

Proposals to Establish a Community of Expertise  
under the UN Global Alliance for ICT and Development (UN GAID)<sup>1</sup>

**CoE on ICT Policy and Finance for Social, Community and Public  
Entrepreneurship**

**I. Scope of Community of Expertise**

**1. Please describe shortly, the development problem(s) the proposed Community of Expertise intends to address within one of the four focus areas of the UN GAID (Education, Healthcare, entrepreneurship, governance)?**

In the context of the emerging information society, countries are increasingly looking to leverage entrepreneurship to facilitate growth and transformation in the way in which development and business activities are carried out. To date, the focus on entrepreneurship has mostly been limited to the private sector form. However, it is becoming clear that there are important roles for social (social change & empowerment) and public entrepreneurship (effective delivery of public goods) in development activity, particularly in the context of service delivery, catalyzing investment and support to under-served areas, and empowering local communities. Further, the insight that ICT can be particularly useful in facilitating entrepreneurship and transformation in key social sectors has been given limited operational support in spite of emerging evidence and the focus on multi-stakeholder and public private partnerships.

Key areas where the focus and the approach needs to be broadened to incorporate public, social, and community entrepreneurship, including bottom-up empowering approaches, comprise:

- (i) national development, communication & broadcasting, and ICT sector regulatory policies;
- (ii) financing mechanisms and implementation strategies (e.g. eligibility to access universal access funds, e-governance services and programme delivery, platforms for development of content and applications) to support the provision of ICT-enabled services and applications;
- (iii) capacity building services; and
- (iv) models for ICT access and infrastructure services for development. These issues are also highlighted in the WSIS Task Force on Financial Mechanisms Report and the chapter on Financial Mechanisms in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

While there are a number of important and dynamic ICT-D networks and knowledge partnerships, none of them appear to have a dedicated focus on strengthening capacities to address the nexus between broad-based entrepreneurship, enabling development policies and financing mechanisms.<sup>1</sup>

The proposed **CoE on ICT Policy and Finance for Social, Community and Public Entrepreneurship** will explore the implications for key development and regulatory policies for

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to document “Modalities for organizing the work of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID)” on the UN GAID website for more detailed description of Communities of Expertise.

enabling broad-based entrepreneurship and will look into the effectiveness of national financing and implementation strategies (ranging from the governance and operation of Universal Access Funds to approaches for content development and delivery) with a view to identifying how gaps be addressed and impact enhanced through enabling relevant social actors to contribute as well as how ICTs can play an effective enabling role in development practices.<sup>2</sup>

Notes:

1 Financing here needs to be looked at in a broader fashion than pure project-based financing or financing mechanisms for 'access' alone. Issues such as the choice of technology platforms, content and application are also relevant once ICTs are looked at more holistically.

2 Entrepreneurship needs to be defined more broadly and could be viewed as incorporating an innovative, risk-taking, problem-solving and a results orientation and the scope in terms of actors expanded to include municipal/local government led networks, small businesses, cooperatives and community media and networks at all layers of content, applications, capacity building and infrastructure within ICD and mainstream development.

## **2. What are the objectives of the Community of Expertise in view of addressing the above problem?**

The objective is to

- Increase awareness and strengthen capacities of network members and organizations active in the ICT-D field through coordinated research and action as well as through peer-to-peer sharing of approaches adopted in different national contexts and experiences, and promote pro-active involvement of applied research (academic and/or government sponsored) and encourage governments to see their own foreign aid support as including research into ICT-D.
- Address the global knowledge gap by catalyzing and partnering in research and analysis including looking into the relationship between costs and sources of finance on the one hand, and policy and regulatory environments, on the other, and the role for and the impact of deploying entrepreneurial, bottom-up and empowering approaches to the provision of ICT-enabled services and applications, capacity building and for the soft and hard infrastructure for development.
- Identify barriers to development using ICTs produced by dislocations between finance, policy and regulatory environments and entrepreneurial activity on the ground in using and deploying ICTs for development and develop a number of advocacy and implementation strategies to overcome such barriers to development.
- Identify opportunities for multi-stakeholder action to take these strategies

forward at the global, regional and national levels.

**3. Describe the envisaged outputs / deliverables of the Community of Expertise, including the timeframe within which each output / deliverable are expected to be ready.**

The CoE will undertake:

- Development of a platform for dialogue and knowledge networking on the selected theme (~3 months)
- A process of analysis and the identification of barriers to ICT enabled development, especially in terms of promoting community, social and public entrepreneurship, conducted through virtual interactions over the web initially (~ 3 months);
- Qualitative analysis (in the form of interviews / focus groups with small business owners) of some of the findings of the SME research conducted by Research ICT Africa
- A face-to-face meeting to begin the process of analysis, identification of barriers and the development of strategies to overcome these barriers and identify opportunities for multi-stakeholder action, possibly at the World Congress on Communications for Development in Rome in October or the Internet Governance Forum in Athens in October/November 2006.
- Policy recommendations and resource mobilization for implementing the strategies through multi-stakeholder action.

**4. Describe briefly how the envisaged deliverables will take into account the need for replicability and scaling-up.**

Aside from the capacities that will be enhanced through peer-to-peer learning and support, the strategies that will be developed will be geared to challenging and removing barriers to development using ICTs on a regional and national basis in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia. They will be replicable as regards policy and regulation and scaleable with regard to supporting effective and empowering entrepreneurship on the ground. In other words, the deliverables will be geared to large scale interventions of replicable approaches at policy, regulatory and financing dimensions.

The replication and scale-up will be made possible because of the wide reach of the network of organizations proposing the CoE initiative, and its close links with ICT4D organizations on the ground implementing projects, as well as those engaging with policy discourse at national and local levels. In addition, members of the CoE have access to primary research that could be further analysed, particularly qualitatively to produce a more nuanced understanding of the obstacles faced by small business and how to make effective use of ICTs.

**II. Organization of the Community of Expertise**

**4. Please insert the lead organization of the Community of Expertise below.**

**Name of the lead organization: Association for Progressive Communications (APC)**

Contact person: Willie Currie [wcurrie@apc.org](mailto:wcurrie@apc.org)

The Association for Progressive Communications (APC) is an international network of civil society organisations dedicated to empowering and supporting groups and individuals working for peace, human rights, development and protection of the environment, through the strategic use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), including the internet.

APC's members were often the first providers of internet in their countries. Today, APC continues to pioneer practical and relevant uses of ICTs for civil society,

especially in developing countries. APC is an international facilitator of civil society's engagement with ICTs and related concerns, in both policy and practice.

**Website of the lead organization: [www.apc.org](http://www.apc.org)**

**5. Please insert below the names and other information of organizations/entities (minimum 2) that are committed to work within the proposed Community of Expertise.**

**Name of organization/entity 1. IT for Change**

Contact person: Parminder Singh [parminder@itforchange.net](mailto:parminder@itforchange.net)

IT for Change (ITfC) is a non-profit organization based in India. ITfC seeks to interpret the context and the opportunity of the new ICTs, and broadly, the emerging information society, through the lens of the global South. Our approach is guided by the ethical cornerstones of development - equity, social justice and empowerment. We seek to emphasize the political and practical issues which represent the interests of disadvantaged sections and that are often under-represented in the debates on the information society. ITfC engages in research and advocacy, and field-based projects that demonstrate innovative ICT possibilities. ([www.ITforChange.net](http://www.ITforChange.net))

**Name of organization/entity 2. United Nations Development Program (UNDP)**

Contact person: Radhika Lal [radhika.lal@undp.org](mailto:radhika.lal@undp.org)

UNDP is the UN's global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners.

**Name of organization/entity 3. AMARC**

Contact person: Steve Buckley [sbuckley@gn.apc.org](mailto:sbuckley@gn.apc.org)

AMARC is an international non-governmental organization serving the community radio movement, with almost 3 000 members and associates in 110 countries.

Its goal is to support and contribute to the development of community and participatory radio along the principals of solidarity and international cooperation.

All continents are represented on AMARC's international Board.

**Name of organization/entity 4. Nexus Research**

Contact person: Seán Ó Siochrú [sean@nexus.ie](mailto:sean@nexus.ie)

Nexus Research is a not-for-profit research co-operative based in Dublin. Founded in 1990 by a group of social scientists and consultants, and relying solely on contract research for its income, Nexus has developed extensive expertise in a number of areas, including the following:

- supporting local and community development
- information society and communications
- empowerment, exclusion and social issues
- programme and project evaluation

**Name of organization/entity 5. LINK Centre, Graduate School of Public and Development Management, Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg, South Africa.**

Contact person: Alison Gillwald [gillwald.a@pdm.wits.ac.za](mailto:gillwald.a@pdm.wits.ac.za)

The LINK Centre is the leading information and knowledge hub providing training, research and consultancy in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) arena in order to develop public, private, NGO and community-based capacity within the Southern African region. The LINK Centre has, since June 2002, embarked on a public interest research programme producing analyses of key ICT policy, strategy and regulatory issues. The programme is focused on three priority themes, viz. ICT sector governance; ICT driven institutional restructuring and HRD capacity for the Information Society.

LINK also became the founding partner in the Research ICT Africa! network, which now includes researchers at universities in 14 African countries. The network aims to develop in-depth knowledge of issues that are specifically relevant to the African context, see [www.researchictafrica.net](http://www.researchictafrica.net) in order to expand research capacity, and to broaden the policy-making horizon in African countries, by introducing innovative concepts and approaches, and by stimulating dialogue on the basis of rigorous research.

**Name of organization/entity 6. Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA)**

Contact person: Vincent Waiswa Bagiire [Vincent@cipesa.org](mailto:Vincent@cipesa.org)

CIPESA is an initiative to help Africans to better understand the policy-making processes that affect them, especially in the area of information and communications technology (ICT) and development. Our objectives are to raise awareness about key issues, provide useful information to assist African participation in policy-making, and stir debate by sparking discussion and convening productive gatherings. Decision-making related to the use of ICT for poverty reduction is a primary area of interest.