

Abstract

The vision of attaining smart Cities and/or smart Municipalities as a mission towards sustainable development has gained much momentum in recent years. With a growing urban citizenry, the need for urban centres that have the potential to meet current and emerging challenges is imperative. Africa, in general, and Uganda, in particular, is not excluded from this predicament. It is important for the Government of Uganda to focus on the smartness of its emerging Cities given the view that much of its citizenry is urbanising rapidly. Consequently, this article discusses findings of a study on the prospects of attaining a smart Municipality in the context of Uganda's Support to Municipal Infrastructural Development (USMID) policy using Hoima Municipality as a case study. With its vast rural hinterland, Hoima municipality's potential lies in adopting bottom-up approaches to harness USMID policy, embarking on ICT-led projects, enhancing Municipal management and adopting strategic initiatives. The study reveals that Municipal initiatives towards smartness depend on technology, organisation, citizens in the Municipality, built infrastructure, and natural resources. Nonetheless, domestic challenges within Hoima Municipality remain key hurdles, necessitating stakeholders to utilise accessible technologies efficiently, improve management, invest in infrastructure and promote citizen engagement. The findings of this study bring into sharp focus the futility of the 'one size fits all' approach to planning for and funding of municipalities. Municipalities are differently endowed and rural based municipalities operate in unique conditions that will require unique responses if they are to acquire smart Municipality status.