

- Strengthen the governance for SmartBots and digital ecosystem.
- Review/update existant policies and regulations – for example policies on cybersecurity, data protection and consumer protection; establish and apply principles of regulatory assessment, impact assessments (including on human rights and gender equality) and digitisation-ready legislation.
- Establish relevant Interoperability (IOP) framework guidelines and tools.
- Conduct a skills assessment of the digital ecosystem (also covering related ecosystems – innovation, entrepreneurship, business and policy (government)).
- Establish a clear plan to ensure that the basic but essential digital (and ICT) infrastructure are accessible, affordable, reliable and of quality standards.
- Make industry the center of innovation in Botswana to help refocus attention on innovation and digital entrepreneurship that goes over and beyond the Botswana Digital and Innovation Hub (BDIH).

The EU support in the implementation of SmartBots strategy aims at assisting the successful digital transformation of the Public Sector, the private sector and the society at large. The recommendations are all aligned to the national priorities of Botswana (including Vision 2036 and SmartBots Strategy), the NDICI-Global Europe and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

No TEIs are currently foreseen in Botswana. The scope for a TEI has been restricted due to the limited presence of EU MS (Germany, France) and the lack of bilateral envelopes. Options remain to pursue cooperation with Botswana through a Team Europe approach via means that go beyond direct financial assistance (e.g. expert exchanges, private sector engagement and/or policy dialogue).

2.2 Problem Analysis

A brief overview of the main indicators for ICT development is beneficial to understand the achievements of Botswana in the past 15 years, but also to understand the untapped potential of the ICT in the country, its public, private and ICT sectors. Using UNDESA's biannual E-Government Development Index (EGDI), a country's performance is based on a weighted average of three normalised scores namely: scope and quality of online services; development status of the telecommunication infrastructure; and the inherent human capital. The development and sustenance of the three (3) areas considered by the EGDI require a strong and vibrant ICT sector in the whole of government, with institutions fostering cross-ministry/agency collaboration, a comprehensive ICT legal and regulatory framework, and a well-developed ICT leadership capacity building framework. Botswana's EGDI improved between 2018 and 2020.

Although Botswana's score on the EGDI has improved, it is below that of the global average. While the 2003 score of 0.3466 ranked the country 101st (out of 173 countries) the 2020 score of 0.5383 ranks the country 115th (out of 193 countries). In an African context, Botswana performs above the African average overall but it merely keeps pace with the global average in 2020, and the country's lack of progress means that this may slide further behind over the coming years. The 2020 edition of the EGDI shows that Botswana outperforms most of its African peers on telecommunication and human capital, but this does not give it an international edge. While Botswana hovers around the African average for online service availability and electronic participation, this is well below the global average. The EGDI, GMSA² and other indices on Botswana illustrate the untapped potential of ICT use, and more broadly, digitalisation, in the country. The untapped potentials, coupled with the impact of Covid-19 pandemic – which seriously affected Botswana's two major economic sectors, mining and tourism – led the GoB to place greater emphasis on digitalisation as a means to help diversify the economy and foster economic growth.

² Global System for Mobile Communications Association Index (<https://www.gsma.com/r/somic/>)