



# Introducing KPMG South Africa' Emerging Tech Unit



According to Shamit Govind, who heads up KPMG South Africa's new Emerging Tech Unit, many technologies in Sub-Saharan Africa have been driven to date by large enterprise resource planning (ERP) companies. However, he believes that with the rise of niche emerging technologies, such as fintechs and agritechs, there is opportunity for more creative thinking around problem-solving.

'In the past, you would need to take a traditional ERP approach, but at KPMG we believe those norms are no longer valid,' he says. 'We're therefore taking a non-traditional approach that doesn't look at all-encompassing or enterprise-wide problems facing businesses, but rather identifies unique issues that our clients are facing in specific areas, which we can help them to turn into value-creation.'

Govind says this approach is based on KPMG's future view, and will focus on matching technologies to challenges. 'It's a far more accelerated and iterative process than the way in which companies currently assess and roll out new technologies, which just takes too long,' he says.

Solutions that the unit is focusing on include advanced analytics and automation, cloud transformation and internet of things (IoT), among others.

Govind believes that while other large consulting firms are still following more traditional models, KPMG can differentiate itself through the creation of this unit that is focusing specifically on how to apply emerging technologies into specific aspects of clients' businesses.

'We don't claim to be able to fix all of a client's problems, but the advantage we can offer is a collaboration. It's both KPMG point-solution providers and niche players in the market that co-create a solution with the client. It's not a case of the traditional consultant that develops a solution, leaves you with it and exits. Instead, it's a journey we walk with the client together – something they actively participate in, along with the partners we work with.'

Currently the KPMG Emerging Tech Unit is particularly well positioned to serve clients in the retail, financial services, agricultural, manufacturing and automotive sectors. Govind says that over the past five or so years, KPMG has moved towards being a platform-based organisation and is able to provide clients with various solutions from within the group, as well as sourcing expertise and technology externally. 'We are able to co-develop with clients on our KPMG platform, which is provider agnostic. We can work with Amazon Web Services, Google Cloud, Microsoft – any provider. That's an advantage of working with us. While we have partnerships with key global players, we are not limited to any single one of them. This means we are able to offer the best available solution to clients.'

The KPMG Emerging Tech Unit also has access to the resources and knowledge base of the greater global KPMG group, which means it is able to apply lessons from one industry or region to another, and temper these with local and domain knowledge.

The unit is focusing efforts on where it believes it can deliver tangible value in short- to medium-term time frames. 'We are commercially minded,' says Govind. 'We also understand that value is not found only in rands and cents, however. There is value in informatics and data, and we are also positioned to help clients to realise the value within data they already have.'

Within the KPMG group, the emerging tech unit sits within the consulting business, but is also a self-driving business that not only supports KPMG with its various projects, but consolidates the best of the group's skills and expertise in emerging tech to offer value to KPMG clients.



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