

A critical analysis of the Tanzania national information policy.

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The purpose of this study was to conduct a critical analysis of the Tanzania National Information Policy. The policy is expected to take control of all issues pertaining to the management of information resources in all spheres of the information industry, so as to raise the socio-economic status of the citizen. Analysis sought to identify various components covered in the current Tanzania National Information Policy, to identify the presence and role played by sectoral information policies, to examine the needs and ways in which sectoral information policies are coordinated and integrated and to identify the best way in which the existing National Information Policy could be improved. The study was conducted at fourteen different information departments in both government and private institutions found in Dar es Salaam region, and were guided by the context, inputs, processes and products (CIPP) analysis model. Respondents included nineteen information professionals from both government and private institutions, seven directors of information departments, eight heads of information centres and three Members of Parliament. Respondents were selected using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Data collection was done using questionnaires, documentary review and interview schedule. Research findings showed that information professionals comprehended the significance of having an integrated national information policy. Despite having such an important role, policy makers seldom used professional technocrats during the establishment of the information policy. Likewise, appropriate information stakeholders were not involved during the process of policy planning and establishment and very few components necessary to national information policy formation were addressed by the Policy. Moreover, sectoral information policies already existing in the information industry were fragmented and uncoordinated. This situation was made worse by the non-existence of institutional and coordination frameworks that would facilitate effective implementation of the policy. It was concluded that the existing Tanzania National Information Policy does not cater for the needs of every player in the information sector. The policy was not appropriately planned and established. It covered only media issues and information provision, ignoring many other important aspects that are part of a

national information policy. It was recommended that the Ministry of Information Sports and Culture (MOISC) should deliberately revamp the existing national information policy by incorporating all elements of the NIP through appropriate stakeholder involvement. Furthermore, it should ensure that the available sectoral information policies and other related information components existing in the information sector are well articulated, integrated and coordinated. Additionally, MOISC should urgently establish institutional and coordination frameworks for effective implementation of the NIP.