Concept Note: Empowering Digital Transformation: Building National and Local Capacities in South and East Africa[1]

Overview

This concept note outlines the proposed Capacity Building Workshop, titled *"Empowering Digital Transformation: Building National and Local Capacities in South and East Africa,"* scheduled to take place from 30 September to 2 October 2024 in Pretoria, South Africa. The workshop, organized in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA) and the United Nations University Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV), aims to provide essential knowledge and technical support to enhance national capacities for advancing digitalization at the local level across 23 countries in Southern and Eastern Africa.

Background and Rationale

Governments play a pivotal role in delivering public services and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the context of the rapid urbanization and digital transformation in Africa, the development of robust national and local e-government infrastructures has become increasingly critical. However, many countries in the Southern and Eastern African regions face significant challenges in advancing their e-government capabilities. These challenges are reflected in their low rankings on the E-Government Development Index (EGDI) and the Local Online Service Index (LOSI).

The lack of sufficient resources, digital infrastructure, and expertise at both the national and local levels has impeded the effective implementation of e-government tools. This workshop seeks to address these challenges by fostering South-South collaboration, knowledge sharing, and capacity building among participating countries.

Workshop Objectives

1. **Enhance National Capacities:** Equip government officials with the skills and knowledge necessary to advance digitalization efforts at the local level, thereby supporting the achievement of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

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[1] **Aligned with UNU-EGOV's Annual ICEGOV Conference: Trust and Ethical Digital Governance for the World We Want**
1-4 October 2024
Venue: *CSIR International Convention Centre, Pretoria, South Africa* *ICEGOV 2024 – Pretoria, South Africa*

2. **Promote Regional Cooperation:** Foster synergy among participating countries by sharing best practices and lessons learned in the development and implementation of e-government strategies.

3. **Support E-Government Implementation:** Provide technical assistance for the application of the LOSI methodology in selected countries, building on the outcomes of previous related projects.

Key Activities

- **Capacity Building Workshop (30 September - 2 October 2024):** The three-day workshop will focus on enhancing participants' understanding of national and local e-government strategies, with a particular emphasis on the application of the LOSI methodology. Participants will engage in interactive sessions, case studies, and discussions on the opportunities and challenges of digital governance in the region.

- **Participation in ICEGOV Conference (1–4 October 2024):** The workshop will be aligned with UNU-EGOV's annual ICEGOV conference titled *"Trust and Ethical Digital Governance for the World We Want,"* providing an opportunity for participants to engage with global experts and policymakers on the latest trends and innovations in digital governance.

- **Regional Launch of the UN E-Government Survey 2024 (3–4 October 2024):** UN DESA will host the regional launch of the UN E-Government Survey 2024, highlighting key findings and discussing their implications for national and local e-government development in the region.

- **Ongoing Capacity Building Activities (3–4 October 2024):** Capacity building activities will continue on 3 and 4 October, focusing on deepening the participants' understanding of e-government tools and strategies, with particular attention to the needs and challenges of countries in Southern and Eastern Africa.

Expected Outcomes

- **Increased Capacity:** Strengthened capacity of government officials to plan, implement, and manage e-government initiatives at both the national and local levels.

- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Improved regional cooperation and coordination in the development and implementation of digital governance strategies, contributing to the broader goals of the UN Global Digital Compact.

- **Broader Application of LOSI:** Expansion of the LOSI network, with the methodology applied in additional countries, providing a foundation for future capacity-building activities.

Conclusion

The proposed workshop represents a critical step in advancing digital transformation in Southern and Eastern Africa. By empowering local governments with the tools and knowledge needed to enhance e-government services, this initiative will contribute to the region's sustainable development and improve public service delivery at all levels.