

EU-AFRICAN R&D PROPOSAL IDEA**Personal Details**

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Proposal**Title**

Using ICT to transform the Digital Divide in Eastern Cape Government Sectors

The title of your Proposal: please provide a maximum of 15 words that accurately reflect what your proposal is about.

Proposal idea (max 500 words):**Background**

Our world is changing, and information and communication technology (ICT) is central to this change. The provision of a telecommunication and mobile infrastructure available for learning and teaching is gradually increasing. ICT has the potential to enhance the management and administrative capacity of various government sectors such as education and health to name but a few.

This project is to propose innovative frameworks for the collaboration of Government and the private sector in the provision of ICT in education and health. Through this initiative we hope that we will be able to turn schools and health centres (clinics and hospitals) into centres of quality learning and teaching by making use of ICT.

In the South African context, the concept of e-Education revolves around the use of ICT to accelerate the achievement of education goals. E-Education is about connecting learners to other learners, teachers to professional support services and providing platforms for learning. e-Education will connect learners and teachers to better information, ideas and one another via effective combinations of pedagogy and technology. The challenge is to transcend the mere exchange of information and to transform e-Education into a range of learning activities that meet educational objectives. e-Education is more than developing computer literacy and the skills necessary to operate various types of information and communication technology. e-Education views ICT as a resource for reorganising education and as a tool for whole-education development.

The research and development community must continuously assess current practices, and explore and experiment with new technologies, methodologies and techniques that are reliable and will support educators and administrators in e-learning and e-administration in different government sectors.

The best way to learn and understand how to improve practices is through research, evaluation, experimentation and collaboration. To this end, this project must bring together educators, trainers, researchers and the ICT industry to an action-oriented research and development forum to evaluate and develop leading-edge applications for e-learning which will ultimately assist all Government sectors to improve their service delivery, management capacity and administrative capacity.

Bridging the digital divide and building an integrated e-Education System will require greater investment in the education sector. Sustained and predictable funding sources for technology are needed in order to realise a large-scale impact over time.

Objectives of Project

- Successful ICT integration in teaching and learning in Eastern Cape Government sectors
- Building confidence in the use of ICT as a training and teaching tool.
- Building a framework for competencies for the integration of ICT into the workplace (schools, hospitals, clinics, etc) to support the successful execution of the goals of such Government sectors within the Eastern Cape.
- Using ICT to bridge the digital divide in the rural areas in order to support education and health programmes.

Short Description of Institution

The School of ICT in Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Information Technology forms a part of the newly established Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. NMMU opened on 1 January 2005, the result of a merger of the PE Technikon, the University of Port Elizabeth and the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University. NMMU brings together the best traditions of technikon and university education, and draws on more than a century of quality higher education, in a new kind of university that offers a wide range of academic, professional and technological programmes at varying entrance and exit levels. Our vision as a values-driven university is to be the leader in optimising the potential of our communities towards sustainable development in Africa.

The vision of the School of Information and Communication Technology is to be the leading provider of state of the art information and communication technology expertise in South Africa. The courses at the School of Information and Communication Technology are designed to give students a world class grounding in the fundamental principles underlying their chosen field of study. The School of ICT is home to a number of leading researchers in their respective fields which include areas such as Information Security, eHealth, eGovernment, eLearning, Usability and many more.