



STRATEGIC **PLAN**

[ABRIDGED VERSION]

2022 - 2027



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INTRODUCTION

Kenya Education Network Registered Trustees (KENET) is a not-for-profit membership organization that designs, builds, and operates a shared national digital infrastructure for research and educational institutions. It delivers a wide range of critical digital services including high-speed and affordable internet connectivity, community cloud services, cybersecurity, identity and trust services to its members comprising public and private universities; university colleges; tertiary colleges; research institutions; teaching hospitals and institutions affiliated to research and education community. By April 2022, KENET had provided internet connectivity to over 400 campuses of 185 member institutions in 46 out of 47 counties in Kenya. As a grant-making organization, it awards travel, research, and innovation grants to members of research and education special interest groups.

KENET derives its mandate from the Trust Deed of 2000, the First Supplemental Trust Deed of 2013 and the Second Supplemental Trust Deed of 2020. It is endorsed by the Ministry of Education and recognized by the global research and education community as the National Research and Education Network (NREN) of Kenya. It is licensed by the Communication Authority of Kenya, the Kenyan ICT regulator, as a Tier-2 Network Facility Provider, an Applications Service Provider, a Content Service Provider, and a Sub-Domain Name Registrar.

KENET's Strategic Plan (2022–2027) sets the priorities that will enable it to impact as a leading provider of education and technology services and research solutions. It is a bold response to major issues of concern to the KENET Community namely: creating a good and adaptable learning and research environment; increasing access and inclusion in IT and digital transformation; and building the requisite professional and technical competencies to drive changes in the national education agenda. Other challenges to be addressed by the plan are the ever-changing regulatory environment; rapid technological advances; and increasing cyber security threats. Resolving these issues will not only contribute towards fulfilling KENET's primary mandate, but also realizing its ultimate desire of having a fully connected and frictionless education and research community, in touch locally and internationally.

This plan builds on KENET's previous strategy. It is informed by several factors including deliberations and recommendations from the review of its past strategic plan; changes in the business environment such as policies, regulations, impact of COVID-19; trends in higher education and ICT sectors; benchmarking with other NRENS and related peers; and projected growth.

It also incorporates the in-depth reflection of the principles and beliefs of the management team that participated in the strategy workshops held between February and June 2022.

To contribute towards making Kenya a knowledge-based economy, the strategic plan is aligned with Kenya Vision 2030, and more specifically the National ICT Policy, and the Digital Economy Blueprint. It also takes into consideration the Fourth Medium Term Plan (MTP IV) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially SDG 4: Quality Education; SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and SDG 10: Reduced inequalities.



VISION

To be an academic community significantly contributing to the achievement of high research and innovation productivity levels of Kenya

MISSION

To promote and facilitate the digital transformation and digital inclusion of member institutions

CORE VALUES

Openness, Diversity, Excellence and Integrity

MOTTO

Transforming Learning, Research and Working Environments Using ICT



Figure 1 below illustrates the linkages between KENET's vision, key results, strategic priorities, goals and core values. The plan is anchored on six strategic priorities or focus areas classified as three enablers – digital infrastructure, institutional capacity, and stakeholders' engagement; and three pillars – connectivity and digital enterprise services, educational technology and research services, and membership services. The foundation core values of openness, diversity, excellence, and integrity will drive KENET's culture. Each strategic focus area has one goal and there are 24 key results, making it easy to track progress in strategy execution.

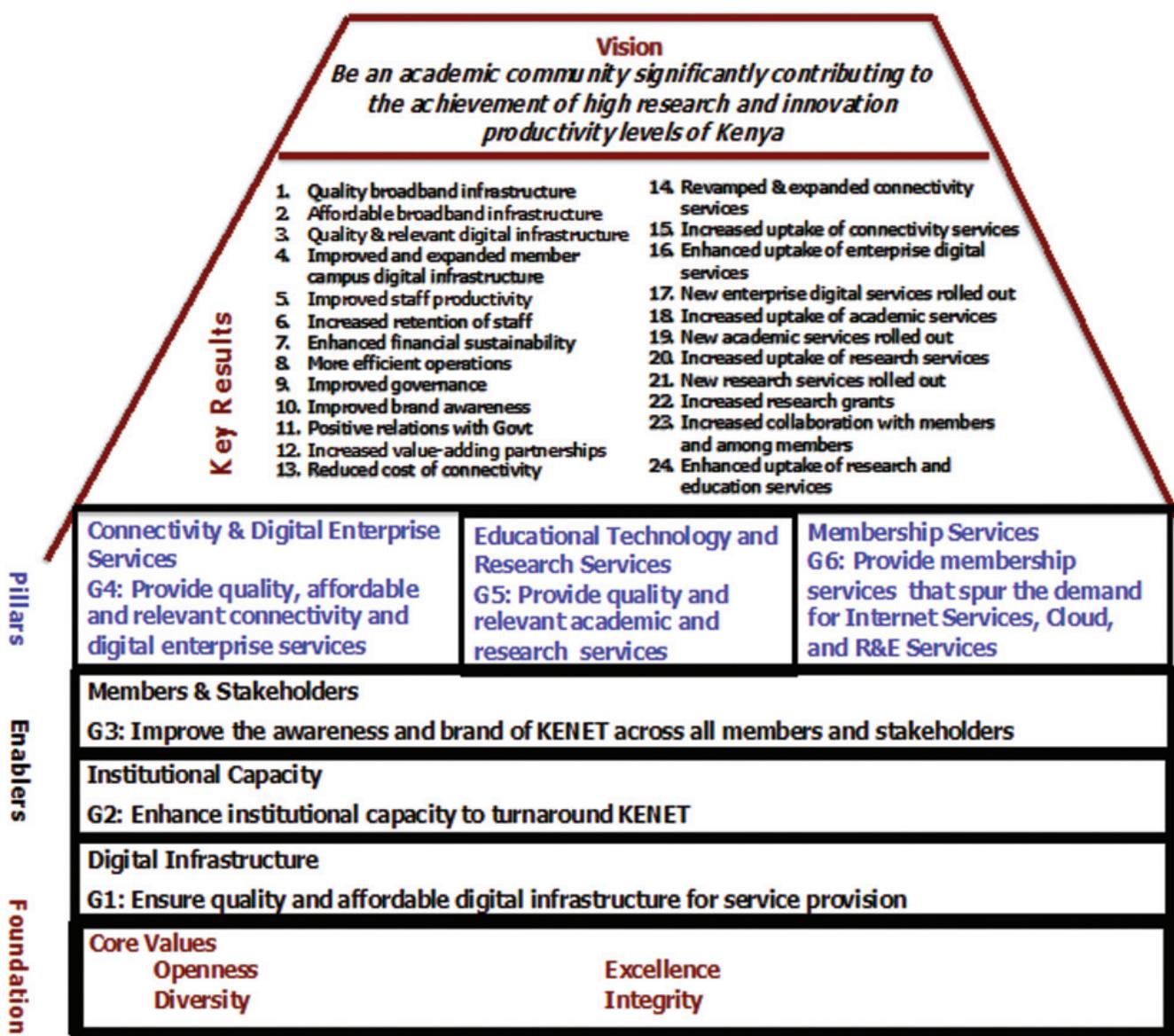


Figure 1 KENET Strategy Map

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, GOALS & KEY RESULTS

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL # 1: Ensure quality and affordable digital infrastructure for service provision

Many campuses of KENET member institutions have poor quality digital campus infrastructure due to ageing ICT infrastructure, unstable power, and inadequate ICT technical skills. Moreover, the digital campuses infrastructure of most of these institutions are over 10 years old and needs to be upgraded. This focus area seeks to enhance KENET network's distribution capacity and its community cloud infrastructure that support the digital enterprise and educational technology services, in order to improve the internet connectivity experience of end-users. Mobilization of huge financial resources will be required to fund the upgrading and expansion of KENET's and its member institutions' internal digital campus infrastructure.

Key results

- *High quality broadband infrastructure*
- *Affordable broadband infrastructure*
- *Quality and affordable digital cloud infrastructure*
- *Improved and expanded campus digital infrastructure in member institutions*

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

GOAL # 2: Enhance institutional capacity to support scalable and sustainable KENET services

During the plan period, KENET will not only expand and renew its member institutions' digital campus infrastructure but also venture into new business areas that bring it in direct contact with its membership. These new services and initiatives will require new institutional capacity, particularly additional human resources, financial, physical (office space and data centers) and administrative information systems. This focus area will seek to strengthen KENET's functional capacity by constantly reviewing and enhancing its organizational structure to respond to emerging business needs.

Key results

- *Improved staff productivity*
- *Increased staff retention*
- *Enhanced financial sustainability*
- *More efficient operations*
- *Improved governance*

STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT

GOAL # 3: Improve the awareness and brand of KENET across all members and stakeholders

KENET will build and enhance the visibility of its expertise and services by creating a strong brand and image. It will also increase its membership's awareness of critical NREN member technical services that facilitate collaboration (e.g., identity federation that enables sharing research and educational resources); capacity building in critical areas such as faculty capacity for teaching with technology; curating blended learning content; and cybersecurity technical skills. One of the important outcomes of this strategic focus area will be the policy and legal recognition of KENET as the NREN of Kenya. In an increasingly competitive funding environment, raising KENET profile will facilitate direct Government support and funding from development partners such as the World Bank and the Africa Development Bank.

Key results

- *Enhanced brand awareness*
- *Positive relationship with Government*
- *Increased value-adding partnerships*

CONNECTIVITY AND DIGITAL ENTERPRISE SERVICES

Goal # 4: Provide high quality, affordable connectivity and digital enterprise services

KENET will exploit new opportunities such as the high demand for reliable, high-speed, and affordable Internet bandwidth for member institutions. This strategic focus area will seek to ensure KENET's growth and long-term sustainability.

Key results

- *Reduced cost of internet connectivity*
- *Revamped and expanded connectivity services*
- *Increased uptake of connectivity services*
- *Enhanced uptake of digital enterprise services*

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH SERVICES

GOAL # 5: Provide appropriate research and educational technology services

KENET will foster the digital transformation of research, teaching and learning in member institutions through faculty development workshops, forums and research engagements, and collaboration initiatives (e.g., special interest groups for priority research areas). To increase the research productivity of its members, KENET will pursue collaborative research grants in partnership with member research groups and special interest groups in different academic and research areas. It will also constitute at least three new special interest group areas starting with earth observation applications. Other opportunities to be explored include expanding academic digital services, such as facilitating faculty digital skills for teaching and learning with technology in member institutions; adopting open science practices and data-intensive research; promoting adoption of frontier technologies; and capacity building of faculty to develop appropriate and engaging content for online and blended learning in universities and tertiary colleges.

Key results

- *Increased uptake of educational technology services*
- *New academic services rolled out*
- *Increased uptake of research services*
- *New research services rolled out*
- *Increased research grants*

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

GOAL # 6: Provide membership services that motivate digital transformation and digital inclusion in member institutions

The main thrust of this strategic focus area is to increase community engagement through forums, institutional visits, benchmarking services, and reports. The engagement will not only be with the senior leadership of member institutions (e.g., ICT directors or CEOs) but also directly with the beneficiaries of KENET services, namely, students, staff, faculty, and researchers. Membership services will be expanded to include data governance and guidelines for digital transformation, including building the ICT talent pipeline, and sustainability of digital infrastructure and services. KENET will also strengthen its capacity to respond to procurement requests by its members or open tenders published by member institutions.

Key results

- *Increased collaboration with members and among members*
- *Enhanced digital transformation of research and education services*

IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION

To execute the strategic plan effectively and efficiently, KENET will align its organizational structure and financial resources to its mission, vision, and core values. Although the main focus during this strategic plan period will be on expanding and deepening existing business offerings and venturing into new business areas, the organizational structure will not change fundamentally. However, a few departments will be created, elevated, or repositioned to ensure that the organization is fit-for-purpose and well positioned to deliver on its mandate.

Considerable financial resources – estimated at KES 9 billion – are required over the strategic plan period. This plan has the ambition of mobilizing resources of up to US\$ 200 million from the Government and development partners, private sector, donor and stakeholder organizations that support research and education.

Several risks that could hinder the execution of the plan have been identified and appropriate mitigation strategies developed. These include failure to mobilize adequate financial resources especially due to financial constraints of member institutions; new laws and regulations introducing new charges and taxes or changing tax status; inadequate human resources especially in identity and trust and cloud engineering; data breaches and cyber security threats; and stiff competition.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Strategic Plan (2022–2027) will be cascaded to all levels within the Organization and integrated into the performance management framework. Annual work plans will be developed at the corporate, divisional and individual levels, and aligned with the strategic plan. KENET will track the implementation milestones set out in the results matrix for each strategic result area and prepare annual and quarterly reports for deliberation and decision-making by the Board of Trustees and the Management Board.

An evaluation of the plan will be carried out annually. However, ad hoc evaluation may be conducted to inform decisions on interventions where significant unexplained variation in performance occurs, especially on a critical result area.

The strategic plan will be reviewed by an independent consultant after two years to assess the overall performance and progress. The review will guide ongoing implementation by providing lessons learnt and inform the way forward. Similarly, at the end of the implementation process, a terminal or end-term review will be conducted to assess the overall implementation rate and provide critical learning points for the next plan.

CONTACT US:

-  University of Nairobi,
Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library**
-  P.O. Box 30244-00100, Nairobi-Kenya**
-  0732 150 500/7, 0703 044 000/7, 0111 017 777**
-  info@kenet.or.ke**
-  www.kenet.or.ke**

