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NAVIGATING ICT GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA'S PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS – INSIGHTS FROM THE GITO AT THE OFFICES OF THE PREMIER

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Abstract. *Effective ICT governance is essential in the public sector to drive digital transformation and improve service delivery. This research investigates the corporate governance of ICT Policy Framework (CGICT-PF) and Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and State Information Technology Agency (SITA) Act governs the operational activities and strategic directions of Government Information Technology Officers (GITOs) in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Free State provincial administrations in South Africa. Using a comparative case study, the research draws on policy analysis and interviews to reveal governance obstacles in procurement and executive ICT engagement. KwaZulu-Natal shows progress due to strong leadership, while Eastern Cape and Free State face delays from compliance-driven cultures and bureaucracy. The study urges a balance between regulation and agility, recommending GITO empowerment through decentralized procurement and leadership development. It advances ICT governance theory by exposing multi-level implementation challenges.*

Keywords: *ICT Governance, Public Sector, Provincial Administration, Procurement Reform, Digital Transformation*

Introduction

The worldwide need for digital transformation requires public sector institutions to make ICT governance an essential strategic priority. The pressure mounts on governments to ensure ICT investments match service delivery objectives and maintain regulatory compliance and achieve operational efficiency [18; 3]. The provincial administrations in South Africa face an urgent problem because Government Information Technology Officers (GITOs) need to handle multiple governance frameworks and institutional barriers as well as executive ICT awareness limitations.

The Offices of the Premier (OTPs) serve as national administrative hubs and are spread across all South Africa's nine provinces. These institutions operate as a platform for considering intergovernmental relations, monitoring service delivery while implementing digital governance strategies that align with national mandates. The environment requires GITOs to spearhead the ICT integration and digital innovation initiatives through strict compliance with the Corporate Governance of ICT Policy Framework (CGICTPF) and the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and the King IV Report on Corporate Governance. The frameworks exist to facilitate transparency in addition to accountability and risk management as ICT investments are driven by strategic objectives [7; 2; 29; 23]. Public entities all over the world are facing the same challenges because of the similar demand for digital transformation and necessity to deliver secure ICT services, which would be compliant with the standards and efficient in serving citizens [18;

3]. Effective ICT governance systems are a necessity for following legality, minimizing risks, and obtaining the highest value from digital investments [28; 15].

The actual enforcement of ICT governance frameworks does not ensure uniform or diligently researched adoption at the provincial level. The existing literature has primarily addressed e-government initiatives at the national and department levels of ICT governance, but there have been no studies of provincial governance tool implementation within public sector restriction [19; 21]. The studies in the research examine how governance frameworks impact GITOs ICT operations and method used for procurement as well as strategic power in the Eastern Cape Province, KwaZulu-Natal and Free State provinces.

The research employs a qualitative comparative case study method to gather data through interviews with GITOs and senior ICT managers and reviews governance documents and operational data. The research goals consist of (1) assessing the efficiency of governance tools together with structures in supporting ICT strategy execution (2) discovering procurement barriers alongside executive support limitations and (3) proposing governance improvements for strengthening provincial ICT management.

The research contributes to ICT governance literature through its empirical investigation of sub-national government settings which demonstrates compliance-versus-agility challenges while delivering actionable reform suggestions. The findings position themselves within ongoing discussions about IT governance models and digital transformation policy

alongside the transforming function of CIOs in public administration.

Literature Review

ICT governance plays the role of an important weapon in the hands of the public sector to drive digital transformation. The transitioning of governments to sophisticated digital systems requires strategic alignment of ICT initiative with strategic objectives and security measures and regulatory compliance [3; 15]. Different frameworks are therefore now available to steer ICT governance practices globally including in South Africa.

ICT Governance in the Public Sector

The ICT governance implementation in public sector organizations differs from those in the private organizations due to political requirements and hierarchical systems and procurement limitations. Diverse Oversight instruments are a requirement for public institutions whose result is the reiteration of efforts and operational inefficiencies and decisional processes that are merely for compliance [18]. The hardship facing the South African public sector is further compounded by the bureaucratic set up and ICT inefficiencies among executive officials [21; 19].

The South African government has put in place a variety of formalisms for guiding ICT governance. The Developmental Government Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) developed the Corporate Governance of ICT Policy Framework (CGICTPF) to enforce ICT governance implementation in departmental operations [7]. The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) oversees the regulation of financial accountability while the King IV Report on Corporate Governance establishes prophylactic communications for participation in our laws and regulations [2; 8]. These instruments establish a strong compliance framework however, critics say they favour formal structures against practical delivery [23; 20].

Global ICT Governance Models

A variety of governance models from countries all over the world offers excellent comparative lessons. The Government Technology Agency (GovTech) is responsible for Singapore's Institutional coordination strategy but still maintains agency-level digital leadership to attain national coherence and local responsiveness [16]. The Estonian digital ecosystem works through decentralized arrangements but has integrated platforms and legal interoperability that enables online delivery of all government services with diminished bureaucratic processes [14]. The models show how agile governance combines with executive ICT leadership and streamlined procurement towards their goals.

The adaptability of governance systems for user needs, which are required by whole-of-government digital leadership, are stressed by the Digital Government Policy Framework of the OECD. The framework advises against proceduralism dependence in favour of governance systems which foster innovation alongside accountability and collaboration [26]. These learnings mean more to South Africa because its centralised governance structure restraints provincial innovation and creates obstacles in the procurement of ICT systems [21].

Governance Tools and Strategic Alignment

ICT governance literature shows a persistent conflict between organizations that focus on compliance (conformance) and those that focus on performance (value delivery). The frameworks COBIT 2019, ISO/IEC 38500 and King IV emphasize the need to balance risk controls with strategic enablement [12; 11]. Many public sector organizations face challenges in converting governance instruments into practical strategies that promote innovation [25].

Research indicates that ICT governance success depends on more than formal frameworks because it also requires executive awareness and effective committees and interdepartmental collaboration [9; 1]. Research in health and education sectors demonstrates that poor governance committee structures combined with insufficient ICT representation in executive forums result in project delays and procurement hurdles and institutional priority misalignment [5; 17].

The South African Provincial Context

The existing literature at the provincial level shows limited research about governance tools in sub-national contexts. The majority of e-government and digital transformation studies focus on national departments [18] but there is limited empirical research about how provincial GITOs handle ICT governance and procurement and strategic alignment within regulatory limitations. The lack of research about provincial GITOs is crucial because provinces serve as main policy implementers while working in fragmented under-resourced environments [27; 24].

The literature shows that procurement delays from centralization [6] and the marginalization of ICT in executive planning [4] and inconsistent implementation of CGICTPF directives [10] are emerging issues. The research indicates that governance instruments receive widespread adoption but fail to produce meaningful results in the delivery of provincial services.

Summary of Gaps

The provincial ICT environments in South Africa face limitations from compliance-heavy processes and executive compliance-heavy processes and executive

ICT capacity shortages and procurement bottlenecks despite having access to global best practices and formal governance systems. The existing research lacks analysis of these dynamics through provincial comparison and GITOs' ability to handle institutional barriers. This research investigates the implementation of governance tools across three provincial administrations while identifying the elements which support or hinder their success.

Methodology

Research Design

The research uses qualitative comparative case study methodology to analyse how ICT governance frameworks affect operational activities and procurement procedures and strategic alignment within South African provincial administrations. The research focuses on three Offices of the Premier (OTPs) Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Free State because of their administrative importance and organizational differences and their diverse success in ICT project delivery.

Data Collection

Interviewees were anonymized using unique identifiers (e.g., GITO OTP 4) to preserve confidentiality while enabling comparative analysis.

Two major sources of research data collections were used:

1. Semi-structured interview with Government Information Technology Officers (GITOs) and senior ICT managers were held in the selected provinces. The comparative case study method provides suitable research design for studying complex institutional phenomena in specific settings where multiple governance frameworks and actors interact [30]. The study analyses governance practices between provinces to show how national frameworks become interpreted or resisted or enacted at the sub-national level.

The Research Design Overview in Figure 1 presents a visual representation of the research concentration together with provincial case locations and data collection methods (interviews and document analysis) and the analytical process from thematic coding to cross-case comparison and final findings.

2. Research comprised an analysis of document evidence (CGICTPF, PFMA, SITA Act).

The questions in the interview protocol included ones on:

- Governance frameworks: the implementation and effectiveness of.
- Processes of ICT procurement and their obstacles.
- Interaction with governance committees and management level.
- Alignments of strategic ICT projects and success measurement protocol.

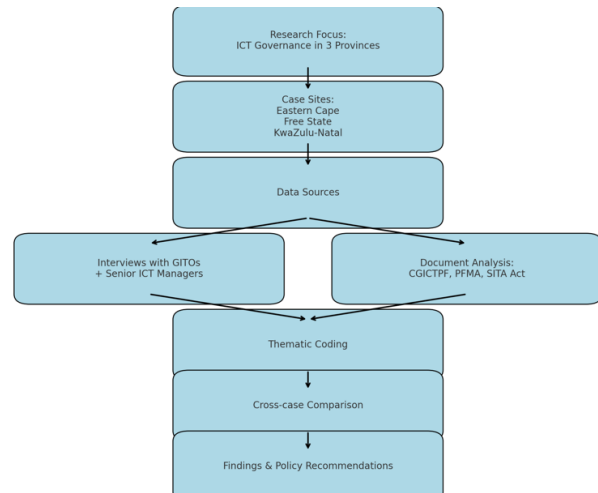


Figure 1. Research Design Overview

Figure 2: Data Collection and Analysis Process, which outlines the step-by-step methodological flow—from selecting case sites to synthesizing themes and developing findings.

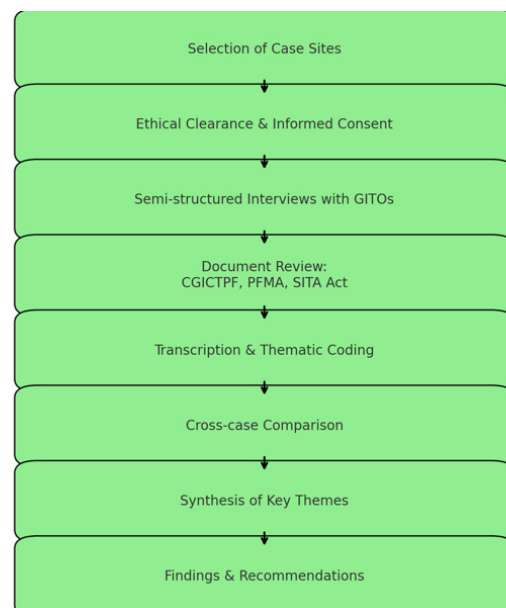


Figure 2. Data Collection and Analysis Process

Data Analysis

All the interviews were transcribed as a preliminary step before undertaking a thematic analysis of the material. Research objectives provided the foundation for the production of a preliminary coding scheme, which experienced inductive refinement if new themes presented themselves. The research comprised of Four major categories.

- Framework compliance vs implementation gaps.
- Procurement bottlenecks.
- Governance committee frequency and effectiveness.
- Strategic project alignment.

The research used cross-case synthesis to compare and contrast the three provincial settings. The aforementioned research employed pattern triangulation for validation of finding whilst identifying outliers through the case of KwaZulu-Natal creating and reflecting stronger executive support and project match.

The document analysis was used to authenticate interview statements and lead to the conceptualization of the operational framework of CGICTPF and PFMA and SITA Act instruments.

Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to ethical guidelines that are proper for qualitative public administration studies. All the participants gave consent to their being included in the study and the interviews were done in a confidential manner. The institutional research ethics committee granted ethical clearance prior to the beginning of the data collecting process.

Limitations

The comparative case study design provides rich insights, but the findings are specific to three provincial OTPs and cannot be generalized for the nine in total. The study relies on self-reported data which might be affected by role bias or organizational defensiveness. Self-reported data limitation in the study is countered by the fact that many participants provided similar responses and the use of documentary sources for verification.

Note on Language Editing

The authors used the QuillBot writing enhancement tool at the stage of the preparation of original manuscript to improve the grammatic and clarity of language in the final part. Throughout this process, the research analysis and data interpretation and findings of the article did not change.

Findings

The research evaluates ICT governance implementation in three South African provincial administrations through Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Free State. The research findings are structured into four sections which examine governance framework adoption and procurement challenges and committee effectiveness and strategic alignment. The research draws from empirical data while using existing scholarship and public sector governance literature to contextualize the findings.

Adoption and Interpretation of Governance Frameworks

The three provinces incorporated the CGICTPF formally as stipulated by [7]. The difference in the framework adoption and actual use by institutions proved considerable variation which validated [22] findings and those of [19] concerning the inconsistency

of the implementation of the ICT governance tool in the South African public sector. KwaZulu-Natal showed the most structured approach by consulting governance tools such as COBIT, King IV and ISO 27001 for operations on ICT.

As GITO OTP 4 noted, *“The benefits [are] more visible for management and operation of ICT. The benefits include the desire for adoption of best practice and standards... like King IV, COBIT, ISO 38500, ISO 27001.”*

GITO OTP 36 gave a more optimistic view as he commented, *“the CGICTPF version 2 requires that each head of a department be a governance champion meaning they are responsible and accountable for the implementation of the CGICT. In practical terms this pursues compliance at the highest level and departments – are beginning to change the way ICT has been viewed and more support for ICT initiatives is being realized”.*

The research outputs correspond with [12] who argue that IT governance maturity can be achieved by proper institutionalization of compliance requirements. Eastern Cape and Free State showed symbolic compliance by giving CGICTPF administrative aim of fulfilling audit requirement rather than developing strategic ICT leadership [25] refer to the governance paradox which arises whenever public organizations adopt frameworks with the expectation of achieving legitimacy but come up short due to bureaucratic rigidity or institutional ownership problems.

Governance Tools Usage Across OTPs – Figure 3 shows the frequency of usage for CGICTPF, PFMA, NT Guidelines, SITA Act, and Governance Committees in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Free State.

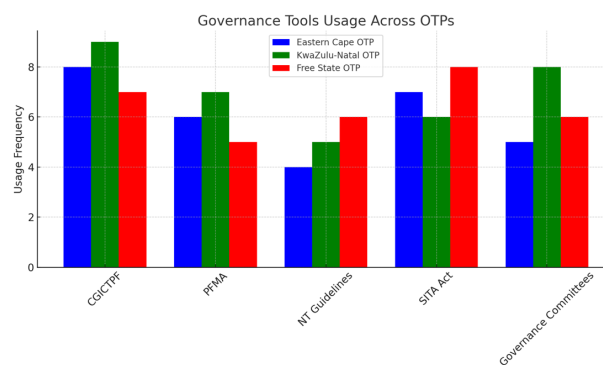


Figure 3. Governance Tools usage across OTPs

Procurement Constraints and the Role of SITA

The procurement process stood as the main governance bottleneck according to the survey results. All provinces reported major delays in obtaining ICT goods and services because of SITA centralized procurement and strict PFMA procedures. The research validates previous studies which show that the SITA Act gives central authority but restricts the ability of departments to respond to their needs [2; 21].

GITO OTP 6 stated: *“The SITA Act is archaic and draconian. It fails to respond to our operational realities.”*

GITO OTP 4 criticizes the procurement process under the SITA Act *“In terms of procurement, we are subjected to the archaic and draconian SITA Act, which is very prescriptive and limiting in the procurement of ICT Goods and Services and has in my view outlived its useful life. As there is currently a moratorium on the implementation of any systems that compete with the implementation of the overpriced and yet-to-be-delivered Information Financial Management System ERP system by Treasury using their partner SITA. This stifles the development of innovative solutions that could alleviate many of the business process automation (BPA) challenges that exist.”*

The case of the Free State GITO participants showed project delays and solution specifications that were different from what the provinces required which confirms the findings of [23] and [20] as to how compliance-based systems limit agility and innovation. The research supports [26] recommendations that there is a need to increase flexibility in the procurement of public sector ICT to manage iterative and emergent nature of digital technologies. The KwaZulu-Natal province managed to overcome these constraints using active governance committee involvement and enhanced internal coordination processes [12]. Research proves that institutions with high internal capability and executive buy-in can strategically use governance compliance.

ICT Procurement Delays by Framework – Figure 4 highlights reported delays caused by SCM Rules, SITA Act, NT Guidelines, and Audit Committees in each OTP.

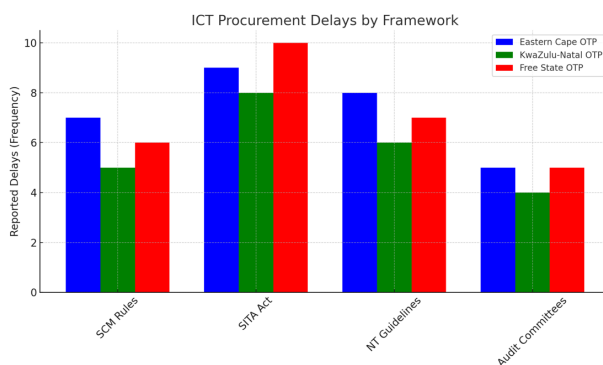


Figure 4. Procurement Delays

ICT Governance Committees and Executive Engagement

The governance committees of ICT steering committee, audit committee and risk management each had a different role in each province. Department meetings in KwaZulu-Natal were more frequent and efficient with ICT representation on the executive level of cautioning for strategic decision making and departmental alignment.

“In KZN, governance structures are strong. EXCO and ICT Steering Committee align regularly.” – GITO OTP 5.

This concurs with the results of [1] and [5] that focus on the role of leadership and committee involvement in achieving successful ICT project deployment. It also embodies the principles of King IV which demand integrated governance framework for accountability and making agile responses possible. By contrast Eastern Cape and Free State showed symbols or dysfunctional committee structures characterized by infrequent meetings, poor documentation and weak reporting lines. GITO OTP 2 remarked:

GITO OTP 2 remarked: *“Our committees are symbolic. ICT is not taken seriously at the top.”*

The findings validate [29] and [6] who observed that committees frequently lack real authority which hinders their purpose of strategic oversight. The study supports [9] who argue that governance structures by themselves are not enough to achieve success without leadership backing and cultural acceptance.

The effectiveness of Governance Committees by OTP is shown in Figure 5 which assesses the effectiveness of ICT Steering Committees, Audit & Risk Committees, Executive Oversight, and Procurement Boards in each OTP.

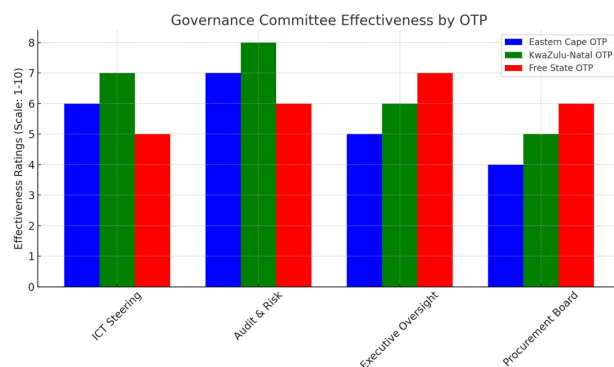


Figure 5. Governance Committee Effectiveness by OTP

Strategic Alignment and ICT Project Success

The research assessed ICT project outcomes to ascertain the efficiency of governance practice in actual workplaces. KwaZulu-Natal province had the highest results with respect to project success rates and integrated planning processes and departmental objective alignment. The findings resonate with COBIT’s strategy to use performance outcomes as measure of governance maturity [13].

The provinces of the Eastern Cape and Free State recorded both high failure rates and high levels of delayed implementations, and poor alignment of ICT-business units.

GITO OTP 3 noted: *“There’s a 70% chance projects fail if ICT is not involved from the beginning. That’s our reality.”*

The results match [17] who state that public sector ICT project failure occurs because of inadequate executive involvement and poor ICT-business alignment. The results confirm ISO/IEC 38500's principle which states ICT should support organizational performance and strategic intent instead of operating as a compliance-focused silo.

The success rates of IT projects by OTPs are presented in Figure 6 which displays the on-time completion, budget compliance, strategic alignment, and user satisfaction across Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Free State.

Table 1 gives an overview of key differences in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and Free State.

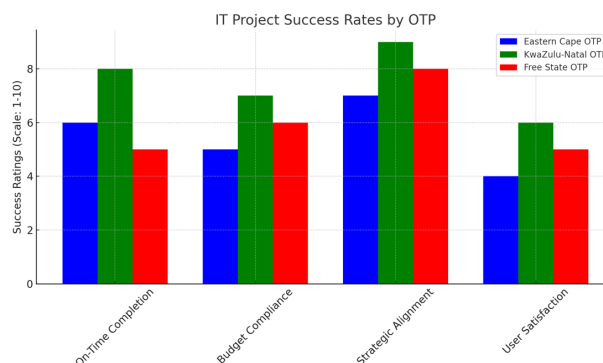


Figure 6. IT Project Success

Table 1. Provincial ICT Governance Comparison Table

Theme	KwaZulu-Natal	Eastern Cape	Free State
Adoption of Governance Frameworks	The organization has fully embraced and institutionalized CGICTPF, King IV, ISO 27001; integrated into strategy	Formal adoption but weak institutionalization; compliance-driven implementation	The organization implements adopted frameworks inconsistently but demonstrates implementation gaps.
Procurement Efficiency	The delays of the project were moderate and were responded to by internal oversight and SITA involvement.	Significant delays; SITA moratoriums and poor solution matching	The procurement process is riddled with delay because there are no clear specifications, and the vendors move at a slow pace.
Governance Committee Functionality	Committees meet regularly with stakeholders and there is effective coordination across structures.	Meetings that are not frequent; symbolic structures with minimal influence	The committees exist but they lack enough authority and members often fail to attend meetings and omission of recording their activities is rampant.
Executive ICT Engagement	There is great executive awareness and GITO forms part of EXCO and strategic forums.	Limited executive ICT understanding; GITO marginalized from strategic decisions	The executive team has low representation because ICT acts as operational support rather than strategic business development.
ICT Project Success Rate	The majority of projects in ICT were delivered timely and, spec, with high alignment and success.	Low project success; frequent misalignment and late delivery	The organization since majority of projects do not achieve the set business requirements gets moderate to low success rates.

Discussion

The analysis of study results uses ICT governance theory and public sector reform literature to explain the findings. The implementation of formal frameworks depends on institutional culture together with leadership capability and systemic constraints that exist within the provincial setting. The discussion explores the main issue which examines how governance frameworks affect strategic ICT implementation in decentralized public sector environments that focus on compliance.

Framework Adoption: Symbolism vs. Institutionalization

The general acceptance of ICT governance frameworks such as CGICTPF, PFMA and King IV in Eastern Cape, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal is established. This province, KwaZulu-Natal is exceptional because it alone has integrated these devices into its decision-making process and ICT strategic management. This supports [12], who state that Governance maturity is more than adoption, it involves

deep embedding within internal processes. The use of governance tools in KwaZulu-Natal is consistent as indicated in Figure 3, Eastern Cape and Free State use them irregularly. This corroborates the “governance paradox” [25] that state frameworks are adopted for compliance and legitimacy, but not meaningfully embedded, due to the bureaucratic inertia and insufficiency of institutional ownership.

Procurement Rigidity and the SITA Bottleneck

The procurement process was found as the most resistant issue regarding governance among all provinces particularly in Eastern Cape and Free State. The participants complained of the repeated delays and vendor mismatches, and moratoriums due to the SITA’s centralized and prescriptive processes, which [21] and [2] also found. The KwaZulu-Natal region was able to deal with the issues by means of its advanced committee supervision and flexible operational practices. The data presented in Figure 4 shows the generation of system bottlenecks by SCM rules in combination with SITA Act obligations and NT Guidelines. Results correspond to the [26] recommendations for increasing procurement adaptivity in digital governance system. The case of the KwaZulu-Natal illustrates the worldwide shift toward hybrid modes in which the central control is combined with the local freedom of the action of the respective local authority [16].

Governance Structures and Strategic Engagement

For ICT governance to be effective it needs tools as well as relational structure. The analysis shows that KwaZulu-Natal display better ICT Steering Committee and Audit Committee and executive Oversight Forum functionality. The GITO engages in EXCO structures to support strategic planning; concerning the findings of [1] and [5] on leadership and committee function. Governance committees in the Eastern Cape and Free State only exist symbolically or carry out poor governance since they lack regular meetings and proper documentation and receive little support from executives. The findings agree with [29] and [6] that ICT transformation does not only require committee presence as committees require authority and legitimacy for them to be effective.

Strategic Alignment and Delivery Outcomes

ICT project performance serves as the most direct evidence of governance effectiveness. The data presented in Figure 6 demonstrates that KwaZulu-Natal achieved superior results in all aspects of on-time delivery and budget compliance and strategic alignment and user satisfaction. The results confirm COBIT’s focus on outcome-driven governance and ISO/IEC 38500’s requirement that ICT should enhance business performance instead of meeting only compliance standards [13].

GITO OTP 3 emphasizes that ICT exclusion from initial strategy development leads to a 70 % probability of project failure. The research by [17] shows that public ICT failure occurs mainly because executives do not participate actively, and structural elements are not properly aligned.

The Figure 7 shows the comparative governance maturity across provinces based on institutionalization, procurement responsiveness, committee functionality, executive engagement, strategic ICT alignment, and project success.

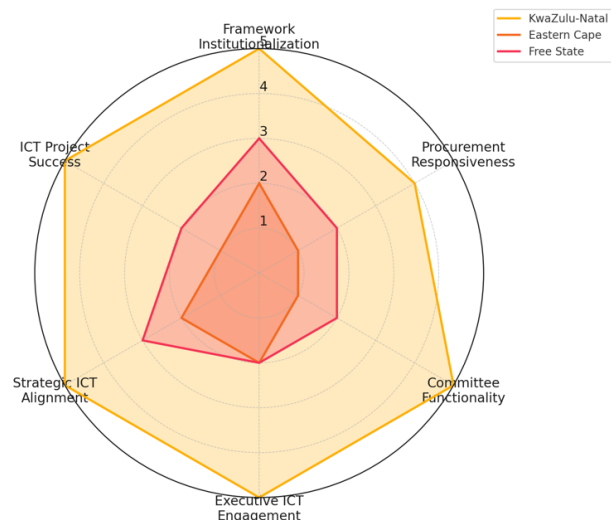


Figure 7. Comparative Governance Maturity Across Provinces

Rethinking Governance: Toward Balanced Models

The existent evidence suggests that the ICT governance should shift from the strictly compliance system to balanced approaches which unite, performance management with strategic alignment and organizational agility. The situation of KwaZulu-Natal is an illustration of how it is possible for institutions that are characterized by strong relational capability and executive back-up to use compliance as a potent tool. The Eastern Cape and Free State cases show the hazards of procedures where no strategic direction has been developed. The observed dynamics affirm the need of governance structures that would shift to fit local demands as suggested by [3], [15] and [26]. South African provincial ICT governance reform requires attention focused on the development of frameworks which are strategically embedded in institutions and have leadership endorsement and operational significance.

The governance influence follows different paths according to Figure 8 because functional committees and executive engagement lead to strategic alignment and project success, but symbolic compliance leads to ICT failure that persists.

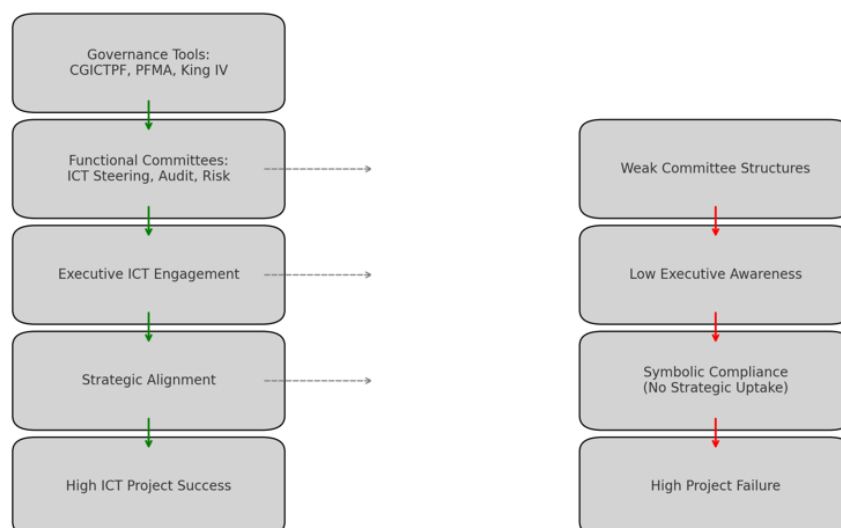


Figure 8. Pathways of Governance Influence on ICT Project Success

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The research sought to establish how ICT governance frameworks function in South African provincial administrations using Eastern Cape and Free State and KwaZulu-Natal in order to identify which tools (CGICTPF, PFMA, and SITA Act) support or restrict ICT management effectiveness. The comparative case study revealed a difference between symbolic compliance and embedded performance-oriented governance. The KwaZulu-Natal province offered developed governance practices through its developed institutional frameworks and operational oversight committees and active executive ICT involvement. Eastern Cape and Free State practiced a compliance-oriented approach, yet their fractured implementation patterns supported poor alignment and high project failure rates. The research finds that a standardized compliance approach cannot be successfully applied in public sector organizations. The success of governance frameworks relies on how well they can be implemented in given contexts and also with responsible leadership support as well operation capabilities. Research enhances developing world ICT governance research by detailing how formal governance instruments interact with institutional dynamics and relational structures in forming their implementation.

Policy Recommendations

1. Build capacity of ICT Literacy and Accountability of Executive.

Provincial departments must ensure that GITO participates in strategic forums (e.g. EXCO) and ensure regular ICT briefing for senior management. This will ensure that ICT strategies are compatible with the institutional priorities and enhance ICT as the property of the executive in headhunting issues.

2. Reform ICT Procurement Processes and

Decentralize Authority.

The Sita act should be revisited to ensure increased provincial autonomy on low risk ICT acquisitions with oversight needing to remain critical. This would minimize systemic delay and would enable departments to also adapt to changing requirement of service delivery more effectively.

3. Mandate and Monitor Committee Functionality.

DPSA and provincial legislatures must demand quarterly reporting on the activities and decision by ICT Steering and Audit Committees. Beyond formal existence, functional governance structures should provide evidence of its impact on strategic planning and delivery.

4. Introducing Performance Linked ICT Governance Scorecard.

A composite index to monitor usage of governance tools, project success rates, budget compliance and stakeholder engagement should be emanated to all provinces. This will also allow for benchmarking, accountability and acceleration of healthy competition in governance performance.

5. Extension of Resources: Investment in GITO Capacity and Retention.

Provincial departments should view the GITO role as a strategic leadership role, not as a technical-support role. This includes professional development to align with King IV, COBIT2019, ISO 38500; which include succession planning to retain institutional knowledge.

South African provincial governments can transition from compliance-based ICT governance to integrated digital leadership by filling these gaps. The transition represents both an institutional performance issue and a matter of democratic accountability and service delivery.

The Figure 9 shows that ICT governance weaknesses need to be addressed through coordinated actions at provincial, national and institutional levels with reforms that go beyond compliance to strategic enablement.

Governance Issue	Recommended Intervention	Responsibility
Executive ICT Disengagement	Mandate GITO in EXCO and strategic forums	Provincial Depts, DPSA
Procurement Bottlenecks via SITA	Review SITA Act for decentralized procurement	NT, DPSA, SITA
Symbolic Governance Structures	Quarterly reporting on ICT Committee activity	DPSA, EXCOs
Lack of Governance Performance Tracking	Adopt ICT governance scorecard	DPSA, Auditor-General
GITO Role Undervalued	Professionalize GITOs with leadership development	Prov HR, DPSA, SITA

Figure 9. Policy Reform Pathways for Strengthening ICT Governance

Constraints and Suggestion for Future Studies

The research provides critical information regarding ICT governance operations in three provincial administrations of South Africa, but that information must be accompanied by specific limitations highlighted by researchers.

The study covered only three provinces Eastern Cape; Free State and KwaZulu-Natal as its purposive sample that got intricate findings and narrows its generalization in South Africa. The actions on ICT frameworks are conducted under distinct institutional cultures and governance capacities and political standing in each provincial administration.

The study relied significantly on interviews, carried out with Government Information technology Officers (GITOs) and top ICT officials as main source of data. The participants in the study demonstrated great cognizance over the governance practices but the researchers did not capture views from chief financial officers and executive committee members and procurement managers. The research failed to capture complete perception triangulation concerning governance effectiveness since no cross-functional decision-making processes were included.

The research design focused on governance frameworks and strategic alignment and yet lacked official assessments of key technical quality and sustainability of ICT systems. Future research may help the study; it could combine system performance audits

with project life-cycle reviews and service delivery metrics that measure digital platforms.

A set of time-based studies on the ICT governance transformations would depict the learning and adapting process of the institutions in response to policy changes or leadership transitions. Analysis of informal governance as well as inter departmental networks and reputational influence and political patronage should be pursued as future research.

Expansion of research into both scope and analytical depth will allow scholars and practitioners to create ICT governance system adaptable to contexts and efficient to drive public sector digital transformation.

Disclosure of Interest

The authors declare that there are no competing interests.

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Conclusion

This study contributes to the emerging field of public sector ICT governance by means of its sub-national analysis with reference to provincial experiences in South Africa. The study shows that adoption of framework on its own does not result in strategic alignment or project success particularly when dealing with weak executive engagement environment and procurement rigidity and

fragmented accountability. KwaZulu-Natal relative success indicates that compliance and performance can co-exist through functional structures and leadership commitment and institutional learning. South Africa

must go beyond procedural compliance to make ICT governance strength and it requires performance-driven practices that promote digital leadership with the aim of advancing delivery of public values.

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ЭШЛИ ЛАТЧУ, ШАВРЕН СИНГХ

УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ИКТ В ПРОВИНЦИАЛЬНЫХ АДМИНИСТРАЦИЯХ ЮЖНОЙ АФРИКИ – МНЕНИЯ GITO В ОФИСЕ ПРЕМЬЕР-МИНИСТРА

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Аннотация. Функциональные компоненты мультиагентной интеллектуальной системы имеют различную физическую эффективность. Управление ИКТ имеет важное значение в государственном секторе для стимулирования цифровой трансформации и улучшения предоставления услуг. В этом исследовании изучается корпоративное управление, регулируемое Рамками политики в области ИКТ (CGICTPF) и Законом об управлении государственными финансами (PFMA), а также Законом о Государственном агентстве по информационным технологиям (SITA), который регулирует оперативную деятельность и стратегические направления работы государственных должностных лиц по информационным технологиям (GITO) в администрациях провинций Восточный Кейп, Квазулу-Натал и Фри-Стейт в Южной Африке. Используя сравнительное тематическое исследование, работа опирается на анализ деятельности чиновников и интервью с целью выявить препятствия в управлении закупками и использованием ИКТ руководством. Провинция Квазулу-Натал демонстрирует прогресс благодаря сильному и квалифицированному руководству, в то время как провинции Восточный Кейп и Фри-Стейт сталкиваются с задержками из-за недостатка квалификации чиновников и бюрократии. Исследование призывает к балансу между регулированием и гибкостью, рекомендуя расширение прав и возможностей GITO посредством децентрализации закупок и развития лидерских качеств. В статье развиваются теоретические основы управления ИКТ, выявляя многоуровневые проблемы внедрения ИКТ.

Ключевые слова: управление ИКТ, государственный сектор, провинциальная администрация, реформа закупок, цифровая трансформация



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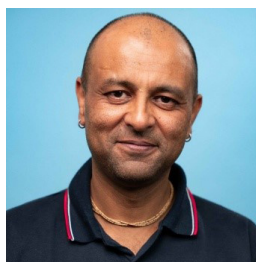
ICT governance expert with over two decades of experience across public and private sectors, including roles at Anglo-American, Shell & BP LOBP, Lafarge, Frigoglass, Mahle Behr, and iSanti (Nampak Glass/AB InBev). Currently Head of IT at iSanti and a PhD candidate at UNISA, his research focuses on corporate governance in the South African public sector. He has served on numerous boards and audit committees—including chairing ICT steering committees – offering strategic oversight on digital transformation and governance. An advocate of ethical, purpose-driven leadership, Ashley has published broadly on ICT policy, digital governance, and systemic reform. He combines real-world leadership with academic insight to strengthen digital accountability in emerging economies.

Эшли Латчу

Эксперт по управлению ИКТ с более чем двадцатилетним опытом работы в государственном и частном секторах, включая должности в компаниях Anglo-American, Shell & BP LOBP, Lafarge, Frigoglass, Mahle Behr и iSanti (Nampak Glass/AB InBev). В настоящее время он возглавляет ИТ-отдел iSanti и является аспирантом Университета Южной Африки (UNISA). Его исследования сосредоточены на корпоративном управлении в государственном секторе ЮАР. Он работал в многочисленных советах директоров и аудиторских комитетах, в том числе возглавлял руководящие комитеты по ИКТ, обеспечивая стратегический надзор за цифровой трансформацией и управлением. Будучи сторонником этичного, целеустремленного лидерства, Эшли опубликовал множество работ по политике в области ИКТ, цифровому управлению и системным реформам. Он сочетает практический опыт лидерства с академическим подходом для укрепления цифровой подотчетности в развивающихся экономиках.

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