

TITLE PAGE

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE STATE OF THE AUTOMATION PROGRAMME AT THE
NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF ZIMBABWE

BY

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ABSTRACT

The establishment of an archival automation programme requires that the institution concerned addresses issues relating to readiness to implement the project. This study sought to establish the state of the automation programme at the National Archives of Zimbabwe by describing the efforts undertaken to automate archival functions. The study was conceived against the background of a prolonged period of implementation, which has seen the seventeen years elapsing without the conclusion of automation. The descriptive survey was the chosen methodology with the questionnaire, documentary sources, structured interviews and participant observation as data collection instruments. The population of the study was the professional staff at the National Archives of Zimbabwe. The data was analysed using the stand alone statistical programme MoonStats. The investment in automation is an expensive undertaking that demands that certain fundamentals be in place for a successful project to be implemented. The study highlighted the importance of organisational readiness in terms of an adequate budget to purchase the requisite hardware and software. Organisational readiness was also measured in terms of the skills base in Information Technology as it impacted on the ability to establish and sustain an automated system. The existence of an automation policy and a plan underpins the success of automating an information system. The researcher established that the National Archives of Zimbabwe is not ready to implement automation in terms of adequate financial resources and relevant skills in IT among its staff. National Archives of Zimbabwe does not have an automation policy or plan in place to implement an automated system. A measurement of the level of automation revealed that NAZ is operating basically on manual systems. Recommendations were made to enable NAZ realise an automated system. These included the need to have an automation plan that has a time frame for implementation to be in place. The institution would need to ensure that staff acquired requisite IT skills. National Archives of Zimbabwe would need to lobby for an increase in budget allocation and ensuring that the existing hardware is constantly serviced and maintained.