

BOTSWANA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SOCIETY

Activity Report

2025 - 2026

Advancing the ICT Profession in Botswana

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1. MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Note: Tshepho to change the picture.. This was edited from the council photos

Tshepho Bathai

President,

Botswana Information Technology Society

On behalf of the Board and membership of the Botswana Information Technology Society (BITS), I am pleased to present this Activity Report for 2025. This report documents a year of focused action, meaningful partnerships, and renewed commitment to advancing the ICT profession in Botswana.

2025 has been a year of deliberate investment in the foundations of our digital future. BITS convened stakeholders across government, industry, academia, and civil society around three critical missions: celebrating and recognising excellence in our ICT community through the National ICT Summit and Awards; championing the inclusion of women in technology through the BITS Women in ICT Chapter; and contributing to the national dialogue on the regulation and professionalization of the ICT sector. Each of these priorities reflects our conviction that a well-organised, inclusive, and professionally recognised ICT sector is not just good for our members — it is essential for Botswana's economic transformation and its contribution to the African digital economy.

We are grateful to our partners in government, particularly the Ministry of Communications and Innovation, to our industry collaborators, and above all to our members whose energy, expertise, and commitment make BITS's work possible.

The journey towards a digitally empowered Botswana continues and BITS remains at the centre of that effort.

2. ABOUT BITS

The Botswana Information Technology Society (BITS) was established in 1994 as the national professional body representing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) professionals in Botswana. The Society was formed to advance the ICT profession, promote excellence and ethical practice, and contribute to Botswana's socio-economic development through the effective use of information and digital technologies.

Since its establishment, BITS has served as a platform for ICT professionals, academics, students, government institutions, and private sector organizations to collaborate, exchange knowledge, and advocate for the growth of Botswana's digital economy. The Society is dedicated to fostering professionalism, encouraging continuous learning, and supporting the development of ICT skills and innovation across the country.

As the voice of the ICT profession, BITS works closely with government, industry, academia, and international partners to influence ICT policy, promote digital transformation, strengthen cybersecurity awareness, encourage emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, and advance the regulation of the ICT profession in Botswana.

The Society also organizes professional development programmes, conferences, seminars, webinars, networking events, and the Botswana National ICT Awards, which recognize and celebrate excellence, innovation, and outstanding contributions within Botswana's ICT sector. These initiatives provide opportunities for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and recognition of individuals and organizations driving the country's digital transformation.

BITS is an active member of TICON Africa Confederation. TICON Africa is the association of national ICT bodies across Africa, which connects Botswana's ICT professional community with continental peers and enables cross-border knowledge exchange, collaboration, and advocacy on issues affecting the ICT profession across the region. The Women in ICT chapter works along the Women in TICON Africa to advance women in ICT across the continent.

Today, BITS continues to champion the growth of a competent, ethical, and globally competitive ICT profession while supporting Botswana's vision of becoming a knowledge-based and digitally enabled economy. Through strategic partnerships, advocacy, and capacity-building initiatives, the Society remains committed to advancing technology for national development.

Our Mission

To advance the ICT profession in Botswana through professional development, advocacy, networking, and the promotion of ethical and impactful use of technology for national and regional development.

BITS has taken its mission further to promote the growth, recognition, and regulation of the ICT profession through advocacy, professional development, knowledge sharing, collaboration, and the promotion of ethical standards that contribute to Botswana's digital transformation.

Vision

To be the leading professional body advancing excellence, innovation, and ethical practice in Botswana's ICT sector.

Membership

BITS membership is open to IT professionals at all career stages — from graduates entering the profession to senior practitioners and organisational members. Members are encouraged to form Specialist Interest Groups (SIGs) and User Interest Groups (UIGs) around shared areas of technical focus, enabling peer learning and collaboration across disciplines including programming, cybersecurity, project management, and AI.

Summary of the BITS Objectives

The Society aims to:

1. Develop and promote the integrity and competence of the ICT profession.
2. Provide leadership and direction to the technology community.
3. Disseminate information on ICT developments.
4. Promote ICT knowledge and understanding among members and the public.
5. Provide a forum for exchanging ideas among ICT professionals and users.
6. Foster collaboration between academia and industry.
7. Offer ICT advice to individuals and organizations.
8. Uphold professionalism and ethical standards within the ICT profession.
9. Mobilize resources to achieve the Society's objectives.
10. Build partnerships with national, regional, and international professional bodies.
11. Protect the interests of BITS in accordance with its Constitution.

3. YEAR IN REVIEW — SUMMARY

3.1 3 Main Flagship Initiatives

The 2025 - 2026 activity programme centred on three flagship initiatives, each addressing a strategic priority for the ICT profession and Botswana's broader digital development agenda:

National ICT Summit and Awards 2025 Launch

Launch Event — Cavista Technologies, CBD, Gaborone, June 2025

Hosted by BITS and launched by the Assistant Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr. Shawn Ntlhaile, the National ICT Summit and Awards 2025 was announced as Botswana's premier annual platform for celebrating ICT excellence, driving innovation dialogue, and building cross-sector partnerships.

- The event brought together industry leaders, academics, innovators, and policymakers to discuss ICT's role in national development.
- Assistant Minister Shawn Ntlhaile affirmed that the ICT sector is the bedrock of Botswana's inclusive development — from e-health to smart agriculture, FINTECH to e-learning.
- Government progress on the SmartBots Strategy, the Digital Transformation Strategy, and the Innovation Fund was highlighted.
- The Summit and Awards — scheduled for 14–15 November in Gaborone — will celebrate achievements across sectors including technology, finance, education, health, and youth innovation.
- BITS Vice President Mr. Vish Sethi called the summit 'a vital space to highlight home-grown innovation and encourage dialogue between government, industry, academia, and developers.'
- A new BITS identity (logo) was unveiled at the launch, signalling organisational renewal and BITS's commitment to leading Botswana's digital future with fresh purpose.

BITS Women in ICT Chapter — Engagement Session

Soft Launch Event — Cavista Technologies, Gaborone, 4th September 2025

In line with BITS's commitment to gender inclusion in the ICT profession, the BITS Women in ICT Chapter convened a dedicated engagement session bringing together women professionals, aspiring technologists, mentors, and advocates to strengthen the pipeline of women in Botswana's technology sector.

- The session provided a structured platform for women in ICT to share professional experiences, challenges, and opportunities within Botswana's digital economy.
- Discussions addressed the persistent underrepresentation of women in technical roles, leadership positions, and entrepreneurial ventures within the ICT sector.
- The BITS Women in ICT Chapter was highlighted by the Assistant Minister at the ICT Summit launch as a key initiative — alongside TechWomen Google Developer Group,

enterprise incubators, and digital bootcamps — for empowering women and youth in technology.

- Mentorship, networking, and access to digital opportunities were identified as priority areas for the Chapter's ongoing programming.
- Participants were encouraged to serve as visible role models to inspire the next generation of girls and young women to pursue careers in technology.
- The session reinforced BITS's alignment with the African Union Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and the global ITU Girls in ICT agenda.

ICT Profession Regulation — Stakeholder Consultations

Stakeholders Engagements and Proposal Draft, 2025 – 2026, Coverage: Africa's Tech Pulse e-magazine

BITS led and participated in a series of stakeholder consultations on the regulation and professionalization of the ICT sector in Botswana, contributing a practitioner-centred perspective to what is one of the most consequential policy conversations facing Botswana's digital economy.

- The consultations examined the case for formal regulation of the ICT profession — including the potential establishment of a statutory professional body, licensing frameworks, and minimum standards of competency and ethics for ICT practitioners.
- BITS positioned itself as the primary voice of the ICT professional community in these discussions, drawing on its mandate to advocate for the interests and standards of the profession.
- Key topics included the definition of ICT professional categories, continuing professional development requirements, disciplinary mechanisms, and the interface with existing regulatory bodies such as BOCRA.
- The consultations were covered in Africa's Tech Pulse — Issue 1, 2026¹ — reflecting the continental relevance of Botswana's approach to ICT profession regulation.
- BITS's engagement drew on the broader African regulatory landscape, where the 2025 outlook identifies AI governance, data protection, cybersecurity, and digital economy regulation as the defining policy challenges of the decade.
- Outcomes from the consultations informed the BITS's ICT Profession Regulation proposal to the Ministry of Communications and Innovation and its ongoing advocacy for a formally recognised, structured, and respected ICT profession in Botswana.

¹ Africa's Tech Pulse, page 32 – 33. Url: https://anyflip.com/titny/jfkj/basic/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

3.2. SEMINARS AND WEBINARS

3.2.1 Digital Services Act (DSA) 2025 Seminar (March 2026)

The seminar, convened at BA ISAGO University, functioned as a multi-stakeholder public lecture focused on unpacking the implications of Botswana's Digital Services Act (2025) for national digital transformation, governance, and the evolving digital economy. The event brought together about 109 participants from government, academia, legal practice, and the ICT sector to examine how the Act reshapes digital service delivery and platform accountability in Botswana.

A central analytical theme of the seminar was the DSA as an enabling legal framework for a digital-by-default public service ecosystem, emphasizing interoperability, system integration, and standardized digital governance across institutions. Discussion also highlighted the Act's role in strengthening institutional coordination through the emerging Digital Services Authority framework, as reflected in broader national digital transformation policy discourse.

The panel featured experts drawn from government, academia, and industry, including:

- Dr Christopher B. Mokone (Acting Coordinator, SmartBots, Ministry of Communications and Innovation)
- Dr Audrey Masizana (Head of Open Data Steering team, also Former HoD, Computer science Department, University of Botswana)
- Vish T. Sethi (CEO, IT-IQ Botswana)
- Lebogang George (Partner, Akheel Jinabhai & Associates)

The dialogue was moderated by BITS leadership, with opening remarks emphasizing critical engagement with the DSA's regulatory and operational implications.

Across presentations and moderated dialogue, several consistent themes emerged:

- Digital governance and platform accountability: Emphasis on regulatory clarity for digital platforms and service providers in line with evolving digital ecosystem risks.
- Interoperability and data exchange: Strong focus on enabling seamless integration of government systems to improve efficiency and service delivery.
- Open data and transparency frameworks: Recognition of open data as a catalyst for innovation, research, and evidence-based policymaking.
- Alignment with complementary legislation: The DSA was discussed alongside the Data Protection Act and Access to Information Act as part of an integrated regulatory architecture.
- Digital trust and institutional readiness: Participants underscored that digital transformation requires not only infrastructure but also governance maturity, standards harmonisation, and public confidence in digital systems.

The seminar positioned the Digital Services Act as a foundational instrument for Botswana's transition toward a digitally enabled state, where regulatory frameworks, institutional capacity, and ICT infrastructure converge to support scalable e-government and digital economy growth. It also reinforced the role of academic-industry forums, such as those convened by BA ISAGO

University and BITS, in shaping policy literacy and stakeholder alignment in emerging technology governance.

3.2.2 WEBINARS with TICON AFRICA

BITS Women in ICT anchors the Women in TICON Africa chapter masterclasses since 2025 to date. These give Women in ICT – BITS chapter an opportunity to collaborate, share ideas and initiatives with their women counterparts across the continent. The series hosted about 3 webinars for 2025 - 2026

3.2.2.1. Women in TICON Masterclass – Inaugural Session

Date: 12 June 2025

Theme/Topic: Breaking the Glass Ceiling in ICT Leadership

Guest Speakers:

- Dr Elaine Van Wyk (ICT Leadership Expert)
- **Host:** Malebogo Khanda-Wiktor (TICON Africa leadership; Botswana I.T Society Secretary General)

Focus:

The session examined leadership barriers for women in ICT, career progression strategies, and mentorship pathways for emerging women leaders in technology.

3.2.2.2 Women in TICON Masterclass – Digital Value & Productisation

Date: August 2025

Theme/Topic: Value Identification, Creation & Productisation in ICT

Guest Speaker:

- Mario Paes (Founder & Director, Synergy Digital Solutions)
- **Host:** Malebogo Khanda-Wiktor

Focus:

Translating ICT capabilities into scalable digital products and services, with emphasis on innovation-led economic transformation in Africa.

3.2.2.3 Women in TICON Masterclass – Professional Development Edition

Date: 26 March 2026

Theme/Topic: Professional Growth, Personal Branding, and Strategic Planning Skills

Guest Speaker:

- Zipporah Maubane (African Union Development Agency – Head of Communications & Advocacy)
- **Host:** Malebogo Khanda-Wiktor

Focus:

Building professional identity, strengthening personal branding, and developing strategic career pathways for women in ICT and governance sectors.

3.2.3 Women in ICT – BITS chapter WEBINAR with Women in ICT – IITPSA (South Africa)

Date: 13 November 2026

Theme: Empowered and Secure: Women Shaping the Digital Future Together²

Guest Speaker:

- Angela Matlapeng – Botswana, Consultant, ITU Trainer of trainers Mentor,
- Kaluba Chikonde – AI Consultant, Entrepreneur, Founder – DimystifAI, Co-Founder – Coding4Finance
- **Host:** Malebogo Khanda-Wiktor

Focus:

The session was a networking and knowledge exchange for Women in IT across Africa, organized by Women in ICT - BITS in partnership with IITPSA – Women in ICT. The deliberations were centered on balancing online businesses, social connections and family life. The intent was to bring together minds to discuss practical strategies for staying secure, confident and in control online, while building lasting professionals networks.

4. CONTINENTAL ACTIVITIES

4.1 TICON Africa Conference 2025

The AMC & TICON Africa Conference 2025 was held from 20–22 August 2025 at the Labadi Beach Hotel in Accra, Ghana, co-hosted by the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana (IIPGH) and the Chartered Institute of Marketing Ghana (CIMG).

BITS was represented by two delegates:

- BITS President - Tshepho Bathai
 - Participated as a panelist on bridging the talent gap, sharing Botswana's perspective on ICT Skills development and industry-academia linkages
- Secretary General Malebogo "Lebo" Khanda-Wiktor
 - Moderated a woman focused panel on tech-driven inclusion and the digital economy. The speakers from across Africa and reinforcing commitment to gender equity in ICT.

Key sessions covered digital infrastructure, AI and data governance, FINTECH innovation, cybersecurity, and the convergence of marketing and technology. The conference also emphasised the need for pan-African ICT professional standards and cross-border digital collaboration to position the continent in global tech ecosystems. Cultural excursions to the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park, Osu Castle, and Independence Square, alongside a beach networking event and gala awards night, enriched the experience. Notable recognition at the gala included a Lifetime Achievement Award for Prof. Nii Narku Quaynor, with most ICT awards going to Zambia, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, and Ghana. Zambia was announced as the host for the

² www.iitpsa.org.za/event/empowered-secure-women-shaping-the-digital-future-together-an-iitpsa-women-in-it-wiit-chapter-event/

2026 conference, with BITS committing to early preparation and continued regional engagement to build on the partnerships forged in Accra.

4.2 SUMMITS AND Regional AGM's

4.2.1 ICT Association of Zambia Summit and AGM

The meeting hosted 2 events:

- The Launch of TICON Africa 2026, scheduled for the 23 – 25 September 2026, in Zambia, Livingstone.
- The ICT Summit and ICTAZ Annual General Meeting.
 - The meeting was attended by the Minister of ICT, and the dignitaries from across the continent, including BITS President, Mr Tshepho Bathai
 - Mr Bathai participated on a panel discussion at the Summit

4.2.2 ICT Association of Zimbabwe Summit

The conference brought together ICT professionals, policymakers, academics, innovators, and industry leaders from across Southern Africa to discuss: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital transformation; Cybersecurity and digital resilience; Digital sovereignty; Cross-border digital infrastructure; Regional technology collaboration and Innovation and skills development.

Key highlights

- Zimbabwe's Minister of ICT, Postal and Courier Services, Dr. Tatenda Mavetera, presented Zimbabwe's National AI Strategy.
- Zambia's Minister of Technology and Science, Hon. Felix Mutati, outlined Zambia's digital transformation priorities.
- BITS attended the event and interacted with the high officials from the various countries.
- During the summit, Zambia and Zimbabwe announced plans to establish a Digital Corridor to improve:
 - cross-border trade,
 - digital connectivity,
 - e-learning,
 - telemedicine, and
 - innovation between the two countries.

Regional significance

The conference positioned itself as a Southern African platform for collaboration on digital transformation and AI governance. It attracted government officials, ICT associations, industry leaders, and technology experts from several countries to discuss how the region can move from being consumers of technology to creators of technology

6. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION with GOVERNMENT

BITS council and members took part in consultations of the 2 policies that were passed in 2025 and 2026. These are:

- i. Cybersecurity Act
- ii. Digital Services Act 2025
- iii. AfCFTA Regulatory Framework For The Communications Sector (Africa)

5. STRATEGIC THEMES AND CONTEXT

National Digital Transformation

All three flagship initiatives in 2025 were anchored in Botswana's national digital transformation agenda. As articulated by Assistant Minister Ntlhaile at the ICT Summit launch, ICT is not simply a sector — it is a strategic pillar for economic growth, governance, and social inclusion. BITS's activity programme was designed to accelerate that agenda by building a more capable, inclusive, and professionally recognised ICT community.

Alignment with National and Continental Policy

BITS's 2025 activities align with key national and continental frameworks:

- › National Vision 2036 — transitioning Botswana to a knowledge-based, digitally enabled economy
- › Botswana Digital Transformation Strategy and SmartBots Strategy
- › African Union Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030)
- › SADC Vision 2050
- › UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure)

The Continental Dimension

Through its TICONA membership, BITS connects Botswana's ICT profession to a network of national associations across Africa. The issues BITS engaged in 2025 — professional regulation, gender inclusion, and innovation recognition — reflect priorities that resonate across the continent. Africa's digital transformation will be shaped by the quality of its ICT professionals, the inclusiveness of its tech workforce, and the strength of its regulatory frameworks. BITS is committed to ensuring that Botswana contributes to, and learns from, this continental effort.

5. PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

BITS's 2025 programme was built on active partnerships and constructive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders:

Ministry of Communications and Innovation	Government partnership — ICT Summit launch, regulatory consultation participation, and alignment with national digital strategy
Cavista Technologies	Hosting partner for the ICT Summit and Awards launch event, and subsidiary events and activities towards the National ICT Awards
BITS Women in ICT Chapter	Internal structure enabling targeted programming for women in the ICT profession. Relationships with Women in ICT – IITPSA in organising events between the 2 countries
TechWomen / Google Developer Group	Collaborative partner in women-in-tech programming and mentorship
TICON Africa	Continental body connecting BITS to national ICT associations across Africa. BITS supports different committees in TICON Africa including Research, Training, and youth development programmes.
Ba Isago University	Signed MoU - Engagement on ICT education, professional pathways, and talent pipeline development. Currently, holding
Africa's Tech Pulse	Continental publication for TICON Africa, with 3 BITS media articles for 2025 – 2026 ^{3 4 5}

6. LOOKING AHEAD — PRIORITIES FOR 2026

Building on the momentum of 2025, BITS's forward agenda is focused on:

- › Delivering a successful National ICT Summit and Awards — establishing it as Botswana's premier annual celebration of ICT excellence and innovation
- › Advancing the ICT profession regulation process — working with government and stakeholders to develop a framework that protects the public, elevates professional standards, and gives ICT practitioners the recognition and accountability structures the profession deserves
- › Expanding the BITS Women in ICT Chapter — deepening its programming, broadening its reach, and building measurable outcomes around women's participation and leadership in the sector
- › Strengthening TICONA engagement — amplifying Botswana's voice in continental ICT policy and professional development conversations

³ <https://anyflip.com/titny/jfkj> - ICT profession regulation consultations

⁴ <https://online.anyflip.com/titny/byui/mobile/index.html> - women in ICT – BITS chapter soft launch

⁵ <https://online.anyflip.com/titny/zitf/mobile/index.html> - ICT Awards launch 2025, Logo relaunch

- › Growing BITS membership — expanding the society's reach to include more early-career professionals, student chapters, and organisational members
- › Advocating for ICT education — supporting the development of a strong pipeline of qualified ICT graduates and professionals, including through engagement with higher education institutions on programme relevance and quality

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BITS expresses its sincere gratitude to all stakeholders who made the 2025 activity programme possible: the Ministry of Communications and Innovation for its continued partnership and leadership in Botswana's digital transformation; Cavista Technologies for hosting the ICT Summit launch; all speakers, panellists, and participants who contributed their expertise and perspectives to BITS events and consultations; the BITS Board and volunteer leadership for their time and commitment; and above all, the BITS membership — whose professional dedication is the foundation of everything this Society does.

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