

## GovTech hosts discussion on Open Data

Leading up to the opening of the GovTech conference in Duran, top directors, executives and chairpersons of multinational companies as well as government agencies and departments participated in an Open Data Think Tank. Speaking at a media briefing held after the event, the Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services, Dr Siyabonga Cwele (MP) said he was encouraged by the robust debate that ensued, with the discussion focusing on how the government could open its data to the public and businesses to improve service delivery.



jarmoluk via [pixabay](#)

"The discussions focussed on the principles that should guide government's Open Data Policy," he said. Principles identified included that the information must be accurate, readily accessible, in a format which makes it easily accessible and that personal information should be protected. Data should be used to promote the public good, and contribute to socio-economic development and social upliftment," Cwele noted. "These initial discussions were very positive, and we will take these forward as we finalise the policy on e-government and the white paper on ICTs," he said.

An 2013 [McKinsey Global Institute Report](#), *Unlocking innovation and performance with liquid information*, pointed out that open data had the potential not only to transform every sector of the economy but also to unleash more than \$3 trillion in global economic value annually.

South Africa is a founding member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), formed in 2011, and will take over the Chair of the Partnership later this year.

According to the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) chairperson, Jerry Vilakazi who participated in the same briefing, SITA is mandated to drive e-government implementation to both citizens and government users. "Today's think tank not only included senior leadership in business, civil society and national and provincial government, but local government as well, as the sphere of government that is at the coalface of service delivery and will be playing an essential role in the roll-out of the South Africa Connect programme. This is significant, he said, because it is within local government that the most impact will be seen.

Noting that affordable data is a precursor to enabling citizens and businesses to make effective use of open data, Cwele stated that government is looking to drive open network access in a bid to drive services-based competition, enabling the entrant of smaller players into the market using infrastructure already rolled out by larger players, for a reasonable price.

For more information on GovTech, go to [Sita](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>