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## Introduction

This document presents Malawi Government Civil Service Information and Communications (ICT) Strategy and Plan.

The ICT Strategy and Plan (Strategic Plan) has been developed as a sub project of The Financial Information Management Transparency and Accountability Project (FIMTAP). FIMTAP is an initiative by the Government of Malawi to promote transparency and accountability in public expenditure management. The use of efficient and effective information management systems is seen as one of the ways of promoting transparency and accountability and reducing poverty. This project has been part of FIMTAP initiative that focuses on “Improving Management Systems and Information Flows”.

This Strategic Plan has been developed to provide guidance and direction on ICT. The document is structured as follows:

- a) Vision and Mission of Malawi Government in respect of ICT; and
- b) For each of the ten broad Strategic Initiatives identified:
  - Strategic Objectives
  - Plans

Government takes cognisance of fact that proper and planned utilisation of ICT enables Government to deliver their services in an efficient, effective and transparent manner. This supports Government objective of poverty reduction through stimulation of various sub-sectors of the economy. Thus, the development of an ICT policy and strategy should provide direction, stimuli and a platform for economic and social change.

The issues raised in the National ICT Framework have been taken into consideration. In developing the National ICT Strategy (under a separate UNDP funded initiative) consideration should be given to the strategies and issues raised in this Civil Service Strategy document.

This document will be updated and revised annually to reflect existing socio-economic and technological situation. DISTMS will be the custodian of the document with the mandate to update the document as directed by the ICT Committee.

Note: Please note that throughout this document, the term ‘Government Ministry and Department’ refers to all Government of Malawi Ministries, Departments, Local Governments and District Assemblies that are part of Malawi Civil Service

**VISION**

The ICT Vision of the Malawi Civil Service is to achieve an 'e-Government'<sup>1</sup> status through promotion and use of relevant and appropriate Information and Communications Technology that enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration.

**MISSION**

The Mission of the Malawi Civil Service, with respect to Information & Communication Technologies, is to identify, develop and utilise appropriate ICTs for Ministries and Government Departments in a way that will increase Civil Service efficiency and effectiveness, in order to achieve

**Simple**

**Moral**

**Accountable**

**Responsive and**

**Transparent Governance to the public and other stakeholders.**

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<sup>1</sup> eGovernment is a concept that is based on Government Organisations using ICT to facilitate administration as well as a means through which services to the public are offered, generated and transacted. Governments of United Kingdom, United States, and Canada are leading examples of countries that have adopted an eGovernment approach. For example, paying duties and taxes over the Internet using credit cards, filling in forms available on the eGovernment websites to submit application requests.

## **Strategy 1: Promote a nation wide public sector approach to using and managing ICT**

This strategy aims to achieve a public sector-wide co-ordinated approach to Information and Communication Technologies across the Government Wide Area Network (GWAN). This approach will require public sector-wide standards and practices. These will ensure the consistent and cost-effective delivery of services across all parts of Government. These new standards and practices will cross current Ministry and Departmental boundaries.

### **Strategic Objectives**

Increase Ministries and Departments responsiveness and ability to fulfil requests through ICT.

- Efficient and cost effective processes through appropriate use ICT.
- A Government receptive to innovation and supporting emerging technologies.
- Cost savings from reducing incompatible hardware, software and networks.
- Investment in ICTs which contributes to the Government of Malawi's priorities.
- ICT to provide improved access to information, improving policy development.
- ICTs increasing the ability to meet Government and key stakeholder needs.

### **Plan**

1. Establish a representative Civil Service ICT Committee to ensure a co-ordinated Government approach to managing, using and investing in ICT. This committee will be a policy making body. Representation must include key stakeholders from Ministries of Finance, Information, Health, Education, Defence, Home Affairs, Agriculture, Commerce and State Corporation Department. Members of the current Government Computer Committee should make up the ICT Committee.
2. Restructure and resource the Department of Information Systems & Technology Management Services (DISTMS) to develop and support the implementation of public sector-wide ICT strategies. **Refer to Appendix I 'Proposed ICT Support Structure'.**
3. Promote standard operating environments within the public sector.
4. Continuously develop, publish and maintain policies, standards and guidelines that provide the framework for a public sector-wide approach to ICT and monitor Government compliance. Therefore ICT Policy & Strategic Plan is a living document and must be continuously reviewed and updated.
5. Seek Ministry and Department participation in the development and implementation of public sector-wide ICT strategies and initiatives.
6. Liaise with other Governments within the region in public sector-wide ICT strategy development and implementation.

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## **Strategy 2: Use ICT to support Government of Malawi visions, strategies, initiatives and outcomes**

The very speed of technological change means many organisations find it difficult to keep up. For the Government of Malawi, this can delay the introduction of important new policies and services.

To ensure the Government of Malawi achieves its overall objectives, Government Ministries and Departments heads and their management teams will take greater responsibility for ICT. They must develop an understanding of how ICT can improve the way Government does business, and ensure their Ministries and Departments successfully integrate ICT with desired visions and strategies.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- Align ICT vision and strategies to Civil Service vision and strategies.
- Allow key stakeholders access to information without needing to know the bureaucratic framework.
- Attaining a state of efficiency within a supportive environment through use of ICT, improving key stakeholders' perception of Government.
- Enhanced cost effectiveness of delivery of services by Government to stakeholders through optimum utilisation of ICTs.
- ICT enabling improved access to information, hence improving Government policy development.
- Significant savings through better management of all ICT resources.
- ICT investment carried out to contribute towards and enhance Government's ability to achieve desired objectives of service delivery to key stakeholders.
- Improved integration of ICT with Government processes and functions.
- A greater appreciation and knowledge of existing and new technologies to meet Government and key stakeholder needs.

### **Plan**

1. Develop Ministry and Department specific ICT strategies and guidelines for operation enhancement in their strategic plans (5-year plans).
2. Ministries and Departments will develop and maintain ICT strategic plans as part of the annual corporate planning activity. These plans will be in line with the Civil Service ICT Guidelines and Plan. The Department head will present the plans to the relevant authorities (ICT Committee) for review and execution.
3. Ministries and Departments, with DISTMS assistance, will develop business proposals (feasibility studies and business case) for all ICT investments as required by the ICT Policy and Government of Malawi regulations on procurement.
4. Introduce a system of preparation of business cases for any ICT requests.

5. Introduce management structures that support the integration of ICT with Government of Malawi outcomes by:
  - ensuring a member of the Department is responsible for managing information
  - ensuring that managers are accountable for the ICT component of outcomes
  - recognising the convergence of information management, information technology and telecommunications through DISTMS
6. Introduce Department accreditation and award systems that recognise best practice ICT integration and alignment with Government of Malawi objectives.

Develop incentives for successful ICT integration and alignment with the Civil Service and national ICT Policies and Plans.

### **Strategy 3: Strategic value and security of information**

Information is at the core of Government operations and services. The Government of Malawi has a duty to treat the information it collects and produces as a protected and valued resource. It must ensure the information is secure, accurate and used appropriately.

The introduction of new technologies means the Government of Malawi can utilise its information to better serve each Department and key stakeholders, by sharing information efficiently among different Ministries and Departments, while ensuring privacy.

Improving access to information adds value to it. The more a piece of information is used by the Government, the general public or business, the more cost-effective it becomes for the Government to store and distribute it.

Information is an asset that can be used concurrently by many people in many processes.

#### **Strategic Objectives**

- Each Department is responsible and accountable for the management, use and distribution of its data, resulting in effective knowledge management.
- Data to be stored centrally and made accessible to authorised parties.
- Transparency of all data, information and transactions.
- Enhanced privacy, confidentiality and security of Government information.
- Access to Government information required to carry out operations.
- Cost savings through faster and more efficient dealings with Government of Malawi; further enhancing stakeholder experiences and perceptions of dealing with the Government.
- Improved control and management of the Government of Malawi's information assets.
- Reduced cost of publishing Government of Malawi information.
- Ability to improve customer service through easier access to information in other Ministries and Departments.

#### **Plan**

1. Develop, communicate and implement standards and procedures, taking into account issues of controls and data integrity, to allow each department to manage its own data. Data must be stored centrally, however, managed individually by each Department.
2. Ensure appropriate public information is made available on public networks such as the Internet.
3. Develop, communicate and enforce security and privacy management policies for the collection, processing, storage, authentication and dissemination of information.
4. Develop, communicate and enforce Government of Malawi information management policies, guidelines and standards.

5. Establish a public sector-wide information strategy to facilitate transparent and seamless sharing, exchange and access to Government information across all Ministries and Departments.
6. Establish the criteria for Management Information Systems and implement an integrated Management Information System. Areas of automation include MRA, National Identification systems, National Payments systems, and Government Records management systems.
7. Establish facilities and guidelines for each Ministry and Department to provide information of value to Government and key stakeholders.
8. Establish licensing and pricing policies for information with commercial value.

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## Strategy 4: Provide customer focused ICT support services

Significant changes in management practices will ensure service delivery matches customer demand for access to services on a need basis. Each Ministry and Department is a customer of information from its own and other Ministries and Departments, as well as the general public. Therefore support of ICTs and management of existing systems is critical to customer satisfaction.

Service Level Agreements (SLA's) for support of ICTs will be defined and adopted within and across Ministries and Departments and with third party contractors. These will be managed and maintained by DISTMS. This transformation will rely on the introduction of an ICT support strategy that spans all Government Ministries and Departments.

### Strategic Objectives

- Centralise management and support of existing ICTs.
- Centralise the location of all servers and database.
- Define and adopt Service Level Agreements.
- DISTMS to be a single point of call for ICT support.
- Enable efficient and cost-effective support and management of ICTs.
- DISTMS more responsive to department ICT needs.
- Staff encounter improved access to support.
- Staff encounter improved access to information, data and network resources.
- Opportunities to outsource support for selected ICTs.
- Ministries and Departments will encounter cost-effective delivery of government services as a result of good working condition of ICTs.
- Improved integration of ICT with Government operations.
- Reduce costs of maintenance through disposal of ICTs that are obsolete and out of date.
- Adopt a culture of continuous improvement and carry out research of ICTs to exploit opportunities for new and emerging technologies/
- Support staff to be fully equipped to provide ICT support services across Ministries and Departments.

### Plan

1. Centralising the servers and database will allow for better support of this equipment in terms of routine maintenance, database management and optimisation, back up procedures, disaster recovery procedures, data security assurance, redundancy and a reduced risk of external threats to data. **Refer Appendix III, 'Centralising Applications & Servers'.**
2. Develop, communicate and adopt Service Level Agreements between DISTMS and Ministries and Departments, as well as third party contractors. **Refer to Appendix V, 'Service Level Agreement Template'.**
3. Define and implement performance measures to monitor and assess Service Level Agreements for support of ICTs.

4. Identify business re-engineering opportunities where ICT can enable organisational improvement and improved service delivery.
5. Centralise ICT support. Introduce telephone and remote access facilities that enable staff to make single point of service inquiries relating to ICT. This can be in the form of a Help Desk where inquiries or faults can be logged in person, electronically or over the phone. **Refer to Appendix IV, 'Guidelines for setting up a Help Desk'.**
6. Adopt a culture of continuous improvement to ensure ICTs are aligned to strategic performance measures and exploit new and emerging technologies.
7. Ensure staff is well trained and equipped to carry out routine and ad-hoc support ICTs. **Refer to strategy relating to skills and training.**

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## Strategy 5: Broaden access to Government information and services

The current diversity of technologies and standards across Government Ministries and Departments is costly and inhibits sharing of information and services.

A public sector-wide ICT strategy allows diverse systems to communicate with each other. This strategy implies the implementation of a fully integrated environment where systems and technologies are integrated, and procedures to access, use and maintain these are standardised.

Government Ministries and Departments will take early advantage of existing and emerging information technology and telecommunications products to improve interaction between Ministries and Departments and public access to services.

Confidentiality, security and privacy will be considered as use of the technology takes place.

### Strategic Objectives

- Centralise the location of applications, databases and servers.
- All applications and data to be made available and accessible over the GWAN to Government and key stakeholders.
- Ease of access to information over GWAN.
- Single point of access for systems and data via the GWAN.
- Integrated systems to allow for public sector-wide access and availability of on-line real-time information via GWAN.
- Consistent interface (look and feel) to access Government services.
- Greater equity of access across Ministries and Departments via GWAN.
- Reduced cost for dissemination of information via an integrated network.
- Improved mobile radio coverage means improved service response. Capitalise on new opportunities from telecommunications and mobile radio networks.
- Greater flexibility and responsiveness to Government and key stakeholders service requirements.

### Plan

1. Establish public sector-wide telecommunications network strategies and standards.
2. Develop, communicate and enforce network security policies, standards and guidelines.
3. Redesign network and system infrastructure to enable standardisation and integration.
4. Centralise location of applications, databases and servers. **Refer to Appendix III, 'Centralising Applications, Databases and Servers'.**
5. Identify suitable and applicable integration opportunities across systems, databases and Ministries and Departments.

6. Implement the integration opportunities identified, including the implementation of an integrated Management Information System that is available to all Ministries and Departments.
7. Compile and maintain a register of all ICT assets including specifications of components, versions, upgrades and location.
8. Establish public sector-wide electronic messaging and directory services.
9. Develop public sector-wide mobile radio strategies that build on the existing Service providers of Radio Networks.
10. Adopt the Internet protocol suite as the standard for Government of Malawi networks.
11. Ministries and Departments to use Internet and Intranet access to enhance public sector wide information access and exchange.

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## **Strategy 6: Become a smart acquirer of ICT products and services**

Inter-Department co-operation and standardised approach to acquiring ICT products and services that benefits the Government of Malawi, and aligns to the ICT Vision.

Adopt efficient and effective procurement standards and procedures as a prerequisite for improved delivery of Government of Malawi services using ICT.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- Enhance Government of Malawi tendering and procurement procedures.
- Procurement of ICT that will directly fulfil the ICT vision and strategy, and meet user requirements.
- Procurement of ICT that is compatible and can be interfaced with other technologies, reliable, applicable, flexible, with built in best practice and standards.
- Selection of suppliers of products or services must be in accordance with predefined selection criteria and standard tender procedures.
- Set minimum hardware and software specification that will be provided to all donors interested in financing specific Ministry and Departmental ICT requirements
- Approval of procurement by authorised parties as defined in Government of Malawi tender procedures and qualifying evaluation criteria.
- Procurement is not final until parties involved formally sign a contract.
- Adopt a "buy not build" philosophy for ICT solutions where possible.
- Transparency of procurement procedures.
- Government of Malawi receptive to innovation and supporting emerging technologies.
- Easier to do business with Government of Malawi based on predefined procurement procedures, guidelines and standards made available in tender documentation.
- Cost savings by reducing incompatible hardware and software.
- Economies of scale in Government of Malawi purchasing.
- More flexible response to community service requirements.
- Reduced cost and timeframes of ICT acquisition based on predefined procurement procedures, guidelines and standards.

### **Plan**

1. Adopt standard Government tender procedures and requirements for procurement.
2. Ensure that the standard tender and procurement procedures include comprehensive activities that cover the following:
  - a) System (ICT) requirements analysis – developing a business case (feasibility study) defining the need for procurement
  - b) Definition of requirements for new system
  - c) Define evaluation criteria
  - d) Preparation and circulation of tender documents
  - e) Evaluation of tenders based on predefined evaluation criteria, reference site visits and cost benefit analysis
  - f) System selection from qualifying bids
  - g) Contract negotiation (negotiation of budgets, timeframes and system functionality)

- h) Implementation
  - i) Support & maintenance
3. Review the procurement requirements and ensure that items to be purchased are standard ICT products that are reliable, flexible and adaptable to the Malawian environment, and have built in best practice and standards.
  4. Maximise the benefits of existing systems, technologies and telecommunications through procurement of interfaces and tools that will allow for the integration of systems.
  5. Pursue opportunities for "clustering" or sharing appropriate ICT based services between Ministries and Departments.
  6. Integrate ICT procurement with existing Government asset management policies and guidelines.
  7. Introduce alternative methods of acquisition, ownership and replacement of ICT infrastructure.

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## **Strategy 7: Attain successful results of ICT initiatives and new implementations**

Good project management is a critical success factor to achieving the desired outcomes of new implementations (projects). This strategy seeks to adopt standard methodologies, approaches, techniques and best practice in achieving successful implementation of new ICTs.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- Each new implementation to be managed by a designated Project Manager equipped with the relevant skills.
- Commitment and participation to the project by all stakeholders, including DISTMS, Department staff and managers.
- New implementations commence only with the relevant authorities approval, having qualified the Government tendering and procurement phases and meeting all prerequisites.
- Comprehensive project charter and project plans with key milestones identified.
- Risk mitigation and management of project risks.
- Change management and minimisation of adverse impact of new ICT to Government way of working.
- Clearly defined communication channels for the project team.
- Efficient and effective resolution of issues.
- Establish a body that will provide guidance and carry out decisions at a senior level.
- Adopt standard and proven implementation methodologies.
- Successful testing and acceptance of new ICT.
- Meet project target deadlines.
- Successfully complete projects within budget.
- Attain user 'Buy-In'.
- Well informed and trained users of new ICT.
- Ensure continuity and support for newly implemented ICT.

### **Plan**

1. Define the criteria required for the appointment of a Project Manager.
2. Develop a Project Management File to facilitate the maintenance of important project documents. This Project Management File should include details of the following:

### **Sales opportunity**

- All steps including decision to bid

### **Proposal Budgets**

- Approval of proposal budget by ICT committee
- Review of proposal by the ICT Committee and Project Steering Committee

### **Proposal Management procedures**

- a. Proposal Presentations
- b. Engagement terms, contracts, variations

- c. Project Plan (including quality assurance steps)
  - d. Project Mobilisation
  - e. Progress control (Project Progress Reports)
  - f. Financial Control
  - g. Meeting notes
  - h. Correspondence
  - i. Report/Presentations/Deliverables
  - j. Assignment Closedown
  - k. Post Engagement
  - l. Working papers
3. Encourage project commitment and participation by all stakeholders, including DISTMS, managers and department staff.
  4. Develop policies and procedures to ensure that relevant authorities approve new implementations.
  5. Develop plans for risk mitigation and management of project risk.
  6. Develop a change management strategy to minimise the impact of the ICT on the Governments ways of working.
  7. Establish clear communication channels for the project team.
  8. Develop effective issue resolution strategies.
  9. Establish a project steering committee to provide project direction and decision-making.
  10. Define criteria for testing and acceptance of the new ICT.
  11. Develop training and knowledge transfer plans to ensure users are adequately trained and can provide continuity and support for the new ICT.

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## Strategy 8: Invest in relevant skills

Staff will be trained and equipped with the relevant skills and resources to use, manage and maintain existing and new systems and technologies.

Everyone will benefit from the increasing role of ICT in Government of Malawi service delivery by improving their skills and ability to use the technology.

### Strategic Objectives

- Better-qualified public sector ICT support staff and users who are more effective in their dealings with Government processes and services.
- Education investment in ICT that supports the Government of Malawi's vision and strategy.
- Reduced cost of ICT support operations and due to well-trained support staff.
- Cost of delivery of services provided by Ministries and Departments reduced due to reduced learning curve of well-trained users.
- Develop and build upon internal capacity and competency of skills and capabilities of support staff and users.
- Enhanced knowledge and use of technology to meet Government operational needs.
- Cross skill staff between Ministries and Departments to ensure continuity and improved service delivery.
- Well trained users together with the appropriate use of ICTs releases resources to carry out value adding activities.

### Plan

1. Establish a framework to manage change in support of ICT development and usage.
2. Define career paths for key individuals so that ICT skills are retained.
3. Establish ICT knowledge exchange programs within the public sector and key stakeholders (e.g.: customs and excise clearing agents).
4. Develop public sector skills in the application of ICT to Government outcomes for:
  - the effective application of ICT to Government activities
  - management training in the areas of management of service delivery contracts, project management, data management and network management, through management development programs
5. Identify and provide relevant ICT skills development for the public sector.
6. Develop professional staff to meet Government of Malawi ICT requirements.
7. Promote ICT courses at tertiary institutions, which develop the skills required to use ICT in public administration.

8. Promote exchange programs with other African countries within the region to foster knowledge and skill transfer in the management and usage of ICT.

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## Strategy 9: Usage of ICT

Emerging and converging technologies offer considerable opportunities for the Government of Malawi to set the pace in innovative service delivery. New technologies bring new opportunities and new risks. The Government of Malawi needs to balance the advantages of using technology and the risks of doing so.

As part of this approach, the Government of Malawi will adopt standards and procedures with built in performance measures, for use of ICTs.

In addition, usage will be largely determined by how competent and confident users are therefore Strategy 7, 'Investing in relevant skills' must be achieved first.

### Strategic Objectives

- Mitigate the risks of usage of ICT by ensuring users are competent and confident, and introducing relevant automated and manual controls.
- Adopt standards and policies for usage of each ICT.
- Use performance measures to monitor and control use of ICT, and ensure optimum usage of technologies.
- Evaluate ICT usage and provide feedback to users to improve skills and effectively use ICTs.
- Successfully carry out change management for introduction of new ICTs to allow for 'user buy-in' and proper usage of new ICTs.
- To ensure full usage of ICT, rationalise the access and availability of ICTs across Ministries and Departments.
- Feasibility studies must be carried prior to procuring new ICTs to ensure maximum usage and appropriateness to Government operations.

### Plan

1. Develop, communicate and enforce standards and procedures for use of existing ICTs.
2. Ensure users are competent and confident to use ICTs via relevant skills transfer and training. **Refer to the skills and training strategy.**
3. Identify performance measure that will allow management to monitor the use of ICTs and provide feedback to users.
4. Develop, communicate and enforce policies, standards and guidelines for the managed introduction of new and improved technologies within the Government.
5. Rationalise the access and availability of ICT across Ministries and Departments.
6. Assess worldwide ICT trends and emerging technologies for value and functionality and determine how usage of such technology can further enhance Government operations.
7. Ensure Ministries and Departments are ideally located to make the best use of ICTs.

8. Establish a cross Departmental approach to participation in the application of new and emerging technologies.

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## Strategy 10: Support development of Government initiatives

ICT is a vital tool in the Government of Malawi's efforts to boost the economic, social and business development of the country. For example, the Government can utilise ICT to support the development of new business in Malawi by streamlining dealings with the Government.

The Government of Malawi can also utilise its purchasing power to encourage and support the local ICT industry.

Commercial information in Department databases may have significant value to industry and may attract new investment or support existing investment. Enabling cost-effective, easy access to this information will add value to the Malawi economy.

Aim toward achieving an e-Government status where all Government services and initiatives will be centrally located and managed via the Internet.

### Strategic Objectives

- Better employment opportunities for staff.
- Improved access to Government of Malawi services and information.
- Increased opportunities for partnerships and strategic alliances with Government of Malawi.
- Clearer idea of future directions and ICT opportunities.
- Cost savings through faster and more efficient dealings with Government of Malawi.
- Reduced cost of selling to the Government of Malawi.
- Better protection of intellectual property.
- Establish a foundation for an eGovernment, to include Internet based portals allowing key stakeholders to make inquiries and transact via the Internet, and for Government to provide services via the Internet.
- Government of Malawi receptive to innovation and supporting emerging technologies.
- Better administration of Government activities using ICT promotes the economic well being of Malawi.

### Plan

1. Strengthen communication between Government of Malawi and industry to support the Government of Malawi's application of ICT by:
  - publishing forecasts of Government of Malawi ICT requirements
  - providing access to data to authorised stakeholders
  - developing electronic directories of Government of Malawi activities and contacts for industry and make available to key stakeholders
2. Encourage the formation of partnerships with the private sector, or other Government bodies within the region, to encourage new and innovative ICT solutions and to share costs, risks and benefits.

3. Develop, communicate and enforce procedures to protect the intellectual property rights of industry proposals.
4. Streamline commercial interactions between Government of Malawi and industry through electronic means.
5. Develop an eGovernment short and long term strategy to include plans for achieving eGovernance as well address the challenges faced within Malawi and Africa for web-based transactions.