

SYSTEMS AND TOOLS

The covid-19 outbreak meant that we had to develop a response plan to ensure continuity of operations. Our

ICT response was to enable staff to work from home and access auditees' systems and data remotely. This also meant reprioritising our ICT initiatives and expenditure.

Viability objective 4: Enable operational effectiveness and efficiencies

PERFORMANCE MEASURE

% implementation of ICT strategy

2020-21 TARGETS

80% – 100% implementation of 2020-21 projects

2020-21 ACTUAL

77% achieved on the IT initiatives for 2020-21

77%

Reprioritising strategic initiatives and associated budget

Given the need to reprioritise to make our new working environment secure, efficient and effective, we worked on reducing the costs of ongoing projects. These included our 3G data contracts where we renegotiated our packages to achieve savings. This helped to release some of the budget, which allowed us to enhance platforms and security for remote working.

We introduced and enhanced remote working platforms including MS Teams for daily business communication and Yammer for staff and internal communication. We automated processes to ensure efficiency in payments, procurement and internal personnel management. To support our audit teams in tracking progress within their audits, we consolidated the audit milestones dashboard with other audit data sources such as TeamMate and the audit software management information system.

Security has become an important factor given our increased use of remote technology and this was enhanced by adding a virtual private network (VPN) platform, enhanced firewall protection and increased security for information stored on our cloud platforms. These enhancements helped auditors to access auditees' ICT systems remotely via the VPN, transfer large files electronically via OneDrive and use uninterrupted IT services during peak periods via 3G.

We also improved our security governance processes to align with the best standards ISO 27001 and Cobit 2019, which will enforce security disciplines. We have also added monitoring tools to assist our security control environment, and raised awareness among our employees about innovative ICT platforms and security and how to respond to any matters that arise.

We gathered insight and business requirements on a fit for purpose enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution. A significant component of the ERP relates to people resulting in extensive collaboration between the people portfolio and the ICT business units.

In February 2021, we successfully relocated our ICT infrastructure to our new head office in Lynnwood.

We have experienced some challenges during the year. These include: delays to finalising the IT strategy, retention of ICT employees that resulted in a high turnover of employees in IT infrastructure, and support for older versions for TeamMate that disrupted the production environment and had to be rolled back.

Information management solutions and knowledge sharing

Our promotion of access to information (PAIA) manual and privacy policy were revised in January 2021. The PAIA manual has been translated into Afrikaans, isiZulu, and Sesotho, and published on the AGSA website to increase its reach and raise awareness among citizens.

Eight *Insights*, published for internal consumption, provided thought leadership on our role in international audits, South Africa's auditing landscape, ethical behaviour and other auditing matters.

We developed a concept document to implement a knowledge of audits and relaunched an enhanced online information and library portal for improved functionality and productivity. For our international auditors, we initiated a community of practice as a platform to share experiences, knowledge and lessons learned.

