Technology to improve service delivery

The Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services says government will use technology more effectively to improve service delivery in the country.

Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services spokesman Siya Qoza says the goal is to get all government departments online so they can improve services to the general public. Image: YouTube

Departmental spokesman Siya Qoza told SAnews government's strategy was to get government departments online and to ensure that people had access to the internet.

This included innovations like services from the Departments of Home Affairs and Transport being offered online so that people spend less time in queues.

He said the police system will be centralised so that police can access information on criminals wherever they are in the country.

Government is further planning to provide schools with access to the internet to allow teachers and pupils to communicate in remote areas. Pupils will also be able to do research and access school content online.

Departments dealing with public are first in line

Speaking at the Southern Africa Telecommunications Network and Applications Conference in Port Elizabeth, Telecommunications and Postal Services Minister Siyabonga Cwele said the department had prioritised citizen-facing departments like Health, Education, Transport, Police, Justice and Home Affairs in the roll-out of online government services.

"Through SA Connect, the department will coordinate and support the roll-out of broadband infrastructure and services across the country, to achieve 100% broadband penetration by 2020.

"This will enable government to improve the quality of services it delivers to citizens and offer more services online," Cwele said.

Last year Cabinet adopted "SA Connect", the country's broadband policy and strategy. Since then the Department of Communications (DoC) connected 788 schools to fast internet through cyber-labs, launched at the iKamva National e-Skills Institute and the National Broadband Advisory Council (NBAC) among others.

Telecommunications and Postal Services Minister Siyabonga Cwele said all citizen-facing departments like Health, Education, Transport, Police, Justice and Home Affairs are being prioritised in the roll-out of online services. Image: GCIS

Cwele said government's investment in broadband was coordinated through the Strategic Integrated Project 15.

"The department is visiting all the provinces and working with municipalities through the South African Local Government Association to facilitate alignment of broadband activities across all spheres of government to SA Connect.

"This alignment is crucial as we seek funding to connect 580 clinics, 4,444 schools, 182 police stations, and 572 other government offices in the medium term," he said.

Cwele said the foundation for government's strategy was to make broadband universally accessible and for its benefits to reach as many citizens as possible.