Information and Communication Technology Association of Zimbabwe (ICTAZ)

Promoting ICTs as tools and catalysts for Sustainable Development

Strategic Plan 2024-2026

JANUARY 2024

Information and Communication Technology Association of Zimbabwe (ICTAZ)

Creating multiple entry points for digital inclusion in developing the inclusive digital economy and knowledge society in Zimbabwe.

Table of Contents

FOREWORD.....3

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....5

CHAPTER 1.....6

1.0 INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND
1.1 OUR MANDATE
1.2 OUR GOVERNANCE

CHAPTER 2.....8

2.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REVIEW
2.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS
2.1 OPERATING CONTEXT

CHAPTER 3.....11

3.0 SWOT ANALYSIS
3.1 INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

CHAPTER 4.....13

4.0 ICTAZ'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
4.1 VISION
4.2 MISSION
4.3 THEMATIC PRIORITIES
4.4 STRATEGIC GOALS
4.5 OPEARTIONAL STRATEGIES
4.6 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

CHAPTER 5.....17

5.0 ICTAZ ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

CHAPTER 6.....19

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
6.1 MEASURING SOCIAL IMPACT AND EVALUATION

FOREWORD

First, I would like to thank the Strategic Planning Committee members for their commitment to this planning process, for their patience and sacrifice, and for their fortitude in seeing it through to the end on the backdrop of a difficult economic environment. Thanks also to the members of the ICTAZ Board of Trustees who participated in the facilitated inaugural Board of Trustees Meeting at the University of Zimbabwe in April 2023, and to the ICTAZ CEO/President, Mr. Hasha S. Maringe for the guidance and insight he provided to all of us.

It is my pleasure to present the Strategic Plan 2024-2026 of the Information and Communication Technology Association of Zimbabwe (ICTAZ), serving as a roadmap charting the course for the next three years. The Strategic Plan is informed by the organization's living experiences and commitment in Bridging the Digital Gap in Zimbabwe towards building an inclusive knowledge society and vibrant digital economy. The 2024 -2026 Strategic plan adopted a Human-Centered Approach which focused on balancing Digital Skills Development and Expanding Digital Access in Zimbabwe – leaving no one and no place behind. The promulgation of the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) 2021-2025, which has brought about significant changes in the ICT sector in the country, has been a key driver in forming the shape and direction of this strategic plan.

The following are the overall Strategic Goals guiding ICTAZ strategic direction:

i. Expand Digital Access to Bridge the Digital Divide
ii. Championing Innovation to Amplify Impact of Technology
iii. Improve Digital Literacy to Promote Digital Inclusion
iv. Promoting Responsible Use of New and Emerging Technologies to combat cybercrime.

The aspects of digital inclusion will cut through implementation of these four strategic goals. The global initiatives and strategies, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union (AU) Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030) has greatly underpinned the development of this strategy. The ever-changing ICT landscape has also been key in persuading ICTAZ to realign its new strategy at the national, regional and global area matters relating to issues of ICTs access, training and utilisation. We pledge our commitment not to leave anyone and anyplace behind.

Fungai N. Mukora

FMukora

Chairperson
Information and Communication Technology Association of Zimbabwe (ICTAZ)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are pleased to share our strategic plan 2024-2024, designed to guide ICTAZ and its stakeholders towards the full realization of its vision. It will guide decisions, influence behaviors and inspire confidence in the mission of our organization.

The crafting of this Plan has been a progressive multi-stakeholder collaboration process which involved different multi-stakeholder engagement strategies that included surveys, dialogues, workshops, conferences, seminars, partnerships and public meetings.

The process began in May 2019 when the Strategic Planning Committee was formed at the Educators ICT Conference (eICTc) held at Forest Hills Resort in Vumba in Mutare as part of the conference resolutions. The committee was comprised of Professor Maria Tsvere (Chinhoyi University of Technology), Mr. Tobias Makuwatsine (NSSA), Mr. W. Mlambo (ICTAZ Founding Trustee), Dr. Stanislas Bigirimana (Africa University) and myself as the CEO/President for ICTAZ and Chairman of the committee. Implementation of the workplan of the committee was then disrupted by the COVID19 pandemic. The year 2022 marked a major milestone for Committee which commenced operations in 2022 following the signing of the MOU between the ICTAZ and the Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) Academy of Teaching and Learning. After signing of the MOU, the committee spearheaded the process of drafting a new plan guided by the outcomes of the previous stakeholders' engagements and planning processes identified at the Educators ICT Conference 2023 held at the Management Training Bureau (MTB) in Msasa, Harare in March 2023.

We are grateful to all our ICTAZ members, new Board of Trustees, Staff and Partners who contributed to the development of this strategic plan. The feedback from all our stakeholders at various stages of the development of this strategic framework, was exceptionally useful to ensure we develop a document that rallies behind a shared understanding of our ultimate vision as an organization. It ensured that our strategic plan took into account the needs of the people we seek to serve and partner with.

We remain committed to empowering society to master emerging technologies as essential tools and catalysts for sustainable development and independently watch-dogging the impact of ICTs on the environment and society for the good of the people and our planet – without leaving anyone and anyplace behind.

Hasha S. Maringe
CEO/President
Information and Communication Technology Association of Zimbabwe (ICTAZ)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document sets out ICTAZ's Strategic Framework for implementation of ICTAZ'S mission to empower society to master emerging technologies as essential tools and catalysts for sustainable development and independently watch-dogging the impact of ICTs on the environment and society for the good of the people and our planet. Covering the period 2024- 2026, the Strategic Plan was developed through a participatory process involving the ICTAZ team and other stakeholders.

The Strategy is informed by ICTAZ's previous strategic direction (2015-2019), by the National Direction on ICTs and other ICT related concerns, including the organization's living experiences. The overall strategic direction was initially defined through a series of multi-stakeholder conferences and workshops, internal consultations, which were then discussed with various partners, including a select number of national, regional and global partners with an interest in advancing digital inclusion.

Over the next three years, ICTAZ will meticulously focus on

i) ICT Education, Training and Capacity Building
ii) ICT Innovation and Research and
iii) ICT Advocacy and Standards Development programs and initiatives.

The organization will identify high impact areas aligned with the overall vision of the National Government and the ICTAZ mission. As a membership-based organization, the Strategic Plan becomes a collective guide for action, based on the principle of Collaboration and Public-Private Partnership (PPP). It serves as a guide for actions at provincial and national levels, but most importantly also it should inform actions at organizational level.

A central tenet of ICTAZ Strategic Plan 2024-2026 is the imperative of building upon best practices and what has worked in Zimbabwe so as to forge a new paradigm on

i. expanding Digital Access,
ii. championing Innovation and Research,
iii. improving Digital Literacy and
iv. promoting Responsible Use of new and emerging technologies to combat cybercrime.

The ICTAZ Strategic Plan 2024-2026 is a tool to empower every citizen to meaningfully participate in building our Nation towards an Empowered and Prosperous Upper Middle-Income Society by 2030.

CHAPTER 1

1.0 INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

ICTAZ is a registered common law organization (Reg Number 688/2013) established in terms of the Deeds Registries Act Chapter 20:05 established to empower society to master emerging technologies as essential tools and catalysts for sustainable development and independently watch-dogging the impact of ICTs on the environment and society for the good of the people and our planet. We are committed towards the development of the enabling environment where all citizens obtain inclusive and equal digital access towards a dynamic digital ecosystem and safe internet that transforms society, mitigate climate change and fuel economic growth. The organization was formed in December 2010 by dynamic ICT enthusiasts, avid for developing ICT-enabled collaborative pathways to wicked problems in society. Endorsed by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology as an official collaborating partner in its undertaking to transform Zimbabwe into a knowledge society in Nov 2011; ICTAZ has developed and implemented significant transformative programs and projects nationally under this framework. Each of our initiatives is infused with our unyielding commitment to digital inclusion. Our guiding light is the vision of a dynamic and inclusive digital ecosystem that transforms society, mitigate climate change and fuel economic growth.

1.1 OUR MANDATE

The following are the objectives to be pursued and the functions to be performed as outlined in the founding Notarial Deed of Trust (Registration Number: 688/2013) that established ICTAZ in 2013.

1.1.1 To promote and spearhead the development, expansion and advancement of the Information Communications and Technology (ICT) research, adoption, utilisation and innovation in Zimbabwe.

1.1.2 To provide for or contribute to ICT integration into education and scientific research and development in Zimbabwe.

1.1.3 To create a network for empowering ICT career minded individuals and organisations who seek to develop and expand their potentials.

1.1.4 To represent all areas of the ICT community either directly or through relevant associations, and to act as a collective and collaborative voice providing a unified national policy forum.

1.1.5 To promote the growth and betterment of the ICT community through facilitating education, training, business clustering, partnering and mentoring, including developing a global awareness of the Zimbabwean ICT community to assist export development.

1.1.6 To collect and disseminate information and be a primary communications conduit to the ICT community in Zimbabwe

1.1.7 To work closely with similar industry ICT Associations to encourage membership growth and support these associations as they meet the needs of their members.

1.1.8 To maintain a high level of liaison and cooperation with Government Departments and authorities, local Government, relevant industry organisations and as appropriate with international organisations.

1.1.9 Construction and administration of 21st ICT Resource and Vocational Training Centres in the rural areas of Zimbabwe for the benefit of the public.

1.2.0 Providing for grants, scholarships, fellowships and other forms of financial assistance to deserving ICT innovative students for pursuing ICT education, vocational training, skill development etc.

1.2.1 Granting of financial assistance to any educational institution for granting scholarships, prizes, medals, awards for excellence in ICT studies and innovative ICT research for deserving students.

1.2 OUR GOVERNANCE

ICTAZ is governed by a Board of Trustees drawn from key local institutions with the public and private sectors. The current Board of Trustees is comprised of the following members:

Ms. Fungai N. Mukora	Dean of Faculty: Faculty of Computer Engineering Informatics and Communications, University of Zimbabwe (UZ) | Chairperson
Dr. Stanislas Bigirimana	Senior Lecturer: College of Business, Peace, Leadership and Governance, Africa University (AU) | Vice Chairperson
Prof. Maria Tsvere	Director: Academy of Teaching and Learning, Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT)
Eng. Dr. Sam Kundishora	Former Permanent Secretary: Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Service, Zimbabwe
Mr. Watson M. Mlambo	Former HOD: ICT Department, Mutare Teacher's College, Mutare
Mrs. Annah Mushunje	Finance and Administration Manager, African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD)
Prof. Peter Tsvara	Acting Dean: Faculty of Education, Humanities, Agriculture, Science & Health Profession, Solusi University, Zimbabwe
Mr. Fredrick Maringe	IRP Program Manager: Heritage Bank, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia
Mr. Tobias Makuwatsine	Systems Administrator: National Social Security Authority (NSSA), Head Office, Harare
Mr. Hasha S. Maringe	CEO/President: Information and Communication Technology Association of Zimbabwe (ICTAZ)

CHAPTER 2

2. 0 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic plan 2024-2026 was developed during a crucial time for Zimbabwe. The country is currently in the middle of implementing the National Development Strategy 1 - NDS1 (2021-2030). The overarching goal of the NDS1 is to ensure high, accelerated, inclusive and sustainable economic growth as well as socio-economic transformation and development as we move towards an upper middle-income society by 2030. One of the objectives of the NDS1 is to modernize the economy through use of ICT and digital technology. The Strategy in Article 6 recognizes ICT and Digital Economy as one of the national key priorities, while Article 99 obligates duty bearers to integrate Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the implementation of the strategy. Furthermore, Article 537 recognizes the need to expand digital access and literacy in order to achieve an inclusive digital economy.

Along with the national government, devolution has resulted in 10 distinct but interdependent country governments. Implementation of the ICTAZ Programs will now be undertaken at two levels: National and Provincial. ICTAZ's new strategy reflects this restructuring. It is built on the premise that by empowering our people to master emerging technologies as essential tools and catalysts for sustainable development and independently watchdogging the impact of ICTs on the environment and society, we will successfully attain a prosperous & empowered upper middle-income society by 2030. To fully deliver on our mission, we have shifted our strategic focus from narrow interventions based on mere advocacy and sensitization of ICT issues, trends and horizons towards a broader, long-term approach that addresses digital literacy, access and inclusion issues more comprehensively. This strategy also promotes engagement in meaningful partnerships as a way of strengthening sustainable outcomes.

2. 1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

This section provides a brief but comprehensive situational analysis of each of the thematic areas ICTAZ plans to implement under the strategy.

2.1.0 ICT Education, Training and Capacity Building

Article 4 (c) of the current Zimbabwe Policy for ICT 2016 outlines inadequate ICT skills as one of the major challenges facing ICT sector in Zimbabwe. According to the policy, there is a shortage of ICT skilled manpower to roll out ICT programmes. This shortage has a knock-on digital literacy which drives uptake and usage of ICT services. The policy therefore obligates the need to integrate ICTs in the education curricula commencing from early childhood education level as well as promote ICTs uptake within communities. Article 4 (g) further identifies low digital literacy level as another major challenge. Under this article, education curriculum does not include ICT, therefore the level of digital literacy at grassroots level is very low to stimulate service uptake and usage, especially in rural areas. In absolute terms, there is very slow progress in the deployment of Information and Communication

Technologies (ICTs) in ways that benefit citizens in Zimbabwe. Low levels of digital literacy amongst our citizens is alarming. As a country, we lack lifelong and professional development programs focusing deliberately on upscaling and upgrading citizen's digital skills and competencies to effectively deploy ICTs in their day-to-day socio-economic activities. Meanwhile, with the rapid and ever-changing nature of ICTs, the digital skills and competencies gap with advanced economies is ever increasing. Where online continuous learning is an option, a significant number of the citizens are still unconnected to the broadband internet and the few that are connected still paying more for less. In Article 5(h) of the policy, providing equitable access to ICT enabled education and training in all parts of the country, including disadvantaged communities is one of the desired policy outcomes.

2.1.1 ICT Innovation, Research and Development

In the Zimbabwe Policy for ICT 2016, Article 4(i) outlines lack of no framework for research and development (R&D) to stimulate innovation and harness the potential of ICTs in promoting entrepreneurship as the main contributing factor to the challenge of limited local ICT innovation, R&D and entrepreneurship. Article 10.5 calls for the promotion and incentivisation of investment in high-tech and high value-added manufacturing and business ICT services; through the establishment of Technology-Park with Special Economic Zone status as a policy statement on Innovation. The policy statement further outlines relevant provisions on ICT Innovation, Research and Development which include the Government:

a) Creating an enabling environment for the country to become an ICT innovation hub for Africa;
b) Working with private sector to set up the infrastructure and funding for ICT innovation;
c) Facilitating a broad-based innovation policy which enables national participation;
d) Incentivising and guidelines to attract international talent to assist in driving innovation;
e) Encouraging the development, exploitation and protection of intellectual property rights (IPRs) in the ICT sector;
f) Facilitating R&D in ICTs through appropriate funding schemes; and
g) Granting Special Economic Zone status to Technology Parks

2.1.2 ICT Advocacy and Standards Development

The rapid technological advancement which has led to convergence of technology and service delivery channels demand the development of new standards as well as standardized approaches to achieve interoperability and protect the rights, privacy, safety and security of people. The Zimbabwean constitution and the ICT Policy has created an enabling environment for individuals and organizations to influence government decisions, raise public awareness about important issues, and promote the adoption of ICTs and tools and catalysts that benefit society as a whole.

2.2 OPERATING CONTEXT

The work and operations of ICTAZ are carried out in all the ten provinces of the country of Zimbabwe. To reinforce its mission, ICTAZ seeks to work at the Regional and Global level through strategic partnerships. This section discusses how ICTAZ will work at each of these levels.

2.2.0 National

Article 2 of ICTAZ Notarial Deed of Trust identifies beneficiaries of the trust as citizens of Zimbabwe and the class of people mentioned in its objectives without discrimination of caste, religion or sex. Implementation of the ICTAZ Programs will be undertaken both at national and provincial levels.

2.2.1 Sub-regional and Regional Engagement

The organization will seek strategic partnerships to influence the sub-region and the region to promote and spearhead the development, expansion and advancement of the Information Communications and Technology (ICT) research, adoption, utilisation and innovation in Africa. ICTAZ will work closely with various entities of United Nations, with the Area Office of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Southern Africa as a sector member. ICTAZ will also work with civil society organizations, networks of ICT Organisations, key research and academic institutions that carry out work at a regional level on ICT related matters. ICTAZ is a founder member of the Technology Information Confederation Africa (TICONA), a ground-breaking Pan-African body of technology professionals spearheading the ongoing development of the highest possible standards of information technology knowledge and practice across Africa.

2.2.2 Global Engagement

ICTAZ will continue participating in global partnerships and decision-making forums to advocate for bridging the digital divide, advance digital literacy and expand the impact of technology globally. The organization works towards a global approach, by seeking out alliances with organizations outside the country that may be willing to come forward and participate in achieving our objectives by partnering, networking or becoming a member. The Association believes that by working closely with other industries, organizations, associations, institutions, government agencies and academia nationally and internationally will ensure that the benefits of ICT advancement ultimately percolate down to every single person in the society.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- ICTAZ is privileged to have Board Members that are well versed in ICT issues relating to education, industry and society. Its Board Members have experience working in key national institutions that continue to shape integration of ICT into several key sectors of the economy. Their diverse expertise will enhance ICTAZ's ICT for economic growth and social transformation strategies.
- ICTAZ has developed key organizational systems and a wide network. We have cemented meaningful official partnerships with ITU, the Ministry of ICT Postal and Courier Services, and also with key academic, professional and civil society organizations.
- ICTAZ has a strong knowledge base and experience in ICT in Education, Digital Literacy Training and Bridging the Digital Divide issues and has developed a database of local and international experts that support its strategic thinking
- ICTAZ has unrivalled operational and resource management systems that ensure that resources received are well used and properly accounted for.

  ICTAZ believes in its ability to take advantage of new opportunities. Its team is always ready to learn and adapt to change. ICTAZ's record of continuous delivery on planned activities and projects has instilled faith in its members, government, donors and the general community that resources invested in the organization will be put to good use.
- ICTAZ works within a strong legal and policy framework on the ICTs that is anchored in the country's vibrant ICT Policy and National Development Strategy 1 2021-2025 (NDS1). This allows for a wide range of ICT based innovative interventions.

Weaknesses

- ICTAZ ability to reach out to more members and expand its geographical and thematic reach is constrained by resource limitations.
- Staff capacity is limited. While the number of staff has grown significantly in the past two years (after the COVID19 shutdown), their capacity to ensure timely, high quality programme delivery must be enhanced.
- Membership and resource mobilization has been largely carried out by the CEO/President; however, efforts are underway to enhance the capacity of key programme staff to undertake membership and resource mobilization, guided by the resource mobilization strategy
- Inadequate research infrastructure and innovative gadgets to respond to emerging research needs.

Opportunities

- ICTAZ's ability to partner with the Government of Zimbabwe in implementing national projects /programs as an officially endorsed collaborating partner to the Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Services in its undertaking to transform Zimbabwe into a Knowledge society by 2030.
- ICTAZ's ability to reach out to more clients and expand its geographical and thematic reach is constrained by resource limitations.
- Membership and resource mobilization has been largely carried out by the CEO/President; however, efforts are underway to enhance the capacity of key programme staff to undertake membership and resource mobilization, guided by the resource mobilization strategy.

Threats

- The current sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe will minimize chances of ICTAZ to access external funding for its programs.
- Minimum donor funding on ICTs. Globally there is declining grant funding for policy Think Tanks and this affects ICTAZ's prospects of securing long term Institutional support.
- Pressing economic challenges currently facing the country. Inflation and exchange rate instability if not addressed will continue to erode value of ICTAZ funding.

3.1 Institutional Context

ICTAZ has grown from operating in one province into a national entity with offices in four of the ten (10) provinces in Zimbabwe for expanding its mission and ensure effective delivery of its programs countrywide. A new Board of Trustees has been officially appointed by the Founders and the Deed of Trust was legally amended to that effect. Staff size has grown from four to nine; we anticipate a twofold expansion during the lifetime of this strategy. As ICTAZ reorganizes to scale up the scope of its programs, it will be supported by a team with ex-pertise in ICTs, Advocacy, Communications, and Project Monitoring and Evaluation. The human-centered design (HCD) approach will be embodied in ICTAZ's work culture. All key stakeholders to ICTAZ shall be supported to deliver their work in a manner that promotes accountability and teamwork.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 ICTAZ Strategic Framework for 2024-2026

The figure below outlines the key components of the strategic framework.

OUR VISION:

A dynamic digital ecosystem and health internet; transforming society, mitigating climate change and fueling economic growth.

OUR MISSION:

Empowering society to master emerging technologies as essential tools and catalysts for sustainable development and independently watch-dogging the impact of ICTs on the environment and society for the good of the people and our planet.

THEMATIC FOCUS AREAS (COMMISION AREAS)		
Education, Training and Capacity Building	**Innovation, Research and Development**	**Advocacy and Standards Development**

STRATEGIC GOALS			
Expand Digital Access to Bridge the Digital Divide	**Improve Digital Literacy to Promote Digital Inclusion**	**Championing Innovation to Amplify Impact of Technology**	**Promote responsible use of new and Emerging Technologies to address cybercrime.**

OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES			
1 Implement the Connect a School, Connect a Community Initiative in rural schools 2 Partner with the Government in establishing solar powered Community Information Centres (CIC) 3 Source for low-cost devices and donations for rural based schools.	1 Establish a School of Digital Technologies for ICTAZ to facilitate Digital Skills and Competencies Training and Certification. 2 Establish strategic partnerships with national, regional and global Institutions to offer Digital Literacy Training to different stakeholders 3 Support Community-Level Initiatives on Digital Literacy Training.	1 Promote the formation of Students ICT Clubs in our members institutions to leverage research and innovation at club levels. 2 Mobilize resources to offer research grants to high school, college and university students. 3 Introduce ICT Awards to reward and promote Innovation and Research and Development in ICTs.	1 Organize Conferences, Workshops and Webinars to raise awareness and promote responsible use of new and emerging technologies 2 Offer training and capacity building to empower citizens with skills and competencies to master and integrate emerging technologies in their day-to-day socio-economic activities.

MOBILIZATION | COMMUNICATION | MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.2 VISION

A dynamic digital ecosystem and safe internet; transforming society, mitigating climate change and fueling economic growth.

4.3 MISSION

Empowering society to master emerging technologies as essential tools and catalysts for sustainable development and independently watch-dogging the impact of ICTs on the environment and society for the good of the people and our planet.

4.4 THEMATIC PRIORITIES

ICTAZ's work is focused on thematic areas that are of particular importance for creating a knowledge based and digitally inclusive society and economy in Zimbabwe. The work and programs for each thematic area is the organized into a working group called a Commission. During implementation of this strategy, there are three (3) commissions focusing on the following thematic areas:

4.4.1 Education, Training and Capacity Building

Building the capacity of Zimbabwean communities and institutions to deploy ICTs to deal with their own problems and development is the most important aspect of the work of this commission. The commission through its delivery vehicle, ICTAZ School of Digital Technologies facilitates all training and capacity building activities developed or implemented by ICTAZ and its partners.

4.4.2 Innovation, Research and Development

The commission focuses on creating new spaces for innovation, research and development, applications and content development, as well as incubation of future firms in the country. This will present wonderful opportunities to uncover creativity, talent, develop and deliver game changing ICT projects which will accelerate systematic economic growth in Zimbabwe. Technically, the commission will bring about greater access to the everyday person to embrace emerging technologies for sustainability

4.4.3 Advocacy and Standards Development

The rapid technological advancement which has led to convergence of technology and service delivery channels demands the development of new standards as well as standardized approaches to achieve interoperability and protect the rights, privacy, safety and security of people. The Commission promotes and facilitates public national awareness campaigns programs on the role of ICT for sustainable socio-economic development.

4.5 STRATEGIC GOALS

The four strategic goals of ICTAZ were developed with vital and valuable contributions and insight of its members to support ICTAZ's realization of its mission and role in facilitating progress towards the implementation of the National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025).

4.5.1 Expand Digital Access to Bridge the Digital Divide

To expand digital access, ICTAZ will make efforts to provide universally accessible, affordable, high-quality, interoperable and secure internet and devices to underserved communities, as well as programs to improve digital literacy skills. ICTAZ will coordinate efforts to close the digital divide in the use of ICTs in all rural schools and communities; and for all peoples, including women and girls, youth, indigenous peoples, older persons, persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in the digital world.

4.5.2 Champion Innovation to Amplify Impact of Technology

By leveraging ICT-driven innovation, ICTAZ will strive to facilitate the development of home-grown solutions to the pressing challenges the country is currently facing. This will also bring about greater access to the everyday person to use ICTs for sustainable development. ICTAZ will work to create new spaces for innovation, research, collaboration as well as applications and content development, presenting wonderful opportunities to uncover creativity, develop and deliver game changing ICT projects which will accelerate systematic economic growth and social transformation in Zimbabwe.

4.5.3 Improve Digital Literacy to Promote Digital Inclusion

ICTAZ seek to advance digital inclusion by empowering citizens with digital skills that will enable them to use ICTs for participation in social and economic life towards a knowledge society and smart Zimbabwe. ICTAZ commits to provide digital literacy to different stakeholder groups in rural areas in Zimbabwe as change agents and torch bearers to enhance ICT usage and bridge the digital literacy gap in rural communities Zimbabwe towards an inclusive digital economy.

4.5.4 Promote Responsible Use of New and Emerging Technologies to combat cybercrime.

ICTAZ is going to works with national authorities, law enforcement agencies, the public-private sector, and civil society actors to address the societal, ethical, legal, and economic impacts of new and emerging digital technologies to maximize benefits and minimize harm to society. The organization will organize awareness programs including toolkits and policy frameworks for the responsible use of new and emerging technologies, which promote research, knowledge sharing, and dissemination related to new and emerging technologies. As part of its mission, ICTAZ will carefully and independently monitor new and emerging technologies trends in Zimbabwe to thwart any attempts to use them as tools for malicious purposes, such as for crime and violence, as well as enablers of threats against peace, justice, and security.

4.6 OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES

The operational strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan framework will provide information on how the respective key strategic goals will be realised to achieve the overall strategy.

4.7 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

To ensure success in implementing the organization's four strategic goals, ICTAZ will a adopt robust mobilization, communication, monitoring and evaluation, among other measures, as follows:

4.7.1 Mobilization

ICTAZ will develop a robust mobilization strategy, to be implemented by its management council, which will support operational strategies to the highest standards. This unit will work with all four thematic areas to identify any opportunities and cases that can be used to enhance opportunities for growing ICTAZ membership and build a sustainable financial base. The unit will also be responsible for identifying funding opportunities for ICTAZ programs and operations. Building a sustainable financial base support, the ambitions of its members and fully implement the objectives of the organization.

4.7.2 Communication

ICTAZ values the role of communication in advancing the impact of its initiatives. In this regard, a new communication strategy will be developed to support ICTAZ's new direction, mission and vision. Through this strategy, ICTAZ will speak in one voice and ensure effective engagement with her stakeholders: communication tools and platforms in both mainstream and social media will be utilized to achieve this.

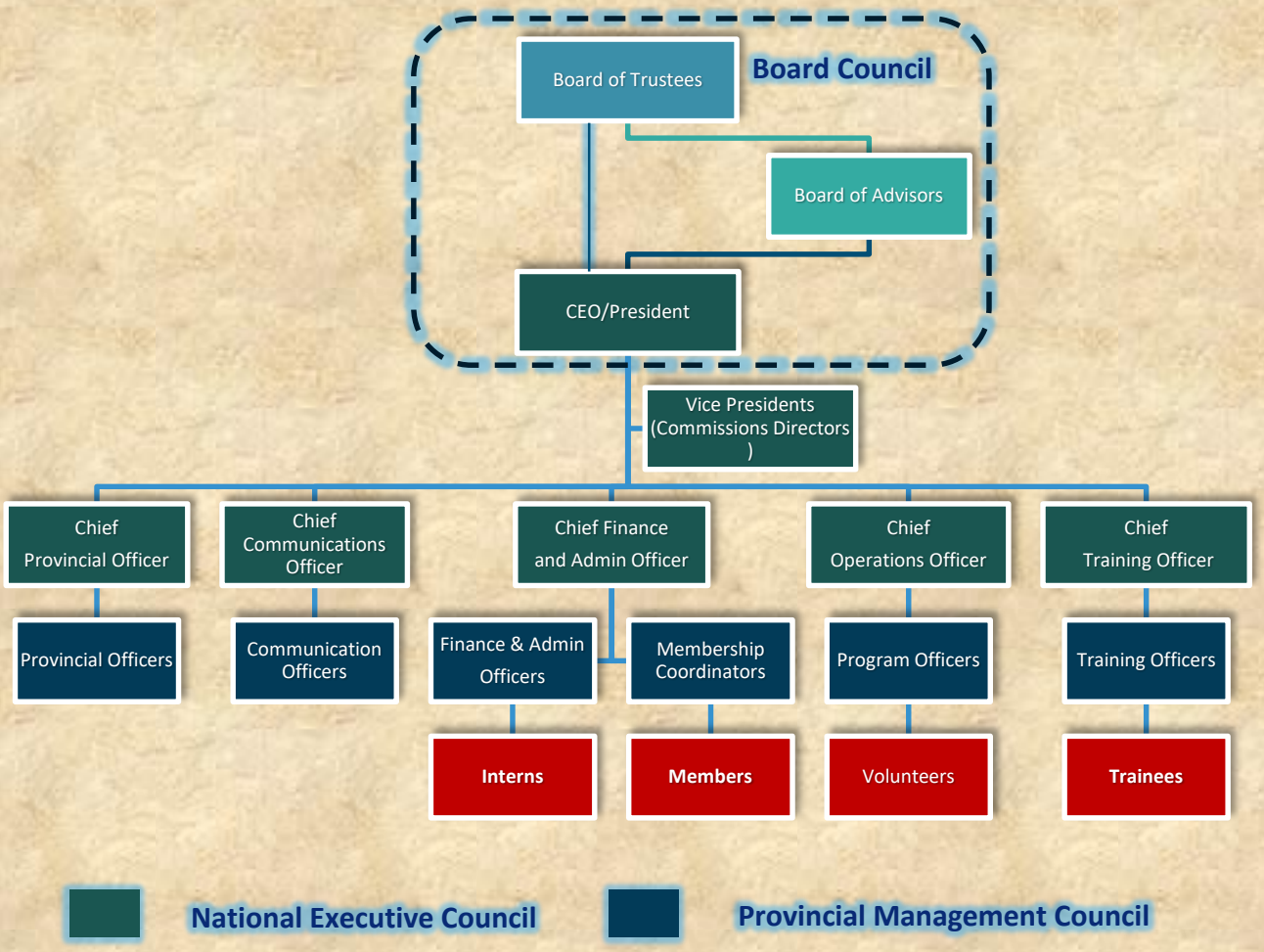
4.7.3 Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Over the period of this Strategic Plan, ICTAZ will revamp its M&E strategy to facilitate an integrated, systemic approach to tracking performance across all programmes and ensure that programmes and projects contribute to the overall results of the organization. The M&E framework will guide both quantitative and qualitative performance results at output and outcome levels. Key data collection, analytical and reporting tools will be developed to measure the impact. These include tools that will facilitate progressive tracking of performance and periodic reviews for better implementation at different stages. As part of the process of monitoring outcomes and performance, ICTAZ will also design a research programme to further develop and promote ICT for Sustainable Development related indicators. ICTAZ will provide a platform for enhancing partnership, networking and collaboration with key stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation, and will strive to address both internal and external reporting requirements.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 ICTAZ'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Based on the constitution, ICTAZ has a four-tiered management structure comprised of the Board of Trustees, Advisory Board, National Executive Council and the Provincial Management council.



5.1.1 Board of Trustees

The primary function of the Board of Trustees is to establish policies and priorities of the Association. This includes policy review and leadership, financial regulation and oversight and management of high-level relationships.

5.1.2 Board of Advisors

The Advisory Board provide insight and intelligence to the Trustees and Executive Council members to support operational planning and alignment to the ICTAZ strategic goals, and to enhance membership enrollment and engagement. Members of the Advisory Board Council are nominated based upon their merit, experience and professional qualifications. The Advisory Board members do not have authority to vote on corporate matters or bear legal fiduciary responsibilities.

5.1.3 The CEO/President

The CEO/President provide strategic direction for the Association and is responsible for the overall management of secretarial works and executive functions of the Association. The CEO/President is responsible for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the Association. He/She is also the Chairperson of the Executive Board Council. In addition, this office will be responsible for spearheading ICTAZ's fundraising strategy and the development and maintenance of strategic partnerships.

5.1.4 The Board Council

The Board of Trustees and the Advisory Board members combined including the CEO/President becomes the Board Council. According to ICTAZ's constitution, the Board Council meets at the call of the CEO/President who also chairs the council.

5.1.5 The Vice Presidents

The Directors of the three Commission Areas and the technical teams will lead the thematic teams in the implementation of the strategy. The three Vice Presidents will all deputize the CEO/President. The Director of each thematic team will reflect the need to achieve team-specific goals as well as the interdependence of all three Commission Areas. The Vice Presidents are part of the Executive Council.

5.1.6 The Chief Officers (Executive Council)

The Chief Officers are responsible for carrying out the policies laid down by the Board Council and for supervising the day-to-day management of the Association at National Level. The Chief Officers together with the Commission Directors (Vice Presidents) form the Executive Council. The Executive Council shall comprise of the CEO/President, Commission Directors (Vice Presidents), Chief Training and Operations Officer, Chief Finance and Admin Officer, Chief Communications and the Chief Provincial Officer. The Chief Officers review the strategy and track its implementation, guide institutional governance, approve annual work plans and budgets, and fundraise support. They meet at least once every month to review the organization's progress and approve the funding of projects as well as responding to recommendations and initiatives of the members. The council is also responsible for coming up with a quarterly programme or calendar of activities for the Association.

5.1.7 The Management Council

The Management Council shall be responsible for carrying out the policies laid down by the Executive Council and for supervising the day-to-day management of the Association at Provincial level. The Provincial Officer shall be the most senior staff person for the management council and shall report to the Chief Provincial Officer at ICTAZ Head Office. The management Council shall consist of the Provincial Officer, Finance and Admin Officer, Training Officer, Communications Officer, Operations Officer and Membership Officer.

CHAPTER 6

6. 1 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

The strategy will be implemented by ICTAZ in collaboration with its strategic partners and other relevant key stakeholders using the human-centered design approach. ICTAZ's Executive council team is comprised of diverse hired experts and professionals in Finance, Computing and ICT, Education, Business Development and Project Management to facilitate the efficient and effective implementation of the strategic plan. Moreover, the team is also responsible for managing day to day core business operations as a whole, which requires planning of various development processes, establishing priorities by recommending long-term strategies and policies, as well as monitoring the development of financial matters and business plans in consultation with ICTAZ's Board of Trustees and Board of Advisors. Information collected through customer feedbacks and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be used to fine tune the design of future program models and strategies. However, as ICTAZ we are vigilant of the fact that the successful implementation of this plan is dependent on a number issues which include our organizational management system, mobilization of adequate financial resources, staff commitment to the strategy and ICTAZ's vision as well as our ability to anticipate and identify risks, and to mitigate or manage these risks in a manner that promotes the strategy.

6.1 MEASURING SOCIAL IMPACT AND EVALUTAION

Despite the fact that measuring the impact of a think tank is inherently difficult, ICTAZ is committed to measuring its impact. This will enable it to establish a connection between its activities and the desired outcomes. It will make use of key performance indicators to track and measure yearly progress in the implementation of the strategic plan in relation to meeting organisational goals and targets. It intends to undertake periodic evaluations that offer a systematic and independent assessment of its operations and in the process demonstrate its continued relevance. A logic model to assist in measuring performance will be designed as one of the outcomes for the Strategy.

[1]National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025) available @ https://www.veritaszim.net/node/4583

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