## The Digital Transformation Programme FY 2021/22: What has been done?

### Overview

The Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit (BMAU) started implementing Programme-Based Monitoring in Financial Year (FY) 2021/22, to assess performance against targets and outcomes in the Programme Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs) of the third National Development Plan (NDPIII). The monitoring is undertaken to verify how funds are utilised by entities and beneficiaries, as well as establish the outputs, and intermediate outcomes achieved. The monitoring also reviews the coherency in implementing the PIAP interventions, highlights key challenges and actions required to improve performance.

This policy brief highlights performance of the Digital Transformation (DT) Programme during FY2021/22 based on assessment of 14 (63%) of the 22 interventions under the Digital Transformation PIAP.

### Key Issues

➢ Underutilization of facilities at the National ICT Innovation Hub.

➢ Limited implementation of the digital migration agenda to ensure countrywide coverage of the national television broadcaster.

➢ Low uptake of innovations.

➢ Inadequate counterpart funding from the Government of Uganda for planned activities.

### Introduction

The Ministry of Information, Communication Technology and National Guidance (MoICT&NG) plays the lead and coordination role of programme activities with supportive roles from the National Information Technology Authority-Uganda (NITA-U). Other core agencies include: Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC), Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), Posta-Uganda, and Uganda Institute of Communication Technology (UICT).

The DT Programme interventions are implemented under four sub-programmes: Enabling Environment; Research, Innovation and ICT Skills Development; ICT Infrastructure; and E-services. The Digital Transformation Programme is envisaged to increase ICT penetration, and use of ICT services for social and economic development. The objectives of this programme as laid out in the NDP III are to:

i) Increase the national ICT infrastructure coverage;

ii) Enhance usage of ICT in national development and service delivery;

iii) Promote ICT research, innovation and commercialization of indigenous knowledge products;

iv) Increase the ICT human resource capital; and

v) Strengthen the policy, legal and regulatory framework.

The planned outputs for FY2021/22 were: ICT infrastructure blueprint developed; technical support and guidance on the roll out of ICT infrastructure provided; digitization of all content and services in the MDAs promoted, shared critical ICT infrastructure established; deployment of new technologies to provide last mile connectivity promoted; National ICT Policy and National Cyber Security Strategy developed; National ICT Innovation Policy finalized and implemented; ICTs for persons with disabilities (PWDs) popularized; training on accessibility of ICTs conducted; Capacity building and training for ministry staff undertaken; Support for the development of ICT policies, strategies and technical standards provided; Grants to innovators and innovation hubs provided; local electronics assembling and manufacturing promoted;

Institutionalization of ICT functions in MDAs/LGs; sensitization activities on IT legislation carried out to enhance awareness; Government cloud implemented; National Information Security Framework reviewed and implemented across the country; solar power at 25 NBI Transmission sites across the country installed; management and extension of the MYUG Wi-Fi network to cover both rural and urban centers undertaken; and Digital Terrestrial Television and Radio Broadcasting network expanded among others.

## Performance

The approved budget for the programme was Ug shs 369.432billion (bn), of which Ug shs 358.015bn (97%) was released and Ug shs 294.943bn (82.4%) spent by 30th June, 2022. The failure to absorb all the funds was explained by the inadequate counterpart funding to trigger expenditures on the donor components of the Regional Communication Infrastructure Programme (RCIP) under the NITA-U. The overall DT Programme performance was good at 81.1%. The programme output and outcome performance were good at 78.1% and 86.7% respectively. The E-services Sub-programme performed better than the other sub-programmes.

**Table 1: Performance of the Digital Transformation Programme in FY2021/22**

| Sub-programme | Performance | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Output | Outcome | Overall |
| Enabling Environment | 62.6 | 98.9 | 75.3 |
| Research, Innovation and ICT skills Development | 80 | 72.9 | 77.5 |
| E-services | 87.2 | 99.2 | 91.4 |
| ICT Infrastructure | 82.7 | 75.8 | 80.3 |
| **Average** | **78.1** | **86.7** | **81.1** |

*Source: BMAU DT Report 2022*

**Enabling Environment Sub-programme**
The sub-programme overall performance was good at 75.3%. Appropriate policies, strategies, standards and regulations that respond to industry needs were developed and reviewed. For instance: The Draft Regulatory Impact Assessment Report on Communications and Spectrum Assignment and Pricing in Uganda was produced; guidelines and plan to implement the National Broadband Policy were developed; the National Cyber Security Strategy was approved; and ICT and National Guidance Strategic Plan and the E-Commerce Strategy were reviewed in line with the NDP III.

**Research, Innovation and ICT Skills Development Sub-programme**
The sub-programme aims to promote ICT research, innovation and commercialization of indigenous knowledge products and increase the ICT human resource capital. The overall sub-programme performance was good at 77.5%.

The National ICT Hub at Nakawa was hosting eight (8) groups/innovators and provided technical support to the developers of the following applications: Education Management Information System (EMIS), Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP), IICS Technologies, and Xente. The hub remains underutilised at 10% of the installed capacity. A total of 31 phase three (co-hort-3) innovators received 50% of the award amount from the National ICT Initiative Support Programme and were at varying levels of progress with some registering prototypes ready for commercialisation, whereas others has commercialised. The programme through the MoICT&NG secured work space and signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Muni, Kabale and Soroti universities for

**L-R: A compact aggregation site installed under RCIP at Kiryandongo District, and upgraded transmission site with solar power system**

establishment of ICT innovation and business incubation centres.

The UICT attained representation on the Joint Admissions Board (JAB) and a total of 600 students were admitted on government sponsorship for diploma courses offered by the Institute. A total of 300 participants from 90 districts were trained in basic digital literacy skills.

### E-Services Sub-programme

An additional 39 applications were hosted on the government cloud; the e-payment gateway was rolled out with 75 e-services and 45 MDAs boarded onto the Unified Messaging and Collaboration System (UMCS). The SMS gateway was rolled out to 28 MDAs which are utilizing 22 services. A total of 37 and 46 MDAs and private entities respectively were added onto the data integration platform. The NITA-U developed the Government interoperability framework and enterprise architecture and the digital

authentication and electronic signature solutions (Ugpass). The sub-programme overall performance was very good at 91.4% as most of the planned output and outcome targets were achieved.

### ICT Infrastructure Sub-programme

The DT Programme through the NITA-U connected 725 sites on the NBI under the Last Mile Connectivity Project against a target of 700, installed and activated 300 MyUg free wireless sites. The sites included MDAs, local governments (LGs) health centres, schools, parastatals, and some private institutions along the NBI routes. Solar panels were installed at 25 transmission sites and power integration under the project completed. The National Data Centre (DC) was certified by the International Standards Organisation (ISO), certificate number ISO 27001:2013 and risk assessment was completed. An additional 39 government applications were hosted by the data centre.

The UBC renovated the following structures: Broadcast House at Nile Avenue, UBC Arua, and UBC Mbarara. The relocation of UBC Arua, and West stations from Kampala to Arua and Mbarara cities respectively was completed. Renovation of the UBC Namatala-Mbale station was ongoing. However, due to inadequate budgetary release to UBC, the planned activities related to design and deployment of the Digital Terrestrial Television/Direct to Home (DTT/DTH) hybrid broadcast system and digital migration were not implemented. The sub-programme overall performance was good at 80.3%. The output and outcome performance were good at 82.7% and 75.8% respectively.

## Conclusion

The programme performance was good, with the E-Services Sub-programme exhibiting better performance than the others. Most annual planned outputs under the E-Services Sub-programme were achieved as most outputs under the RCIP were completed.

However, the national broadband, and digital terrestrial transmission coverage was still low at 31% and 60% respectively. The Research Innovation and Skills Development Sub-programme disbursed funds to 31 cohort-3 grantees. The support to private innovation and incubation hubs and upgrading of the broadcasting equipment and infrastructure under the UBC was not achieved owing to inadequate budgetary releases. This is likely to affect the attainment of the NDPIII outcome aspirations.

## Recommendations

- The MoICT&NG should attract more innovators to the National ICT and Innovation Hub.
- The Digital Transformation Programme Working Group (PWG) should prioritize allocation of resources to digital migration, infrastructure development of UBC, and operation and maintenance of initiatives delivered by the RCIP for sustainability.
- The PWG should devise strategies to increase the uptake of the innovations for commercialization and employment creation.
- The MDAs should be encouraged to utilize the relevant applications to support the growth and development of the innovators.

## References

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