



**IICD**  
**Strategic Framework 2002 – 2007**  
**‘Deepening Local Ownership through**  
**Partnerships’**

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## Preface

This five-year plan is a continuation of the first ground-breaking phase of IICD's operations. Focused on a deepening of support for local activities and projects in up to 9 developing countries, it follows directly from shifts in IICD's strategy adopted in 2000. It also includes actions taken in 2001 as a result of the institute's external evaluation.

At the beginning of 2002, when the start up phase of IICD was completed, IICD is well placed to continue the momentum started and to effectively support the efforts of its local partners to address poverty through ICT enabled development activities.

By the end of 2006, when this plan ends, IICD and its partners will be ready to make the transition from a Dutch-based institute to a multi-actor north-south network founded on strong local partnerships and a jointly-owned approach to poverty alleviation through local empowerment and sustainable development.

While the organisation is at present a Dutch foundation, in the past 2 years, IICD has pursued a 'multilateral' approach in the funding and execution of its programmes and in its organisation. The aim is to broaden the financing base and to begin to make IICD an organisation that is as locally owned and demand responsive as is possible.

Thus, the British government has committed significant programme funding, and negotiations with the Swiss government for a similar type of support have just been finalised. Other types of partnerships have been developed with multilateral and international agencies, both public and not for profit.

The composition of the staff is now international and steps will be taken to make the institute's governance and its Board more international and representative of the partners with whom IICD works.

### IICD Today

IICD has **Country Programmes** in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Current **sector** priorities – as identified by local partners in Roundtable Processes – are in health, education, livelihood opportunities, governance and the environment. Some **results** from the first five years are:

- Country Programmes in 8 countries; built around partnership agreements on training, monitoring and evaluation, information and networking, local process facilitation.
- ICT and training skills provided by 15 national training partners and IICD to 1230 people from 48 local partner organisations.
- Around 2500 students from 18 countries participate in the Global Teenager Project.
- 14 Roundtable workshops generated 74 policy and project ideas and 48 proposals, of which 30 are currently in implementation.
- ICT Stories Project mobilised 250 local contributions of lessons learned, of which a subset has been analysed through the Learning by Doing Project.
- The IICD corporate web site averages 150,000 page views per year.
- 25 research and advisory activities addressed issues raised by partners.
- Enabling partnerships signed with Cap Gemini Ernst & Young, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), and Hivos; IICD elected member of the Executive Committee of the Global Knowledge Partnership.
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems have been developed with local partners to monitor and evaluate the level of end-user satisfaction, the overall development impact of programmes and projects as well as IICD's role in the process. An independent local partner organisation carries out Monitoring and evaluation activities in each Country Programme.

## Acronyms and Key Concepts

Central Services	<i>Overhead activities such as the building, furniture, hardware as well as governance mechanisms like the board and international advisory committee</i>
Core Programmes	<i>Country Programmes, Thematic Networks, Seed Funds</i>
Corporate Services	<i>Necessary headquarters activities – such as corporate communication and partnerships – that support implementation of the core activities</i>
Countries	<i>See page 9.</i>
Country Programme	<i>In each country where IICD is active, Country Programmes are locally owned ICT for development activities, formulated and implemented by local organisations in partnership with IICD and coordinated by a local network or platform of some kind.</i>
DFID	<i>United Kingdom Department for International Development</i>
DGIS	<i>Directorate General for International Development Cooperation of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>
ECDPM	<i>European Centre for Development Policy Management</i>
Enabling Partner	<i>Organisations with whom IICD collaborates to deliver activities, locally or internationally. See page 5.</i>
GKP	<i>Global Knowledge Partnership – international network on ICTs for development</i>
Hivos	<i>Dutch NGO that supports seed funds and activities in Bolivia and Tanzania.</i>
IAC	<i>International Advisory Council</i>
ICTs	<i>Information and Communication Technologies</i>
IICD	<i>International Institute for Communication and Development</i>
IN Partner	<i>Information Exchange and Networking Partner – local organisations responsible for lessons learning, knowledge sharing and communication at the country level.</i>
Local Partner	<i>Any local organisation participating in the activities of a Country Programme. See page 5.</i>
M&E	<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>
M&E Partner	<i>Local organisation that oversees the introduction and analysis of a monitoring and evaluation instrument by each project supported by IICD.</i>
National Training Partner	<i>Local organisation that organises and provides training courses for partners in a Country Programme.</i>
NGO	<i>Non Governmental Organisation</i>
Seed Funds	<i>Limited finance available to local partners to start up projects identified and prepared through locally owned processes.</i>
Sectors	<i>Priority areas to apply ICTs for development, Based on partner demands, these are: education, health, governance, environment, and livelihood opportunities. See page 15</i>
SWAp	<i>Sector Wide Approaches – approach to development finance in which local actors, usually governments, coordinate multi-donor ‘baskets’ of funds on a sectoral basis.</i>
Thematic Network	<i>Cross-country activities that link local partners working in similar areas, connecting local knowledge with global knowledge.</i>

## Summary

Following the positive recommendations of an external evaluation in early 2001, this strategy for IICD **builds on the work** of the past years. IICD will work with reliable partner organisations in up to 9 developing countries, helping local stakeholders to understand and assess the potential uses of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in development. It will also strengthen the capacities of the local partners to formulate and implement feasible and locally owned development policies and projects that make use of ICTs.

Learning from the past, it also **proposes some changes**. Increased efforts will be given to building and strengthening 'ICT for development' networks where local partners take full ownership of a range of activities executed through country programmes. Further, knowledge sharing networks will focus on the applications of ICTs in development sectors, such as education, agriculture, or health, helping to deepen information exchange and learning across projects and countries.

The **mission** of IICD is to **assist developing countries to realise locally owned sustainable development by harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies**. It does this through a strategy with the following **goals**:

1. to empower local organisations and stakeholders to make effective use of ICTs on their own terms, and
2. to catalyse lessons learning and knowledge sharing on ICTs by local organisations and the international community.

While ICTs may have a significant positive and negative transforming impact on society in general, the underlying philosophy of the IICD approach is that **ICTs are tools that can contribute to sustainable development and poverty alleviation**. But, this is only the case when the ICTs are closely associated with other development actions; where the ICTs are used to achieve other objectives – in education, food security, and so on.

Local **partner organisations** have a key role in the strategy. Legitimate and representative actors in development, they are change agents that work with and for poor people. Responding to real local demands, they devise and implement suitable development and poverty-reducing interventions, including any uses of ICTs. They are the owners of the activities that IICD supports. IICD strengthens the ability of these partners to understand and apply ICTs for development.

To ensure that the results address local development needs and priorities and are sustainable, six **guiding principles** are applied to all activities – ownership, demand responsiveness, multi-stakeholder involvement, capacity development, partnerships, and learning by doing.

Two **strategic approaches** are used to achieve the mission. First, *country programmes* bring local organisations together and strengthen local institutional capacities to formulate and execute the ICT components of development policies and projects. Second, *thematic networks* link local and international partners working in similar areas, connecting local knowledge with global knowledge.

## Prelude

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are seen by many people – in both developing countries and in development agencies – as exciting and effective new ways to attack poverty in developing countries. This belief has led to the launch of many public and private ‘digital divide’ initiatives, much debate and discussion, and many anecdotal stories. Nevertheless, there is little concrete evidence that ICTs indeed contribute to the fight against poverty.

Many policy makers, development specialists, and practitioners on the ground are still not convinced that ICTs make a difference. Poor people, it is argued, prefer to have enough to eat and to be healthy than to have access to computers, phones, or other ICT marvels.

Such a ‘bits’ versus ‘bites’ approach is ultimately sterile. Pragmatists argue that while poor people of course need to eat, ICTs can also help them, indirectly by improving the quality of the services they receive or directly by improving the quality of the information available to them or by opening up new opportunities. When wisely applied, ICTs offer enormous opportunities to narrow social and economic inequalities and support sustainable local wealth creation, and thus help to achieve development goals.

ICTs cannot of course act as a panacea for all development problems, but by dramatically improving communication and exchange of information, they can create powerful social and economic networks, which in turn provide the basis for major advances in development. By enabling these new networks to collect and share local knowledge and information, ICTs can provide new and more efficient methods of production, bring previously unattainable markets within the reach of local producers, improve the delivery of government services, and increase access to basic social goods and services. There need therefore be no trade-off between investment in ICTs and the achievement of development objectives. The basic right of access to knowledge and information is a prerequisite for modern human development.

The key issue is that ICTs alone, in and of themselves, are not tools for poverty reduction. They gain their value from their surroundings, from the problem they are

### **Yam farmers in Ghana strengthened through use of ICTs**

*IICD, July 9, 2001*

For years, Edward Addo Dankwa from the Ghanaian Ministry of Food and Agriculture has made concerted efforts to increase the livelihood opportunities of local farmers. In this endeavour, Edward discovered the usefulness of ICT as a tool for the farmers to improve their competitiveness and market position through faster, cheaper and more reliable communications channels and contacts.

With support from IICD, Edward has set up an ‘E-commerce’ project that enables farmers to have access to information on markets and prices, crops, agricultural inputs, the environment, etc. via email and web sites. So far, the Project has been implemented in two districts.

Access to – and exposure from – the web sites has opened up markets that otherwise wouldn't have been exploited. In this respect, some merchants from Accra in the southern part of Ghana recently learned that they could get yams at a relatively cheaper price from the Techiman District in the middle part of Ghana. The merchants contacted the interim chairman – Nana Owusu Gyare II – of the Techiman E-Commerce Cooperative Union. This is a committee that has been formed to oversee to the implementation of the Project in the district. Nana was asked whether he was able to deliver a considerable amount of yam for export purposes. Nana then called a meeting of small-scale yam producers and traders in the district and asked them what quantity each could provide. Individually, the farmers would never have been able to meet the request but through the Project Cooperative they were able to organise and put together the volume requested. They even got a better price for their yams than they would have got if they had sold the yams on the local market. This example increased the individual farmers', market people's, exporters' and intermediaries' beliefs that everybody should come together and help to achieve what they wanted the most: to produce and sell. In addition, they were affirmed in their conviction that ICT could help them in better working together and market their products more efficiently.

In the upcoming years, Edward and his team will continue to develop their project to serve the needs of – eventually around 1400 – Ghanaian farmers and small-scale producers. The aim is to improve their business positions by increasing efficiency and eliminating waste associated with fraud and superfluous travel. A minimum increase in their sales volumes of 15 % is targeted for. The Techiman example provides positive evidence that such a target might well be within reach.

used to address – education, health, governance and so on. In such cases, they may significantly contribute to poverty reduction as part of a wider package of pro-poor measures.

A key issue that remains is to better understand whether and how and under what conditions ICTs can best be used in the fight against poverty. Certainly, they can be used in many inappropriate ways. Can ICTs be used to drive economic growth, do they help to empower poor people by opening up educational and other opportunities, and how can they be used to improve the quality and delivery of public services? What are the potentially harmful side effects of the new technologies and how are they best avoided?

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs created IICD in 1996 to find answers to these and other questions. By supporting development activities that have been defined by local organisations according to their own needs and priorities, IICD seeks to avoid the problems that beset previous applications of new technologies in development. IICD especially supports the uses of ICTs in development activities that are locally owned and respond to genuine local demands and realities on the ground. This support has been operationalised through a way of working that empowers local organisations to themselves determine the development and ICT priorities to be followed. Ownership of the whole process from project identification to impact assessment is shared by local actors that are themselves working to eradicate poverty.

Working with different types of actors, IICD facilitates local processes and provides seed funding to promising project ideas that apply ICTs to poverty reduction. It also co-finances specific elements like capacity development, catalyses cooperation, cross-fertilizes ideas across countries and sectors, synthesises and disseminates lessons for others to digest and learn, and generally ensures that the activities undertaken are sustainable and achievable and that they contribute to the alleviation of poverty.

While IICD seeks to engage in activities that actually respond to and address the development problems of poor people in developing countries, experience shows that IICD itself is not able to directly 'reach' poor people. It must find intermediaries who can. It therefore works with other organisations that are 'pro-poor' in their outlook and activities. 'Pro-poor' means that the local organisations work with poor communities, helping to ensure that members of poor communities can grasp new

### **Brain food for the masses**

*Excerpt from an article in Asia Week (June 29, 2001) by SANJAY KAPOOR*

Every morning at 4:30, Pannerselvan, a fisherman in the Indian village of Veerampattinam, drags his boat from the high, sandy shoreline to the water, revs up his engine and heads into the restless Bay of Bengal. As he navigates through the tricky currents, he is plagued by doubts. What will the weather be? And what about the waves, will they be high or low? And if a storm blows in, will he ever return? Pannerselvan in the past got answers the hard way.

But the fishermen of Veerampattinam no longer put themselves in harm's way every time they launch their boats. Three years ago, M.S. Swaminathan, one of India's best-known scientists, chose the village for a pilot project, a demonstration that ICT could change the lives of the poor. Swaminathan established a minimalist communications network to link phone-less Veerampattinam with the city of Pondicherry. The Internet came to town — and with it crop prices, e-mail, and weather forecasts with ocean wave reports courtesy of the U.S. Navy's public website. Four times a day, a local volunteer checks the Web and broadcasts the information through a village public address system. Every evening as he sits sipping tea at a nearby stall, Pannerselvan can listen and decide whether it is safe to go fishing the next day. "When the computer says that there will be a storm," he says, "there has always been a storm. We all believe in it."

The communities sustain the network. Each village runs its own "info-shop" — the network terminus — and pays the electricity bills. Besides blaring out market rates of agricultural goods through loudspeakers, the info-shops provide e-mail services and employment information. In Embalam village, the info-shop is entirely managed by women who consult the Internet and broadcast current market prices for agricultural products. "Now that villagers have access to market rates, middlemen are not able to exploit the farmers or fishermen," says Raja Mohan, the head of the Swaminathan Foundation's ICT hub in Pondicherry.

The Pondicherry government wants the foundation to extend its network to 208 villages. Swaminathan predicts that millions of jobs can be created in rural India as early pioneers spread knowledge to others. "These people," he says, "will teach the masses how 'know how' can become 'do how.'"

opportunities, are able to shape important decisions that affect them, and may reduce their vulnerability to sickness and to social or natural misfortunes.

This approach is very dependent on both the strength of the local partners that act as intermediaries and on the quality of the partnership relationships they have with IICD and with their own partners. Choosing the right partners is critical (see box this page), as is providing the right kind of institutional support that empowers the local partners and avoids building any kind of financial or intellectual dependence on IICD. The guiding principles set out on page 8 are intended to avoid such an eventuality.

In its partnerships, IICD looks for mutual benefits in which the responsibilities of each party are set out in agreements. These agreements specify the types of support that IICD provides. Generally acting as facilitator and catalyst and sometimes as technical advisor or scrutinizer, IICD strengthens the efforts of its partners to themselves realise the results they have specified from their investments in ICTs. Seed money and co-financing is available to the partners to 'kick-start' projects or to maintain essential network tasks that would otherwise not be possible from locally available resources.

In this strategy, some local partners may be entrusted with significant responsibility for tasks like priority setting and financial management. Since large sums of money may be involved, an 'institutional capacity' checklist is used to assess the fiscal and organisational reliability of such partners before entering into agreements where certain financial responsibilities are delegated by IICD.

### **IICD's Partners**

Partners are organisations that explicitly share IICD's commitment to socio-economic development through ICTs. They thus do not seek to use IICD support to propagate inequality or to capture/control economic opportunities for themselves.

IICD follows a multi-stakeholder approach in all its partnerships. This means that it works with private, public and not-for-profit sector organisations at both the local and enabling levels.

Since development is best done by local institutions, IICD relies on intermediaries (local partners) in each of the countries where it works to reach poor people. Local partners are the key institutions with whom IICD works at the country level. The extent to which they own local projects and policies is essential to the sustainability of the results. They also play a key role in the overall management and coordination of the Country Programmes where different types of local partnerships exist for different functions - monitoring and evaluation, information exchange and networking, global teenager project, and training.

An intermediary strategy is also pursued internationally. Here, enabling partners provide resources and expertise not available locally nor in IICD and they help to spread the experiences of IICD and its local partners. Enabling partners allow IICD and its local partners to more effectively implement their missions.



# 1. Guiding Principles

IICD applies six **principles** to make sure its work is effective and sustainable:

1. Ownership: The ownership of each activity needs to be clear and recognised by all concerned. In countries where IICD works, sustainability requires that the local actors participating in an activity are ultimately responsible (and willing to be responsible) for the results. For IICD, this means that individual activities should respond to local situations and demands. The processes used to identify, formulate, manage and implement the activities must also be led and owned by local actors. This ownership is on several levels. At a 'national' level, local organisations take responsibility for the overall Country Programme and for the activities executed through it. While responsibility for individual tasks such as training, fund raising, or evaluation may be distributed among participating organisations, the overall ownership is vested in a group of local organisations. Together they may use common instruments such as a network, annual meeting, web space, or newsletter. One challenge at this level is to ensure that all the partners are aware of the shared ownership and what this means for each of them, mainly in terms of their responsibilities and commitments. The governance of the Country Programme also needs to reflect its shared purpose and ownership, allowing interested organisations to participate in its direction and activities. At a project and policy level, individual implementing organisations already 'own' the projects they have developed. In both cases, the owners also need to make sure that *their* partners or beneficiaries take ownership of the plans and results. Additionally, IICD is often a co-owner of an activity, sometimes with partners from several countries or with other agencies.
2. Demand responsiveness: As mentioned above, 'pro-poor' activities must respond to local demands and offer location-specific solutions and strategies. Building local ownership is one key part of this. It is important however that local demands are properly assessed, represented, and prioritised and that they do not get 'lost' in later stages of the implementation of an activity. For IICD, this means working with partners that are themselves demand responsive and with processes that are representative and participatory. One of the strongest ways to build demand responsiveness in an ICT or information activity is to ensure that it is embedded or anchored within a sectoral, thematic or other initiative for which the ICT application is intended. By associating the 'consumers' – policy makers, environmentalists, doctors, teachers, or poor people – the ICT activity is kept close to the 'market' and therefore relevant and demand responsive. The trend to manage development resources through large 'basket' funds for sectors or crosscutting issues provides openings for projects initiated by IICD partners to stay close to the mainstream of demand.
3. Multi-stakeholder involvement: An important aspect of demand responsiveness and ownership is that all interested actors may participate in the processes to assess demand and design solutions. For IICD, this means that public, private and not-for-profit actors are actively involved in the identification, formulation and implementation of activities. However, whenever different actors are brought together, unbalanced power relations may result in larger or stronger actors dominating or manipulating the process. IICD therefore pushes for approaches that safeguard open and full participation and the use of transparent processes that avoid the potential misuse of power. In line with the first principle, decisions on who participates are taken locally. IICD will press to ensure that no unjustified

barriers to participation have been erected. Again, in the context of a Country Programme, this is a principle that the local partners as well as IICD need to adhere to and the benefits of broad representation need to be locally owned.

4. Capacity development: Most developing country institutions that IICD works with require new skills and institutional capacities to implement the ICT components of their activities. Working in partnerships and with different types of actors is also a challenge; as is taking on the full implications of an approach based on ownership and demand responsiveness. For IICD, this means making sure that its local partners have the necessary institutional capacities and individual skills to make effective use of ICTs for development purposes. It also means strengthening the capabilities of the partners to 'own' individual activities and to effectively participate in locally led ICT for development initiatives. This included paying attention to institutional 'mindsets' to include notions of participation, ownership, partnership, demand responsiveness, and social inclusion.
5. Partnerships: For IICD and the institutions with whom it works, the challenges to use ICTs for sustainable development are too large to be attempted alone. Joint ventures and partnerships leading to joint action are the only way to mobilise the expertise and capacities necessary to achieve results. For IICD, this means working with different types of local partners, and jointly preparing and implementing Country Programmes in which local partners are in the driving seat. Beyond this, partnerships are the primary device to share and disseminate lessons about specific sectoral or other applications of ICTs for development.
6. Learning by doing: Finally, this is an area with a growing demand for concrete lessons and tools that can be borrowed, adapted if necessary, and applied. IICD's partners are in a good position to answer some of these questions. For IICD, this means strengthening the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that can be used by local IICD partners in their immediate projects. It also means generating and disseminating knowledge and lessons that can be used by national policy makers – to adapt sectoral and national policies – and by wider international communities working in similar areas.

## **2. Strategic Approaches**

To achieve its mission and goals, IICD has adopted two strategic approaches:

1. Country Programmes – a mainly institution strengthening approach in which IICD works with networks of local and enabling partners in up to 9 developing countries, mobilising local capacities to address local challenges.
2. Thematic Networks – a mainly knowledge sharing approach where IICD works with local and international partners, connecting local knowledge with global knowledge and promoting South-South and South-North exchanges.

### **2.1 Country Programmes**

IICD works with local partners to create locally owned Country Programmes that can serve as an instrument for ICT-supported development in key development sectors like education, health, the environment, governance, and livelihood opportunities. The purpose is to enhance the institutional capacity of the local partners to identify and develop ICT sector policy plans, implement pilot projects, and to further develop their own capacities. In this plan, 47% of the total resources will be allocated to the Country Programmes. If seed funds are included, this rises to 68%.

Each Country Programme has several components – network building, policy development and projects, capacity development, and knowledge sharing. In the past, the cycle normally began with a Roundtable workshop. Today, the starting point is to identify and work with a small network of committed local organisations with the Roundtable workshop being one of the first joint activities to be developed.

The local policy and project partners that participate in a Country Programme form a 'network' that determines priorities, shares responsibilities and tasks, mobilises resources, and ensures that the planned results are achieved. Experience so far in the eight countries suggests that these networks will have different compositions and will take different legal and institutional forms, depending on local conditions. Looking to the present when the setting up of the local enabling networks is in its early stages, the main challenge is to ensure that the eight current Country Programmes evolve into a self-reliant phase where the local partners set all the priorities and execute all the activities. Many of the building blocks of these networks are already present and more attention will be given to their consolidation and 'connectivity' in the coming period. To help do this, IICD facilitates local processes, catalyses cooperation, assists with resource mobilisation, and brokers relationships as well as access to needed expertise and knowledge.

Country Programmes are long-term investments and IICD expects to interact with them over a 5-7 year period in each case. However, the nature and intensity of the IICD support changes over time as the local partners become more self-reliant in tasks like policy formulation, project identification, fund raising, and capacity development. Knowledge sharing at a low intensity is maintained beyond the initial development of a Country Programme, as part of the ongoing commitment by both the local partners and IICD to share and communicate lessons and information about ICTs for development to wider audiences.

### Country Selection Criteria

IICD uses the following criteria to determine how it responds to requests from a new country:

1. Poverty: is the country classified as low-income or least developed and does it qualify as a highly-indebted poor country;
2. Demand: is there an identified local need for IICD's work? The demand for IICD's activities should be supported by an invitation from a legitimate and representative national actor;
3. Added value: What impact can be expected in terms of linking ICTs to development strategies? Size and complexity - e.g. politics, culture, potentially competing ICT actors and programmes - will be taken into account. IICD does not displace existing market actors – only strengthens or helps build them;
4. Learning potential: What scope is there for lessons to be generated and fed into other country, sector and regional activities;
5. Partner opportunities: Are there existing or potential institutional contacts within IICD and its networks with local actors? How strong is local ownership and at what levels? Is there a network already in existence?
6. Co-financing opportunities: Are there local or other enabling partners likely to finance and facilitate the implementation of the activities identified by the local partners?
7. Enabling environment: Is there sufficient commitment by local organisations to poverty reduction and demonstrated interest in the potential of ICTs for development.

IICD currently has 8 Country Programmes – in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Within the 5-year period, it is projected that this number will increase to no more than 9 Country Programmes (criteria for new countries are set out in the box above). This includes newer countries where IICD involvement is intense and multi-faceted as well as other countries where local organisations have taken over the running of the Country Programme and where IICD's own direct involvement is reduced. In exceptional cases, IICD may support incidental activities in other countries, however, the intention is to continue to focus on a few countries only and not to extend activities beyond what is feasible and sustainable.

### 2.1.1 ICT for Development Network

Local ownership of the Country Programme requires that its governance be vested in a local 'ICT for development network'. The development of the network starts when IICD first interacts with a local organisation in a country, seeking to identify legitimate and representative partners with which to work. A different approach is needed in each country. In some, such a network already exists, as is the case of an informal public-private 'E-Think tank' in Tanzania. Elsewhere, as in Ghana, various groupings of, for example, Internet service providers, mobile phone operators, or information specialists exist, but they are disconnected or lack an explicit development focus. In these cases, something new has to be started and support is needed to bring various actors together. The aim is to start with a small focus group of committed organisations that can act as champions for the emerging Country Programme and ensure that its momentum and direction is maintained.

The partners that IICD works with represent all types of actors. In Jamaica for example the key partner is the National Council on Science and Technology, in Ghana it is the local chapter of the Internet Society together with a local Internet service provider, in Zambia the Ministry of Education is currently very committed to a national process, the 'E-Think tank' is the main interlocutor in Tanzania, and in Bolivia all the partners are NGOs.

Organisations elected to coordinate local activities, including being responsible for the use of public funds from IICD, will need to have the support of other local partners and meet some basic institutional capacity criteria related to their sustainability and fiscal responsibility.

The network:

- Governs the Country Programme;
- Prioritises projects to be submitted for funding to local and international funders;
- Prepares an annual budget to be financed by IICD for enabling activities including workshops, project formulation, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation and knowledge sharing;
- Prioritises new areas or expanding the Country Programme towards new sectors, policies, or projects;
- Acts as a platform to exchange ideas among participants and seek areas of collaboration;
- Catalyses a wider community of learning that stimulates policy debate and promotes awareness of ICT issues in each country.

Acting as a facilitator in the network, IICD:

1. Catalyses an ICT for development network in up to 9 countries;
2. Provides financial support to each network, based on a yearly action plan;
3. Participates in the management of a 'seed' fund to support pilot projects generated through Roundtable and other locally owned processes;
4. Supports cross-country and South-South exchanges.

As a national network progresses, the role of IICD diminishes and is eventually reduced to a cross-country knowledge sharing function and ongoing exchange programme with national training partners. This may take between five and seven years. An 'exit strategy' for each country has not been defined but will be a subject of discussion with the local partners.

## 2.1.2 Roundtable Processes

A key component in a Country Programme is the Roundtable process. Consisting of networking activities among pioneers, face-to-face workshops to identify policies and projects, plus formulation and implementation phases for the resulting policies and projects, it links ICT plans and investments with existing development strategies in key development sectors. The aim is for local partners to identify and implement ICT applications that can be mainstreamed into sector policies and strategies. As much as possible, the initiatives are linked to sector wide approaches (SWAs) or similar instruments where actors in a sector agree priorities and resource allocations in a coordinated way. As mentioned earlier, such linking helps to anchor the ICT policies and projects in local sector priorities such as agriculture or education. The whole process is designed to be a partnership in development between the local champion organisation(s) and IICD, locally managed and to make use of local expertise.

At Roundtable Workshops, local stakeholders - public, private and non-profit – analyse the potential of ICTs in development and set priorities for future actions. Stakeholders can be a government ministry, a private entity, or an NGO. The workshops assist in strategic decision making and result in an agreed set of ICT policy directions for specific development sectors and concrete ICT project ideas supporting development in health, education, livelihood opportunities, governance or the environment. Regarding the workshops, IICD:

1. Supports, with funds, expertise, or facilitation, Roundtable workshops in each country;
2. Funds other workshops on request, based on a yearly action plan developed by the local ICT for development network;
3. Enhances the capacity of partners to themselves organise and facilitate multi-stakeholder workshops of this type.

After each workshop, project partners formulate policy plans and project proposals. In general, the aim is to develop sector-wide ICT policies and project proposals that address the challenges faced in, for example, education. To gain experience and to generate awareness and lessons based on practical experiences, a small number of pilot projects may be developed for demonstration purposes and within a broader policy context. Local institutions are individually responsible for the implementation, financing, and management of these projects and policies. In these phases, IICD:

1. Provides and funds policy and project formulation advice. This draws heavily on local expertise where it is available or from IICD's international expert networks;
2. Assists the local partners to strengthen their institutions in terms of policy and project formulation, business planning, project management, and brokerage with the local and international donor community;
3. Co-funds pilot projects developed by partners in the network. Selection and prioritisation of pilot projects is by the local ICT for development network. The actual funding from IICD resources uses technical criteria related to sustainability and feasibility that have been developed with the local partners;
4. Encourages the use of appropriate monitoring and evaluation instruments (see annex);
5. Funds monitoring and evaluation activities by a local independent monitoring and evaluation partner;
6. Provides, on request, additional advice and expertise in specific areas (such as through the Thematic Networks).

### 2.1.3 Capacity Development

Capacity development and institutional strengthening cut across all activities. In addition, special attention is given to capacity development activities that train local project partners in institutional, technical and advisory skills and knowledge sharing. The primary vehicle is a series of collaboration agreements with **national training partners**.

IICD and the local training partners focus on two levels of capacity development. First, a focus on individual capacities, which means skills and knowledge, usually acquired through technical (ICT skills) and non-technical training workshops. The acquisition of these skills is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for building locally sustainable capacities. Second, a focus on building organisational capacities, such as internal structures, procedures, the collective capabilities of the staff, and external factors in the wider institutional context, such as the policy framework, as well as other political, social and economic factors.

Two principles guide the overall approach:

- Working with a national training partner: This involves developing capacities in local institutions as well as individuals to offer the types of ICT training needed; and
- Employing productive learning: Every training activity results in defined products – capacities or skills - that can be used to enhance the productivity and effectiveness of the trainee and his or her work environment.

To ensure a self-sustaining and continuous approach to training and learning, IICD works with and strengthens the **national training partners** in each country, by:

1. Funding and organising an annual training of trainer programme for all training partners in the countries;
2. Funding and providing advice to local training partners on strategic and operational issues;
3. Funding and supporting South-South exchanges of trainers and other partners in the networks, especially among the countries;
4. Co-financing technical update seminars for project partners and other interested parties.
5. Supporting capacity development activities identified by the local partners.

### 2.1.4 Local Knowledge Sharing

According to participants in a recent IICD workshop with its country partners, finding out about the status and impact of local ICT initiatives and learning from them is a serious problem. Since most of the developing countries where IICD works do not have national ICT policies nor any instrument to track the many ICT related projects in the country, participants identified an urgent need to set up effective tools or platforms where local ICT for development plans, progress, results and experiences can be discussed and assessed. While there was felt to be relatively plentiful international dialogues and platforms, the local national scenes are virtually empty in this regard.

The Tanzania 'E-Think tank' is a good illustration of how local organisations have tried to deal with this problem. A loose network of people and organisations working with ICTs for development, the E-Think tank organises local meetings, discusses

policy issues and feeds them to government, runs e-discussions, and acts as a sounding board for new projects and proposals. The added value of such a mechanism is such that the Tanzania Government and the E-Think tank are investigating how to create a more formal organisation to do the local knowledge exchange and other tasks.

In Tanzania, the added value of a local network comprising all the various stakeholders in ICTs is seen as 'enabling' more informed policy making and as 'connecting' the key actors and stakeholders together to learn, to collaborate, and to avoid duplication of effort.

At a June 2001 consultation meeting, local organisations from the countries where IICD works proposed to create an ICT for development 'community of practice' in each country to strengthen lessons learning and information exchange within their countries. Building on what already exists and not restricted to IICD projects and partners, each Country Programme will create or adopt an information exchange mechanism to link up local ICT expertise and knowledge, to push for wider awareness about ICTs, and to generate some of the lessons and stories that can help answer the question – how do ICTs contribute to poverty reduction?

IICD support for these knowledge networks focuses on:

1. Enhancing the institutional capacities of the information exchange and networking partners in developing countries. This includes providing advice on knowledge sharing methods and tools (local newsletters, website or workshops) and developing joint dissemination tools at the local and international levels;
2. Co-financing knowledge development and sharing activities on the basis of a yearly plan validated by the local ICT for development network;
3. Mobilising support for the national networks from other development agencies and partners.

#### **Expected Results from a Country Programme**

1. Governance by a local 'ICT for development' network of organisations that is responsible for setting priorities, seeking financing, and implementing activities;
2. A series of locally-led consultation processes to assess demands and relate them to priority ICT actions at the country and sectoral levels;
3. ICT-supported policies in priority sectors developed by a network of local organisations;
4. ICT-supported sector projects developed and implemented by local organisations participating in a local ICT for development network;
5. Local network partners with the capacity to formulate, implement and sustain development programmes using ICTs;
6. Capacity development and ICT support services delivered by local organisations forming part of a network;
7. Local lessons and experiences with ICTs for development generated and shared by a local knowledge sharing community.



## 2.2 Thematic Networks

Learning and accountability for results arise from IICD's work with its partners in the Country Programmes and from the work of others in national ICT for development networks. What happens to this learning, experiences and results? Does such knowledge remain at the Country Programme level, or is it brought to a level where it can be pooled and shared across Country Programmes and with other parties nationally and internationally?

IICD's local partners have called for increased support on the uses of ICTs in specific sectors (see box below) and themes in which they are working. They are all using ICTs for development, but those working in agriculture or education, for example, want to interact with each other, to learn from each other and also perhaps to work together. They want to meet people inside their countries, in other countries, especially in the same region, and they want to tap into global knowledge networks. Thematic Networks are the instruments by which IICD supports these demands. In this plan, 14% of the total resources will be allocated to Thematic Networks.

With the reaching of a critical mass of projects in the Country Programmes, the need to share experiences across international borders and amongst southern practitioners has become evermore striking. IICD's partners and others, involved in a particular sector such as health have increasingly turned to IICD for assistance in deepening their sector specific knowledge — all with the purpose to strengthen existing development objectives. IICD's responding to this local demand is one of the expected results of thematic networks.

### Sector Priorities

High priority sectors are those that have a demonstrable link with sustainable development. The demand and sectoral interest expressed so far by IICD's local partners nearly always coincides with one of the following three sectors:

1. Education, health, or livelihood opportunities (especially agriculture): These sectors are often also the focus of sector wide approaches (SWAs). It is also IICD's experience that the greatest socio-economic leverage is achieved in these sectors following the introduction of ICTs. Given these factors, IICD will continue to focus on these sectors.
2. Governance: Increasingly, IICD's local partners articulate a need for improved governance using ICTs. This is largely due to two factors: First, the prominent national and international anti-corruption dialogue, and second, the heightened institutional capacity demands being placed on local and national governments as part of decentralisation processes. IICD will continue to meet local demand for this sector, since it recognises the added value ICTs can bring to addressing e.g. transparency and efficiency issues in governance.
3. Environment is in least demand by IICD's local partners. However, IICD expects this sector to gain in importance, but at this stage, it remains on the margin of IICD's priorities.

The experiences of one project partner in formulating and implementing sector policy and projects furnish valuable input for other partners. In March 2001, an IICD partner in the Ugandan Ministry of Health requested information about the experiences of other IICD partners in defining ICT supported health care policy. IICD was able to share with them the process and results of the Ghanaian Ministry of Health. IICD and its local and international partners catalysed and facilitated this sharing of valuable knowledge.

### **2.2.1 Demand-Driven Thematic Networks**

Such 'thematic' networking applies to all sectors where IICD partners are working: education, health, good governance, livelihood opportunities and environment. In all their activities, local partners make use of technical media such as radio or Internet, to achieve their sector goals. In some cases, local partners specifically request that IICD work to assist them in gathering knowledge and expertise on ICTs themselves. In the past, this has included, for example, on telecentres, wireless technologies, and on the use of tools like Linux, databases, and standards.

To-date, Thematic Networks have been developed to respond to partner articulated needs in ICT-supported agriculture, known as e-business. The e-business knowledge partnership with Cap Gemini Ernst & Young supports this demand by enabling IICD to furnish its partner networks with on-request expertise as part of a clear programme. Progress is also being made in meeting the additional knowledge needs of partners in ICT-supported governance – or e-governance. Smaller collaborations have been initiated around technical issues such as ICT training, capacity development, and the evaluation of information and knowledge activities. The exact number and focus of Thematic Networks will depend on the demand expressed by partners.

Another example is the international exchange conducted as part of the Global Teenager Project. This education sector activity currently links around 2500 students from 89 schools in 18 countries and offers them a communication and learning tool. Students follow curricula together online, in which they follow course material and, equally as important, learn from one another's distinct perspectives. The project is co-financed by numerous small sponsors and partners in The Netherlands and abroad and it is being further developed into a self-reliant networking initiative with local and international components.

Thematic Networks foster continuous learning around the priority development sectors and on certain cross cutting ICT 'issues' such as training, evaluation, or technologies where there is a demand for answers. In both the sectors and the issues, the main emphasis is on network building in the South, linking local partners with similar interests and concerns. Much of this linking will itself make use of new ICTs such as e-discussions and may involve building up web-based resources and information exchange tools.

Linking also involves bringing partners in the South into contact with sources of expertise found in private, public and non-profit sectors internationally — to knowledge partners. Thematic Networks therefore link local and international partners in networks or communities that share expertise and ideas. These expertise networks are a focus for knowledge sharing among Country Programmes and a means to tap into and inform the global knowledge base. Partnerships — in terms of sharing knowledge and the resources needed for implementation — are at the core of Thematic Networks.

## 2.2.2 International Thematic Networks

Alongside local and cross-country knowledge sharing, IICD catalyses the development and sharing of knowledge on a broader international level and brings the experiences and lessons of its partners to wider audiences. The intention here is not to duplicate the already existing global initiatives, rather to ensure that the specific knowledge and lessons from work in the developing countries is widely accessible and is heard in international forums.

The content or knowledge base brought together in these various activities is widely disseminated via e-mail, the web, and on paper using *iConnect*. This gives a very focused and practical perspective on the use of ICTs for development. Targeted to the many partners and stakeholders in the wider IICD programme, it draws its content mainly from the Country Programmes and Thematic Networks. It is also a dissemination platform for research, lessons learned and storytelling — with storytelling being one of the most effective means of sharing knowledge.

Regarding Thematic Networks as a whole, IICD:

1. Catalyses and organises thematic workshops and action plans for local project partners working in the thematic area;
2. Supports expert networks that can give advice to local and other organisations;
3. Catalyses sources of and in some cases funds the development of models, toolboxes, research and additional knowledge products in specific thematic areas;
4. Jointly realises at least 3 thematic networks (on a sector basis) and five issue based networks in partnership with local and international organisations;
5. Uses the monitoring and evaluation instrument to draw cross-country lessons learned;
6. Funds and manages a small research support activity, targeted to learning about ICTs in developing countries and drawing on local expertise often working together with international institutes and specialists in this area;
7. Co-funds and manages the ICT Stories project in collaboration with *infoDev* as a device to stimulate storytelling;
8. Co-finances and disseminates knowledge brought together via e-mail, the web, and on paper using *iConnect* and networks such as the Global Knowledge Partnership.

### Expected Results from Thematic Networks

1. Information demands of local partners met through knowledge 'products' and communication services;
2. Relevant South-South content developed and exchanged via local and cross-country networks;
3. Knowledge-based relationships enable local organisations to tap into international sources of expertise; and
4. Integration of the knowledge generated by IICD and its local partners into global knowledge and policy making networks on ICTs for development.

## **Annex: Monitoring and Evaluation**

One of the challenges is to make sure that IICD and its partners are able to learn from the experiences they gain. This means learning at the levels of the policies and projects, the Country Programmes, and inside IICD. A special effort will be needed to make sure that the indicators and results for notions like demand responsiveness and ownership can be tracked alongside issues like capacity development and sustainable development. Several tools for planning, progress monitoring, and evaluation will be used to capture results and overall impact, at three levels:

1. Operational level: improvement of project and organisational effectiveness. The focus is on accountability for results and learning from activities in each Country Programme
2. Programme level (Country and Sector): strategic planning, replication of best practices and improvement of overall development impact. The focus is on lessons, taking the Country Programme results and analysing them per country for accountability and lessons across Countries;
3. Strategic level (IICD institutional learning): strategic planning and improvement of organisational effectiveness. Focus here is both on accountability and lessons and relations with partners.

### ***Operational Level***

A survey has been developed to monitor and evaluate the role of IICD, the level of end user satisfaction and the development impact of the programmes and projects. In each country, an independent local partner organisation carries out monitoring and evaluation of activities in each Country Programme.

1. Project partners assess the effectiveness of the assistance provided by IICD and its local Country Programme partners (the host organisation, training partner, the IN-partner) and local consultants. The assessment considers the assistance in identifying local needs, the establishment of local ownership, technical assistance, capacity development and knowledge exchange.
2. Independent local consultants assess whether the project's objectives have been met, in terms of the target groups, the quality of the results and the accessibility of the services provided.
3. End users assess the impacts of each project on their professional and personal lives. These impacts are assessed in terms of the increased awareness of ICT opportunities in development, empowerment through participation in the project, and the socio-cultural impact on the users' lives. The end users also assess the project's economic impacts in terms of the effects on their productivity, income and labour market prospects. Finally, the analysis measures the project's impact as a catalyst, i.e. whether it has contributed to innovation, and its suitability for replication in other sectors or institutions.

### ***Programme Level***

In implementing its strategy through partnerships, IICD seeks to **involve its partners** and stakeholders in priority setting and decision-making on the directions to be followed and the activities to be implemented. While some mechanisms are in place to allow for such involvement – notably **Focus Groups** in Country Programmes – partner perspectives will need to be systematically added to all levels of decision-making.

Country and Sector Programme level lessons and best practices – emerging from M&E of Country and Sector Programme results – are fed back into the knowledge sharing chain to reach the cross-country and global level. This occurs primarily through the Sector Programmes, which begin with a South/South focus in a workshop. Additional lessons and best practices from other Southern practitioners and global partners then get fed into the process to help augment the lessons and global knowledge base.

### ***Strategic Level: IICD Institutional Learning***

Next to learning processes directed at external target groups, IICD needs internal learning processes to adapt its strategy to new experiences, trends and lessons. Overall accountability is done by a 5-year review of IICD by DGIS selected parties, while strategic lessons and best practices are the focus of the Institute's International Advisory Council, which advises on strategic policy matters. Each year a programme review and planning process is carried out, revealing strengths and weaknesses and introducing changes as required. The institute's annual report provides an overview of planned activities and results achieved.