officers updated, but also to anticipate the needs associated with emerging change.
- More than being reactive, governments increasingly need foresight and anticipatory capacities to manage the competencies and capabilities of the public sector workforce and organise themselves accordingly.
- The fast-changing environment where governments operate, has also transformed the needs and expectations of citizens and businesses with regards to how they interact with the public sector and/or can access public services.
- To address the change underway, a creative, flexible and adaptive public sector workforce with a citizen-driven mindset is required to drive an innovative public sector with the capacity to tackle the disruptive challenges of the twenty-first century and respond to the changing need.

Digital user skills

Allowing the public workforce to properly use digital technologies and take the full benefit of digital productivity tools (e.g. email management, text processor, spreadsheets and databases).

Digital skills

Digital professional skills

Attracting and maintaining specialists in digital technologies in the public sector (e.g. managers of IT systems, programmers, web designers, data analysts).

Digital complementary skills

New skills sets necessary namely to public service professions which are profoundly transformed through digitalisation (e.g. taxes collection, service design, public sector communication).

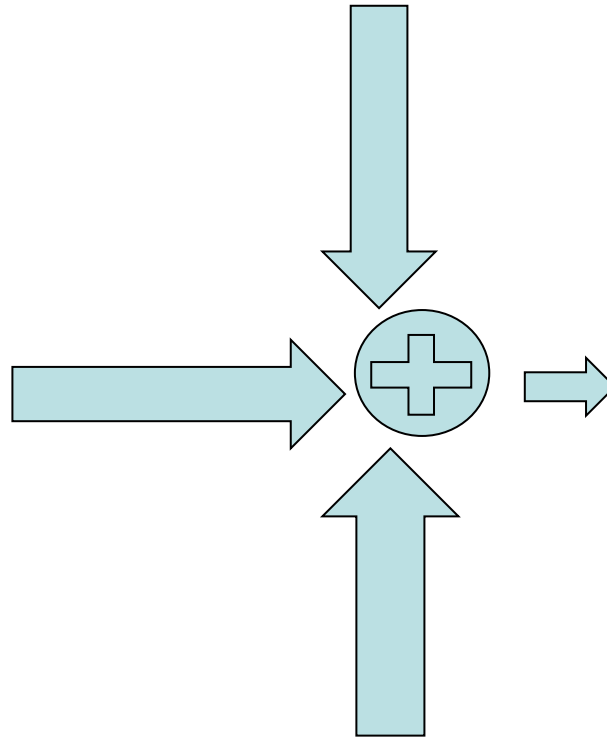
Digital management and leadership skills

Spreading a digital mindset in the public workforce able to properly acknowledge the opportunities, benefits and challenges brought to the public sector by the digital transformation.

- ✓ Promotion of a **digital culture** across the different sectors in society and all spheres of government, supporting the development of a mind-set that properly considers the opportunities and challenges of digital technologies across public processes and services.
- ✓ Reinforcement of a **data culture** in the public administration, that is capable of supporting a public sector that understands data as a critical asset for improved monitoring, forecasting and service delivery capacities.
- ✓ Development of a **delivery culture** across the public sector. In a digital age where citizens and businesses are used to the fast development and incredible convenience of services provided by digitally-based providers, the delivery of public services needs to achieve new levels of agility.

**Flexible, Connected
and Agile Public
Officials**

Digital Government



Digital Society

The notion of digital society reflects the results of the modern society that adopts and integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) at home, work, education and recreation.

SOME DCDT INTERVENTIONS

- ✓ National e-Government Strategy implementation being expedited, looking on taking services to the municipal level
- ✓ Digital and Future Skills Strategy being implemented
- ✓ SA Connect Programs to connect all public institutions
- ✓ Cost to Communicate – Looking on Zero rating some of key public services
- ✓ PC 4IR Strategic Implementation Plan
- ✓ District Digital Enablement

THANK YOU