MEDIA STATEMENT
Attention: To all Media

Date: 03 September 2018

The Provincial Government has launched a free Wi-Fi on 31 August 2018, as part of the implementation of the broadband telecommunication network infrastructure. Free Wi-Fi service will provide a unique opportunity for the people of Limpopo Province to become active participants in the knowledge economy.

The implementation of the ICT projects demonstrates the commitment made by the Premier during the 2018/19 State of the Province Address on 23rd February 2018.

Government provides a free Wi-Fi at the Library Gardens and Polokwane Municipality Offices. This free 'Wi-Fi services is plug and play. In other words there is no password needed to connect to the services within the two areas mentioned above. This service will provide users with 250mb of data daily.

Free Wi-Fi located at the Library garden, which is in the proximity of Limpopo department of Home Affairs, Financial Hub and Provincial Government Communication Information Services offices (GCIS), Wi-Fi will provide students, unemployed graduates, SMMEs, and all citizens with access to global data and information to advance their academic assignments and research, employment searches, and market researches for business development. This is the one milestone of taking Limpopo Province forward towards accessibility, affordability quality and availability of broadband network services.

Over 90% of the libraries in Limpopo Province are well equipped with ICT infrastructure to enhance reading and learning experience.

The following are ICT infrastructure projects in the province:

BROADBAND PROJECTS AND MILESTONE IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

1.Poverty Reduction

ICT infrastructure will support poverty reduction strategies by informing policy making, facilitating citizen to government transactions and public sector reforms and promoting participation and accountability. A major opportunity for using ICT in poverty reduction is to provide information and knowledge to rural populations and to empower local development agents to serve the poor. A variety of informational and connectivity advantages will accrue to the poor through improved operational capacities of the specialized local agencies.

The infrastructure will facilitate the electronic rural information system which will connect farmer's organizations, local cooperatives, rural municipalities, NGOs, and local government extension agencies to the Internet. The transmission of information on prices, markets,

inputs, weather, social services, and credit facilities will be far much better than using traditional methods, reducing transaction costs and inefficiencies, creating a viable land market, enhancing the credit worthiness of farmers and improve the life of the common man.

The ICT infrastructure will contribute to income generation and poverty reduction. It enables people and enterprises to capture economic opportunities by increasing process efficiency, promoting participation in expanded economic networks and creating opportunities for employment, providing access to practical information on small business accounting, weather trends and farming best practices, decisions about what crops to plant and where to sell their produce, buy inputs, incomes, access to rural finance, micro-finance opportunities for local people and small enterprises that previously had no access to flexible financing due to rigid banking regulations and information monopolies of large businesses.

2.SMME Development

Six (6) enterprises (SMMEs) are part of the project and will benefit 33% of the value of the project, in terms of Phase One which will cover Polokwane Municipality, Capricorn District and Provincial Identified growth points. In terms of the PPPFA Regulation, for any tender of R30 million and above, a minimum of 30% should be subcontracted to SMMEs. The six enterprises (SMMEs) will be trained and operate the trenching machines, laying fibre, connecting all sites, implementing of Network Operating Control Centre and the Call Centre in Phase One. Ultimately they will also be responsible for operations and maintenance of the entire network. All these are preceded by training to ensure that in Phase II they are able to roll-out the project without assistance.

3.Data centre

The data centre is the nerve centre of the entire network which was the first component of the entire system procured and implemented in March 2018. In terms of the project scope of Phase One, the Data Centre is the first milestone which was achieved and is linked to the Project Plan.

4.Network Operations and Call centres

Currently, SMMEs, as per work allocations are involved in the renovations of the buildings identified for the Network Operations Control Centre and Call centre and earmarked for completion in September 2018.

BENEFITS OF THE BROADBAND

1.Health

The deployed ICT infrastructure will facilitate remote consultation, diagnosis and treatment. The ICT-facilitated collaboration extends to medical research, health workers in the province will access relevant medical training through ICT-enabled delivery mechanisms. The centralized data repositories connected to ICT networks will enable remote healthcare professionals to keep abreast of the rapidly evolving stock of medical knowledge, effectively facilitating the dissemination of public health messages and disease prevention techniques, improving disease prevention by enabling more effective monitoring and response

mechanisms and improving the administrative efficiency of their public health systems and improving the efficiency of medical facility administration through, for example, the streamlining of medical procurement or the creation of patient record databases.

2.Education

The ICT infrastructure will harness and improve the efficiency, accessibility and quality of the learning process in the province through distance education, where affordability and geography have been real barriers to access in the case of Limpopo Province, enabling increased access to knowledge and more collaborative and interactive learning techniques. It will facilitate the development of scientific research networks on a worldwide basis, empowering indigenous research and development programs, providing technical training course over the Internet, training workers in designing, building, and maintaining computer networks, enabling students to obtain jobs in the local IT industry. Through the use of the infrastructure, data repositories and networks, curricula can be developed collaboratively, educational materials can be procured more cost effectively, staff and student time can be scheduled more efficiently, and individual student performance can be monitored more closely.

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