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Determinants of Implementation of National Government Strategic Initiatives in Kenya

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Abstract

Across the globe, governments at national, regional and local levels are currently facing unprecedented challenges as they strive to shape a high performing, high integrity, dynamic and citizen-centred public service. Consequently, in a bid to reform the public sector performance with a view of ensuring timely and efficient service delivery to the public, governments have resorted to the adoption and implementation of various strategic initiatives. However, the determinants of implementation of government strategic initiatives remained largely untested. In view of this, the current study sought to assess the determinants of implementation of National Government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labour and Social Protection in Kenya. Specifically, the study evaluated the effects of leadership, communication, organization culture and organizational structure on implementation of National Government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labour and Social Protection in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population of the study was 300 employees of the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs as well as Labour and Social Protection in Kenya who were directly involved in coordinating the implementation of two of Kenya's strategic initiatives - the Huduma Kenya and the cash transfer programs. The study sample size of 90 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling technique. A self-administered questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. In data analysis, the study data was analyzed through descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 23.0). The study also conducted multiple regression analysis to test the relationship between the study variables with the findings presented in tables and figures. The study established that the management employees were in agreement that the leadership set the goals and policies required for the implementation of the strategic initiatives (mean = 4.17); communication was critical to the successful implementation of national government strategic initiatives (mean = 4.25); a positive and

constructive culture was necessary for successful implementation of government strategic initiatives (mean = 4.20) and that the organization structure served as a mechanism for coordination and unification of efforts of persons involved in the implementation of the government strategic initiatives (mean = 4.33). The study findings also revealed that there was a strong positive and significant association between leadership, communication, organization culture as well as organizational structure and implementation of National Government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labour and Social Protection in Kenya as depicted by beta values of 0.769; 0.724; 0.653and 0.694 (with all having p<0.05), respectively. The study concluded that leadership, communication, organization culture and organizational structure in Government Ministries were core determinants of implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya. The study recommended that efforts should be taken to strengthen the nature of leadership, communication, organization culture and organizational structures in Government Ministries charged with implementing various national government strategic initiatives in Kenya.

Keywords: Leadership, Communication, Organization Culture, Organization Structure and Strategy Implementation

Introduction

Background of the Study

Given an intensifying competitive environment characterized by rapid rates of technological change, globalization, increasing regulation, changing consumer demands and increasing scrutiny, it is regularly asserted that the critical determinant in the success and, doubtlessly, the survival of any contemporary organization is the successful implementation of its strategies (Tria & Valotti, 2012). In recent years, public and private organizations alike, have sought to create greater organizational flexibility as a way of responding to the everincreasing environmental turbulence (Kearney, 2018). According to McBain (2016), the significance of strategy implementation in public entities can only be well understood through appreciation of the huge challenges facing today's public sector. This view is also supported by Arnaboldi, Lapsley and Steccolini (2015) who averred that across the globe, governments at national, regional and local levels are currently facing unprecedented challenges as they strive to shape a high performing, high integrity, dynamic and citizen-centered public service.

Strategy implementation is crucial but difficult because in most instances, strategy implementation activities take a longer time frame than formulation. They require involvement of more people and involve greater task complexity. They are altered by changing dynamics in the organization's operating environment and involve a need for sequential and simultaneous thinking on the part of implementation managers (Lêgreid, 2017). Within the public sector, the improvement of service delivery is one of the most pressing issues facing today's public organizations and governments are typically responding to this challenge with renewed focus on how the public institutions can best implement their strategies with a view of improving service provision to the citizenry (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2014). Consequently, public organizations, as is the case with private ones, have to think strategically and translate their insight into effective strategies to cope with their changed circumstances and have to develop rationales necessary for effective strategy implementation (Kettl, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

In an effort to transform public service delivery in Kenya to make it better respond to the needs of the citizens, the Kenyan Government has developed various national government strategic initiatives. Key among these strategic initiatives are the Huduma Kenya Program, cash transfer programs and the Vision 2030 initiative. The Huduma Kenya program aims at providing easier citizen access to Government services using a one stop shop model. Cash transfer programs aim to improve the livelihoods of the vulnerable groups in the community. Vision 2030 aims to transform Kenya into a newly industrializing, middle-income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens by 2030 in a clean and secure environment Gitau (2016). Studies by local researchers including Gababo, (2010), Moyare (2014) indicated that while the necessary policy frameworks for the implementation of these noble national government strategic initiatives were well in place, there were implementation gaps evidenced by shortfalls in realization of set targets within the outlined timelines. In Kenya the Governments vision to improve livelihoods through quality service delivery has been met a lot of disappointing outcomes. Most of the times the projects are considered a failure. This paper sought to find the reasons behind the failure and sought to contribute to the success of these initiatives. Therefore, this paper identified poor implementation of Governments Strategic Initiatives in Kenya as the main problems and therefore interrogates some of the factors thought to be determinants in the implementation process.

Hassan (2011) recommends that further research be undertaken on how local market fills in gaps left by international visitors when there are slumps. The gaps identified in previous studies are important and that is why this study chose these variables. (leadership, communication organization culture and organization structure) because previous studies identified them as gaps. The four variables have been chosen as they are critical to the success of the initiatives by the government as well as the ultimate goal of enriching livelihoods. Given the nature of politics in Kenya, the government of the day should look to leave a valuable legacy to the nation and also for the continuation of the Vision 2030 agenda and the millennium development goals.

Objectives of the Study General Objective

This study sought to assess the determinants of implementation of National Government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labor and Social Protection in Kenya.

Specific Objectives

- 1. To determine the effects of leadership on implementation of National Government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labor and Social Protection in Kenya.
- 2. To establish the effects of communication on implementation of National Government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labor and Social Protection in Kenya.
- 3. To examine the effects of organization culture on implementation of National Government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labor and Social Protection in Kenya.

4. To explore the effects of organizational structure on implementation of National Government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labor and Social Protection in Kenya.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

This section includes a review of theories that guided this study. The study was guided by four theories namely; Force Theory of Change, Resource Based Theory, Stakeholder Theory and Contingency Theory.

Force Theory of Change

The force theory of change was postulated by Kurt Lewin in 1957 (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). The theory indicates that the key to resolving social conflict is through the facilitation of planned change through learning and so enable individuals to understand and restructure their perceptions of the world around them. Lewin believed a successful change project involved three steps: unfreezing, change and refreezing.

Resource Based Theory

The Resource Based Theory (RBT) was developed by Barney in 1992 (Barney, 1992). The theory argues that organizations should not try to achieve strategic fit with the external environment but aim to maximize their internal resources to create and dominate future opportunities (Saqib & Rashid, 2013).

Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory was formulated by Edward Freeman in 1984. According to this theory, a stakeholder is a party that has an interest in a company or organization and can either affect or be affected by the operations or decisions of the organization/business (Freeman, 1984).

Contingency Theory

The Contingency Theory is a behavioural theory that was developed by Woodward in 1958. The contingency theory is premised on the idea that there is no one or single best way or approach to manage organizations. Instead, the optimal course of action is contingent (dependent) upon the internal and external situation.

Empirical Review

This section includes a review of past studies in relation to the factors that influence strategy implementation.

Leadership and Strategy Implementation

The study observed that within the government strategy implementation framework, leadership played the important role of mobilizing needed resources and guiding the efforts of members involved in the strategy implementation process (Madhekeni, 2012).

Communication and Strategy Implementation

In a study on strategic initiatives that focused on the institutionalization of results-based management in Kenya Public Service, it was established that communication was an

important prerequisite for the effective implementation of the strategic initiatives. The study observed that institutional communication played a significant role in knowledge acquisition, training, and applied learning during the process of the strategic initiatives' implementation.

Organization Culture and Strategy Implementation

The study observed that when major changes occur in an entity's operating environment, organizations usually must alter their culture in order to survive. The researcher averred that the reasons for changing organization culture need not be negative. Consequently, the study argued that, to effectively implement their strategic initiatives, organizations should strive for an open and participative culture that is characterized by such attributes as trust in subordinates, openness in communications, considerate and supportive leadership and group problem solving (Mutambatuwisi, 2016).

Organizational Structure and Strategy Implementation

According to the study, poorly conceived reorganizations may create significant problems in the implementation of the firm's strategic initiatives, including structural gaps in roles, work processes, accountabilities and critical information flows.

Research Gaps

Despite the existence of a wide range of empirical studies on strategy implementation in Kenya's civil service, it was evident from the empirical review that none had ever been carried out to specifically address the question of determinants of implementation of national government strategic initiatives. Majority of the studies including Obong'o (2013) Catalyzing Change; Energy Sector Leadership Gababo (2010) on the Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources were on strategy implementation and its influence on public service delivery. None of the local studies had focused on the determinants of implementation of strategic initiatives in the country and therefore a research gap existed. The current study sought to fill this research gap. Most of the studies done locally have not exhausted the four variables in regards to implementation of these initiatives and specifically in the project areas reviewed in this research

Research Methodology

According to Denscombe (2014), once the research problem has been devised, a research design is developed so as to provide a format for comprehensive steps to be followed in carrying out the study. The research adopted a descriptive research design. Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) explain that the target population should have some observable characteristics, to which the researcher intends to generalize the results of the study. The target population of this research was the employees of the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs as well as Labor and Social Protection in Kenya. As such the unit of observation was the staffs working in these two Ministries' Headquarters. Denscombe (2014) defines a sampling frame as a list of the target population from which the sample is selected and that for descriptive survey designs a sampling frame usually consists of a finite population.

Table 3.2 Population and sample size distribution

Ministry	Strata	Population	Percentage	Sample
Ministry of Public	Top Management	18	10	5
Service, Youth and	Middle	54	30	16
Gender Affairs	Management			
	Lower Management	108	60	33
	Total	180		54
Ministry of Labour	Top Management	12	10	4
and Social Protection	Middle	36	30	11
	Management			
	Lower Management	72	60	21
	Total	120		36

The research used primary data which was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire contained questions based on the study objectives. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), a questionnaire was appropriate for data collection from a large number of respondents as it helped to save on time spent in data collection. Prior to the actual data collection, the researcher conducted a pilot study of 10% of the sample size in order to ensure that the questions were well constructed, understood and to eliminate ambiguity hence refining the research tool. Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) asserted that 10% of the sample size was adequate for purposes of pilot testing of the research tool. Data collected was coded and classified into different components to facilitate a better and efficient analysis. The study data was analyzed through descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 23.0) and presented through percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation. The study findings were presented in tables and figures.

Regression analysis was useful to the study as it helped the researcher to analyze the existing relationships between the study's independent variables and the dependent variable.

The regression model used was as follows;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where;

Y = Implementation of national government strategic initiatives (the dependent variable)

 X_1 = Leadership; X_2 = Communication; X_3 = Organization culture; X_4 = Organizational structure

 β_0 = Constant

 $\beta_1 - \beta_4$ = Beta coefficients of independent variables

 ε = Error term

Two major assumptions underlined the use of the regression model in this research and which were normality of the study data and there being no multicollinearity among the study's independent variables. In this study, normality of the data was tested using the Shapiro – Wilk test at a significance level of 5% and for $p \ge 0.05$ normality was assumed while for p < 0.05 deviation from normality was assumed. On its part, multicollinearity was tested using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values with VIF values ≤ 3 and Tolerance values > 0.1 indicating no multicollinearity among the study variables.

Results, Interpretation and Discussions Response Rate

The study recruited 90 employees of the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Ministry of Labor and Social Protection in Kenya as the study respondents. Out of the 90 questionnaires administered, 64 were adequately filled and returned contributing to a response rate of 71.1% (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Response rate

	Frequency	Percent
Responses received	64	71.1
No response	26	28.9
Total	90	100.0

Inferential Statistics

Testing the Assumptions of Regression

Prior to performing the multiple regression analysis, the study performed two diagnostic tests namely normality and multi collinearity tests. These two tests were critical in ensuring that the study data met the specific assumptions that under lie use of regression analysis. The results of the tests are as described hereafter;

Tests of Normality

The normality tests help to confirm whether the study data follows a normal distribution or not. If normality is not achieved, the results may not depict the true picture relationship amongst the variables. In this study, normality of the data was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test at a significance level of 5%. For $p \ge 0.05$ normality was assumed while for p < 0.05 deviation from normality was assumed. The normality tests results are as shown in Table 4.2

Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity test evaluates whether the independent variables are highly correlated, with the primary concern being that as the degree of multicollinearity increases, the regression model estimates of the coefficients become unstable and the standard errors for the coefficients can get wildly inflated. Multicollinearity in this study was tested using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values with VIF values ≤ 3 and Tolerance values > 0.1 indicating no multicollinearity among the study variables. The results of the multicollinearity tests are as shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.1 Multicollinearitytests results

Variables	Collinearity Statistics				
	VIF	Tolerance			
Tax registration	1.391	0.719			
Declaration of income	1.584	0.631			
Prompt payment of tax due	1.420	0.704			
Timely filing of returns	1.131	0.884			

From the multicollinearity tests results shown in Table 4.10, there was no multicollinearity among the independent variables of the study since their VIF values were all less than 3

while their Tolerance Statistics values were all >0.1. There being no multicollinearity in the study data meant the

Table 4.2 Tests of Normality

Variables	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Leadership	.828	64	.312
Communication	.731	64	.406
Organization culture	.912	64	.219
Organizational structure	.763	64	.381
Implementation of national	.947	64	.445
government strategic initiatives			

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 4.2 indicates that the significance values for the Shapiro-Wilk tests were 0.312 for leadership, 0.406 for communication, 0.219 for organization culture, 0.381 for organizational structure and 0.445 for implementation of national government strategic initiatives. For the normality test in this study, the null hypothesis was that the population was normally distributed against the alternative hypothesis that it was not normally-distributed. Given that the p-values of Shapiro-Wilk tests for all the study variables were greater than the chosen level of significance of 0.05 then the study failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded that the data came from a normally distributed population. The results of the tests are therefore of a normally distributed population. There being no violation of normality in the study data meant that regression analysis could be carried out.

Regression Analysis

To analyze the relationship between the study variables, a regression analysis was conducted. This was done by regressing the independent variables (leadership, communication, organization culture and organizational structure) against the dependent variable (implementation of national government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labour and Social Protection). The results are as summarized below.

Table 4.3 Model Summary

	, a.c a			
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.848ª	.719	.700	.6861

Predictors: (Constant), leadership, communication, organization culture and organizational structure

According to Table 4.11, R squareis the coefficient of determination which tells us the variation in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variables. The value of R square in Table 4.11 is 0.719 which means that 71.9% variation in the outcome variable

[implementation of National Government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labor and Social Protection in Kenya] wasdue to variations in leadership, communication, organization culture and organizational structure of the implementing agencies. Hence, 28.1% of variation in the implementation of National Government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labor and Social Protection in Kenyawas explained by other factors not in the model or not focused on in the current study. To ascertain whether the regression model was fit, analysis of variance was conducted and the results are as shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4.4ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	74.81	4	18.7035	37.81	.0000a
1	Residual	29.19	59	0.49468		
	Total	104.00	63			

a. Predictors: (Constant), leadership, communication, organization culture and organizational structure

b. Dependent Variable: Implementation of National Government strategic initiatives Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) consists of calculations that provide information about levels of variability within a regression model and form a basis for tests of significance. The "F" column provides a statistic for testing the hypothesis that all $\beta \neq 0$ against the null hypothesis that $\beta = 0$ (Weisberg, 2005). From the findings in Table 4.12, the significance value is .0000 which is less than 0.05, indicating that the model was statistically significant in predicting how leadership, communication, organization culture and organizational structure of the two Ministries affected implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya. Further, the F critical at 5% level of significance is 2.53. Since F calculated value of 37.81 was greater than the F critical value of 2.53, this affirmed that the overall model was significant. Since, the overall model was fit regression analysis was carried out for all the variables, the results of which are shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.5 Regression Analysis Results

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	В	Std.	Beta		_
		Error			
(Constant)	3.406	.610		5.584	.000
Leadership [X ₁]	0.769	.172	.681	4.471	.000
Communication [X ₂]	0.724	.185	.639	3.914	.000
Organization culture[X ₃]	0.653	.233	.584	2.803	.007
Organizational structure [X ₄]	0.694	.201	.605	3.453	.001

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Based on the regression results shown in Table 4.13, the regression model becomes; $Y = 3.406 + 0.769X_1 + 0.724 X_2 + 0.653 X_3 + 0.694 X_4$

From the regression equation above, taking all factors (leadership, communication, organization culture and organizational structure) constant at zero, implementation of National Government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labor and Social Protection in Kenya would be 3.406. at regression analysis could be carried out.

Summary

This section provides a summary of the key findings of the study based on the study objectives.

Leadership and Implementation of National Government Strategic Initiatives

The study findings showed that the management employees in the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs as well as Labor and Social Protection in Kenya were in agreement that the leadership gave the team(s) implementing the strategic initiatives a sense of purpose and responsibility; the leadership initiated actions and decisions required for the effective implementation of the strategic initiatives. In addition, the regression results showed that there was a strong positive and significant association between leadership in the implementing/concerned Ministries and implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya.

Communication and Implementation of National Government Strategic Initiatives

The study findings showed that the management employees in the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs as well as Labor and Social Protection in Kenya were in agreement that communication was critical to the successful implementation of national government strategic initiatives. In addition, the regression results showed that there was a strong positive and significant association between communication in the implementing/concerned Ministries and implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya.

Organization Culture and Implementation of National Government Strategic Initiatives

The study findings showed that the management employees in the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs as well as Labor and Social Protection in Kenya concurred that the culture in the ministry informed the way employees interacted during implementation of the government strategic initiatives; a positive and constructive culture was necessary for successful implementation of government strategic initiatives. In addition, the regression results showed that there was a strong positive and significant association between organization culture of the implementing/concerned Ministries and implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya.

Organizational Structure and Implementation of National Government Strategic Initiatives

The study findings showed that the management employees in the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs as well as Labor and Social Protection in Kenya were in agreement that the organization structure served as a mechanism for coordination and unification of efforts of persons involved in the implementation of the government strategic

initiatives; organization structure clarified authority and power of each individual engaged in the implementation of the government strategic initiatives thereby minimizing conflicts and confusion; organization structure provided the pathway for communication among team members and the organization during implementation of the government strategic initiatives. In addition, the regression results also showed that there was a strong positive and significant association between organizational structure in the implementing/concerned Ministries and implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn thereto;

On the first objective, the study concluded that leadership at Government Ministries played a critical role in the implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya. Consequently, it was evident that a sound and effective leadership in the concerned Ministries would positively affect implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya. Therefore, the research found that if leadership selection was basing not on political affiliations and tribe but on merit, the implementation process would be professional rather than to please their political interests.

On the second objective, the study concluded that effective communication was essential to the implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya. That communication should not only be a one-way traffic but rather should involve those in management positions listening to subordinates.

On the third objective, the study concluded that organization culture was instrumental in guiding efforts in the implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya and hence a positive and constructive organization culture within concerned Ministries was necessary for successful implementation of national government strategic initiatives in Kenya. Government ministry need to develop a unique culture that traverses the tribal affiliations. This will help with work ethics that are devoid of cultural allegiances. A positive working culture helps in efficient delivery of target and effective resource utilization.

On the last objective, the study concluded that organizational structure played a crucial role in facilitating the implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya. As such, having a sound organizational structure within the concerned Ministries would positively affect the implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya. This will work to avoid redundancies when it comes to work delivery. A clear hierarchy makes it easy for efficient delivery. This also works to reduce unnecessary bureaucracies and therefore promote a thorough implementation of the initiatives.

In general, the study concluded that leadership, communication, organization culture and organizational structure in Government Ministries were among the core determinants that significantly affected implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya and that any positive improvement on these factors would have a positive effect on the implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya. The valuables understudy were also are said to be core to the continuation of the Vision 2030 through government transitions. In the public sector, professionalism is compromised basing on tribal and political affiliations, with proper address to these factors, the implementation of the initiatives will be successful.

Recommendations

Given the significance of leadership to the implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya, the study recommends that leadership positions in Government Ministries and agencies involved in implementation of National Government strategic initiatives should be filled on merit by persons who hold the right qualifications and experience, are visionary and who meet the highest standards of integrity. It is also recommended that the offering of such positions be extended to the public sector for a wider pool of expertise. This will help with less political affiliations and more professional competence.

Given the significance of communication to the implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya, the study recommends that open channels of communication should be established in Government Ministries in Kenya to allow for effective information exchange and sharing of ideas among parties involved in implementation of the National Government's strategic initiatives.

Given the significance of organization culture to the implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya, the study recommends development of a strong, positive and constructive culture within Government Ministries in Kenya that is built on strong ethical values, inclusivity, tolerance, respect and diversity.

Given the significance of organizational structure to the implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya, the study recommends that Government Ministries and agencies involved in implementation of National Government strategic initiatives should regularly review their existing organizational structures in order to ensure that they are aligned to their present needs and demands.

Suggested Areas for Further Research

Since this study explored the determinants of implementation of National Government strategic initiatives by the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and Labor and Social Protection in Kenya, the study recommends that studies should be carried out to assess the impact of implementation of the various National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya in light of their intended goal(s).

Also the initiatives should be broader that even the private sector would like to get involved or will directly contribute towards them. The initiatives may also include the

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