Capturing the opportunity of digital transformation

In an environment such as ours, characterised by high levels of complexity, digitalisation presents unparalleled opportunities. In terms of our regulatory mandate, access to the Independent Verification System is one such development that enhances our day-to-day work.

The National Lotteries Commission (NLC) monitors the reliability, security and efficiency of the National Lottery and sports pools' central gaming system and network of terminals to ensure every National Lottery and sports pool ticket bought is appropriately recorded and included in the relevant draw.

The system allows the NLC to agree sales figures and prize shares and make certain that the number of winners and prize amounts are accurate after each draw. The system also enables the NLC to confirm that monies due to good causes are correctly determined.

Our pursuit of digitalisation has also allowed for better integration of various facets of our business, overcoming siloed approaches that hinder operational effectiveness. This has formed part of a business re-engineering process the NLC embarked on in 2015 by commissioning an ERP system to integrate all of its business units to a single and secured platform.

Today, the ERP supports the business end-to-end, tying together a multitude of processes and enabling the flow of data between them. By collecting the organisation's shared transactional data from multiple sources, the system eliminates duplication and provides data integrity with a single source of truth.

It offers additional benefits such as improved business oversight from real-time information gleaned from generated reports, lower operational costs through streamlined processes and enhanced collaboration across the organisation.

Furthermore, through the use of data mining techniques, we are able to develop predictive models that inform strategic decision-making.

The ERP platform extends to all the nine NLC offices across the country, utilising a modern MPLS data network.

This network enables seamless transmission of multiple data technology-based services such as e-mail, internet, telephony and video-conferencing applications.

The investments made to date on our digitalisation journey can be credited for supporting business continuity during the current crisis by enabling employees to work from home using a secured platform.

This is particularly relevant given that a predominantly digital means of conducting business does come with its own threats – namely cybersecurity, which has become a massive global problem. Prioritising cybersecurity capabilities is not only crucial for protecting our organisation and our stakeholders' data, assets and reputations, but also fundamental to our successful digital transformation.

It is therefore considered in all initiatives carried out. We continue to enhance cybersecurity management, explore cloud services and architectures and expand interconnectivity with other entities in the government sector.

At time when President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the lockdown period in March 2020, the investments made to date on our digitalisation journey can be credited for being ready to support business continuity beyond March 2020.

The NLC has set aside necessary investments to enable staff and external stakeholders to participate in and benefit from services offered from this secured infrastructure and enterprise architecture. In this endeavour, we also continue to pursue the ambition of becoming a paperless organisation.

A paperless environment is one in which the use of paper is eliminated or significantly reduced. This is done by converting documents into a digital format. Through this endeavour, the organisation can reduce costs, make documentation more accessible and information sharing easier while better securing personal information.

We recognise that in our South African context, however, this ambition must be tempered with the reality of barriers to internet access and the high cost of data. We therefore see this as a long-term goal.

Likewise, our digital transformation journey is not an end point, but an ongoing initiative to enable the NLC to meet the needs of all our stakeholders. Our ICT strategy is forward-looking and responsive, and is measured using SMART objectives.

To achieve these ambitions, innovation and a culture of continual learning remain critical tools toward success, especially within an era of increasingly advancing business, social, and economic environments.

Performance overview for 2019/20

100%
of all identified and reported illegal lottery schemes investigated
(2018/19: 100%)

3011
monitoring and evaluation site visits conducted against 2 500 target
(2018/19: 2 847)

91%
of grants disbursed within 60 days prescribed timeframes, exceeding 90% target
(2018/19: 83%)

9 295
jobs created
and **333 004**
secondary beneficiaries

137
stakeholder engagements conducted against a target of 12 engagements
(2018/19: 10)

99%
of procurement localised against 95% target
(2018/19: 99%)

Average minimum
of **11.35%**
equitable distribution to all provinces exceeding 5% target
(2018/19: 11.11%)

40
organisation-wide compliance and ethics interventions exceeding target of 5
(2018/19: 3)

Average payment turnaround times of 13 days, exceeding 30 days operational target

99%
of applications were adjudicated within 150 days
(2018/19: 98%)

8.42%
return on investments (ROI) of NLDTF funds exceeding 8% target
(2018/19: 8.42%)