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Lesotho's National ICT Development Status and Efforts to Improve Access to ICT.
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Introduction

Lesotho with a population of 2.2 Million consists of 10 districts. Maseru is the capital district and has the highest info-density and info-use within the country. Despite recent telecommunication industry transformation introducing new players for ICT infrastructural expansion and regulatory framework, there are currently no Community Internet Access services. Internet access is via three main ISPs but limited to government offices for negligible number of employees, private sector offices and a small number of schools. Household consumption for Internet services is almost non-existent. However, there is a high penetration of mobile communications access and services.

The Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology is in the process of developing the overall ICT policy under which Universal access principles are covered. The ministry has developed the ICT access Model (Lesotho's E-Post model) based on ICT equipment usage pattern study recently conducted. The aim of the model is facilitate ICT access to the majority of the population, by serving as a vehicle towards the delivery of e-government, e-commerce and accelerate the process of achievement of National Vision objectives (Vision 2020). The objectives include achieving: Poverty reduction, Accelerated economic growth, Stability and sustainable democracy.

Population with Access to a Public Internet Access Centre (PIAC)
As there is no community Internet per say, the government is making plans to establish Information centres using the existing postal Infrastructure for access to ICT services. A comprehensive research work has been carried out to map out ICT infrastructural aspects and ICT service usage patterns. Information presented in tables below has been taken from some research publication papers. Vital to implementing ICT access and service delivery is availability of other supportive infrastructure such as national power grid. According to the report to Lesotho Government cabinet by Department of Energy-Lesotho, only 11% of the population is connected to electricity. ICT infrastructure expansion is planned in such a way that it will influence expansion of the national power grid to areas where PIACs are to be established. Thus an optimal infrastructural expansion can be achieved.

Table 1: Telecommunications Operators and their Customer base.

Company	Type of service	Ownership	No. of Subscribers
1. Telecom Lesotho	PSTN	70% =Private 30% = Gov.	40 000
2. Econet Ezi~Cel Lesotho	Wireless	TL Subsidiary	60 000
3. Vodacom Lesotho (VCL)	Wireless	Private	100 000

4.Bethlehem Technologies	International Bandwidth Resale	Private	Not known at the moment.

Source: Lesotho's Migration path to e-government.

Table 2: Circuits Leased from TL.

Total No.	Capacity	No. Leased by Government
150	64 Kbps	7
51	128 Kbps	2
1	256 Kbps	1
1	512 Kbps	0

Source: Lesotho's migration path to e-government

Table 3: Lesotho ISPs

ISP	Capacity	Number of Dial-up Customers
Adelfang	128Kb/s	300
Comnet	704Kb/s	900
Leo	128Kb/s	1500
999Comms	128Kb/s	0

Source: Lesotho's Migration path to e-government

Table 4:Access/ownership of ICT services

Indicators	Number	Access (ownership) in %
Radio	8 (Country wide)	85
Television	2 ,,	41
Cell phone	2 ,,	37
Fixed line/phone	1 ,,	20
Computers	- ,,	0.04
Computer literacy		24

Source: Lesotho's E-post Model/ICT Access model

Table 5: Demand for Internet and Telephone

Indicator	Demand in %
Telephone	80
Internet	79

Source: Lesotho's E-post Model/ICT Access model

References:

[1]   Makhera. N., Moloisane A., Busler M.: **Lesotho's migration path to e–government**; URL: http://www.iiisci.org/ccct2004, August 2004.

[2]   Makhera. N.: **Lesotho's E-post Model/ICT Access model** –Ministry of Communications Science and Technology Maseru Lesotho, September 2004.