



# Evaluation of Sectoral Implementation of Nigerian National Information Technology (IT) Policy

CPRSOUTH2014

POLICY BRIEF

The Nigerian National IT policy (USE IT) was formulated in March 2001 with sixteen sectoral application areas and the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) was established as the implementation agency. Out of these sixteen sectoral applications, this study sought to determine the extent of implementation of the policy in six sectors - health, agriculture, urban and rural development, arts, culture and tourism, national security and law enforcement as well as research and development. Ministries and agencies relevant to each sector were studied and the extent of implementation of the IT policy was evaluated. The study also assessed the newly drafted national ICT Policy to determine whether areas in the current national IT policy that are yet to be satisfactorily implemented have been taken care of. The implementation of the national IT policy in health, agriculture, Nigeria Police Force as well as in the research and development sector was adjudged very satisfactory, that of urban and rural development and Nigeria Immigration Service was seen as average; while it was adjudged unsatisfactory in Arts, Culture and Tourism sector. A review of the newly drafted national ICT policy revealed that some of the identified gaps in the current national IT policy had been incorporated to some extent while recommendations were made for the other areas.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of the current National IT Policy in the agricultural, health, urban and rural development as well as research and development sectors, has been satisfactory. Thus,

1. **GOVERNMENT** should sustain the tempo of implementation in these sectors and put mechanisms in place to achieve better level of implementation in the arts, culture and tourism sector
2. **NITDA** should ensure that the newly drafted national ICT policy:
  - i. **INCORPORATES** areas not fully implemented in the current policy including arts, culture and tourism,

and more efforts in national security and law enforcement sector.

- ii. **INCORPORATES** relevant private sectors and stakeholders in policy implementation and review. These are the major players in the ICT industry and they are the ones that will further deal with consumers.
- iii. **LAY EMPHASIS** on internet broadband penetration especially in the rural areas.
- iv. **GRANT** more autonomy to the private sector as a major player in the ICT industry.
- v. **MAKE PROVISIONS** for gender issues as it affects women especially in their access to ICTs thereby bridging the digital divide.

## THE RESEARCH

### INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian National IT policy (USE IT) was formulated in March 2001 with sixteen sectoral application areas and the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) was established as the implementation agency. Out of these sixteen sectoral applications, this study sought to determine the extent of implementation of the policy in six of the sectors - health, agriculture, urban and rural development, arts, culture and tourism, national security and law enforcement as well as research and development. Ministries and agencies relevant to each sector were studied and the extent of implementation of the IT policy was evaluated. The study also assessed the newly drafted national ICT Policy to determine whether areas in the current national IT policy that are yet to be satisfactorily implemented has been taken care of and then make recommendations.

### METHODS

The population of study was seventy-five. Fifteen Heads of departments across selected sectors were interviewed face-to-face, one online interview via e-mail as well as fifty-nine copies

of questionnaire administered. Interview responses were transcribed verbatim based on extent of implementation of each of the objectives of the IT policy that each sector seeks to achieve. Questionnaires were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and inferences were drawn by rating responses on a scale of 1-5 (excellent to not satisfactory respectively).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Extent of Implementation of the Nigerian National IT Policy across selected Sectors

##### (a) Urban and Rural Development Sector

This study revealed that only objectives 9 and 10 of the national It policy in this sector which are promoting proper documentation of ownership of lands and property in urban and rural areas, and creation of environmental networks were satisfactorily implemented; implementation of objectives 2, 3 and 7 are unsatisfactory while other objectives were averagely implemented.



**(b) Health Sector**

Here, objective 1 which is using IT for the establishment of Health-Care Information Systems (HIS) cutting across primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare systems is unanimously agreed to be satisfactorily implemented so far. Extent of implementation of other objectives too is satisfactory. This also buttresses the interview responses that showed the Ministry is actually working tirelessly towards achieving the objectives for which they are established.

**(c) Arts, Culture and Tourism Sector**

The Ministry does not have a fully functional ICT Unit thus assessing the implementation of the national IT policy was a bit challenging as the policy is either not implemented or still in the pipeline. The researchers therefore proceeded to study one of the Parastatals under the Ministry particularly the one that has been known for carrying out constant cultural activities over time. That was the National Council for Arts and Culture, NCAC. This study revealed that the Council has been carrying out some of its activities using IT and not actually following a specific national IT policy. This is not too surprising because the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and National Orientation that is supposed to give out policy and ensure strict adherence to it is neither aware of the policy nor appreciate the importance of it.

**(d) Agricultural Sector**

Here, the extent of implementation of objective 1 of the policy which is optimizing land use for food production is very satisfactory while other objectives are also satisfactorily implemented except objective 8 which is the use of IT for land and water management, offshore resources exploitation, yield assessment and livestock management.

**(e) Research and Development Sector**

For this sector, the National Information Technology Development Agency NITDA was studied. NITDA is the implementation agency of the Nigerian National IT Policy which this study is assessing its extent of implementation. Based on the agency's publications, several programs are being launched and success stories have been recorded over the years towards achieving the mandate of the agency which is to ensure successful implementation of the Nigerian national IT policy in line with the realization of vision 20-2020 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

**(f) National Security and Law Enforcement Sector**

The Nigeria Police Force

This study revealed that the extent of implementation of some of the objectives were satisfactory; however more efforts need to be added in raising awareness and educating national security and law enforcement personnel at all levels on the use, benefit and risks of new IT environment.

The Nigeria Immigration Service

Here, the researchers could not adequately assess the implementation of the policy because as at the time the study was carried out, the organisation was undergoing major re-shufflement from the Federal Government, hence most senior

officers were either compulsorily retired or the newly elected ones are either not settled to grant an interview or too busy to fill a questionnaire. However, it was deduced from the document made available to the researchers and responses gotten from officers on ground that NIS has incorporated extensive use of IT in almost all their operations but there is no clear adherence to any particular policy. That is why the Service is now calling for policy formulation that will affect ICT use in the Service.

**Assessment of Nigerian National Information Communication Technology Policy (Draft)**

Below are our submissions on the newly drafted policy among others:

- i. The policy recognizes the issue of convergence of technology. The converged technologies include telecommunications, broadcasting, internet and broadband, information technology and postal services.
- ii. No sectoral policy application but rather on different policy focus' areas.
- iii. There is provision for a converged regulatory agency (telecommunications, broadcasting, Information Technology, Postal Service) although with limited autonomy as most of its activities will be controlled by the government which negates the need for independence of regulatory bodies so the government can concentrate on more pressing issues.
- iv. The composition of the Adhoc Committee members shows that there is under representation of the major stakeholders and representatives of private sector who are the main drivers of the ICT industry in Nigeria. Their participation is important as they all have a greater stake in any IT policy debate or review.
- v. The draft policy made provision for Youth and ICT, but silent on gender issues as it affects women and access to ICT.

**FUTURE STUDIES**

Future studies should analyze the direct impact of national ICT policy on the Nigerian people.

**AUTHORS**

**Wole Michael OLATOKUN (PhD)** | Africa Regional Centre for Information Science, Ibadan, Nigeria | 6 Benue Road P.O. Box 22133 University of Ibadan, Nigeria | Tel +234-8059767412 | woleabbeyolatokun@yahoo.co.uk

\***Fatimah Jibril ABDULGAYAN (Mrs.)** | Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria | Department of Library and Information Technology, School of Technology Education, P.M.B.65, Minna, Nigeria | Tel+234-7068155501 | Email:|nnafatimah@gmail.com

