

Facilitating ICT-enabled development

“If we don't even attempt to introduce these technological improvements, then we will remain behind forever”, Mr. Mbuya, District Officer, Kinondoni District Tanzania

Through Country Programmes, IICD is helping local partners in nine countries to implement projects and develop information and communication technology (ICT) policies in priority sectors. Each Country Programme brings together the key stakeholders in the sector and enables them to formulate and implement ICT-supported development projects and policies. Throughout the programme, these local partners are supported with capacity building, knowledge sharing and monitoring and evaluation activities. This is IICD's strategic approach to Country Programmes to create locally-owned projects and ensure long-term sustainability.

The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) assists developing countries to achieve locally-owned sustainable development by harnessing the potential of ICT. Two strategic approaches are taken to achieve our mission and goals: Country Programmes and Thematic Networks. Country Programmes help local partners to implement projects and develop ICT policies in key development sectors (e.g. education, environment, good governance, health and livelihoods). Thematic Networks work across borders to help people learn from each other and to disseminate best practices at the international level.

Country Programmes generally cover a period of five to seven years. The nature and intensity of IICD's support changes and evolves over time as local partners become more self-reliant. A mature Country Programme will have five or six active projects in at least two sectors. IICD's sector-based approach is a reflection of its conviction that the best way to achieve long-term impact is to ensure that ICT for development is clearly defined through national ICT and sector-wide policies.

Since 1997 IICD has built up a wealth of knowledge and experience through Country Programmes. Currently 20% of all projects are continuing independently of IICD.



ICT Roundtable process

A Country Programme starts by bringing together the key stakeholders in a Roundtable Workshop. This enables them to formulate their ICT development needs which will be turned into proposals for ICT-supported projects and policies. The workshops are organised on request with a small group of local organisations representing the key stakeholders in a given sector. IICD has facilitated more than forty ICT Roundtable workshops since 1997. These enable stakeholders – public, private and non-profit organisations – to analyse the opportunities for ICT in development and set priorities for future activities, based on clear criteria.

The Roundtable process has three main phases:

1. Roundtable workshop
2. Policy and project formulation
3. Policy and project implementation

IICD facilitates each two to four day conference. A local consultant prepares and presents a reference paper on the current state of national policies, ICT policies and projects in the chosen sector. The roughly 40 invited participants then work on various scenarios to provide context for a more focused discussion on how ICT can contribute to the development of the country or sector. ICT opportunities are formulated for each priority area from which project ideas can be selected. In the last phase of the workshop, the participants present six or eight project ideas with key objectives. They also identify a project 'owner' who will further develop the project proposal.

Project and policy formulation

At a later stage in Country Programmes, project owners develop ideas into five-year project proposals and possible ICT policies with active support from IICD staff and local consultants. The proposals specifically consider the development relevance and institutional capacity required for implementation. Finally, the various parties involved also jointly develop a funding strategy to present to interested potential financiers, including national government, development banks and funding agencies.

Project and policy implementation

Once funding has been secured, the project is implemented, primarily by the organisation that 'owns' the project. IICD's contribution in this phase is mostly limited to strategic advice and support with capacity development, knowledge sharing and monitoring and evaluation.

Capacity development

Capacity development plays an important part in all phases of Country Programmes. This includes 'train-the-trainer' activities and 'Life-Long-Learning' courses to increase the ICT skills of the project teams. During the implementation phase, training partners

provide practical ICT skills training to the project partners in specific areas, such as web development, project management, and database development.

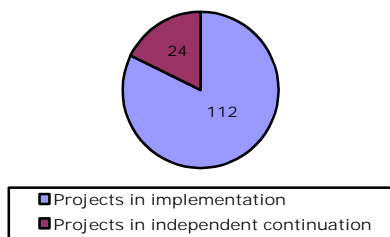
Knowledge sharing

To prevent isolation, the partners participate in National ICT for Development Networks. These networks link up local ICT expertise to share lessons learned and best practices. It also helps to raise awareness about how ICT can contribute to development. Besides face-to-face meetings, these networks develop websites, produce newsletters, and document project results.

Monitoring and evaluation

Throughout the process, a local partner works with IICD and the project partners on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Questionnaires and focus group sessions provide feedback which generates insight into the effectiveness of the Country Programme and contributes to greater accountability on all sides. The evaluation results help IICD and its partners to improve their performance and serves as input for future policy.

IICD has almost 140 projects and policy processes within Country Programmes.



More information

For additional information, please visit our website: www.iicd.org/countries or contact information@iicd.org

The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) assists developing countries to realise locally owned sustainable development by harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs). IICD realises its mission through two strategic approaches. First, Country Programmes bring local organisations together and help them to formulate and execute ICT-supported development policies and projects. The approach aims to strengthen local institutional capacities to develop and manage Country Programmes, which are currently being implemented in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Second, Thematic Networking links local and international partners working in similar areas, connecting local knowledge with global knowledge and promoting South-South and South-North exchanges. Thematic Networking focuses on sectors and themes like education, health, governance, the environment, livelihood opportunities (especially agriculture), and training. These efforts are supported by various information and communication activities provided by IICD or its partners. IICD is an independent non-profit foundation, established by the Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation in 1997. Its core funders include the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGIS), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).