

Sida support for ICT in developing countries

The rapid development of mobile telephony and the global expansion of the Internet show that ICTs have a significant role to play in developing countries. ICTs have the potential to be effective tools in support of poverty reduction. These tools may address problems in health, education and livelihoods. In addition, they can enable people's empowerment and ultimately strengthen democracy and human rights.

Sida and ICT for development

Sweden has supported ICT in development co-operation since the late 1990s. This support amounts to USD 20 to 30 million per year, most of which is channelled through bilateral development programs with Sida partner countries. Sida has formulated a strategy on how the organisation can promote ICT in development cooperation, and has established an ICT for Development Secretariat to promote the integration of ICT in Sida's activities.

Sida is supporting international programmes such as InfoDev, the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) and Bellanet. Sida is also co-funding a number of programmes with other donors such as the Eldis Gateway and the Catalyzing Access to ICTs in Africa programme (CATIA). The Swedish Program for Information and Communication Technology in Developing Regions (SPIDER) is also supported by Sida.

In the public sector, Sida supports a number of ICT initiatives, e.g., at the Rwanda Information Technology Authority (RITA), the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), the National Institute for Statistics (INE) and Inspectorate General for Finance (IGF) in Mozambique, the population registry in Sri Lanka and the Vietnam

Blind Association (vBA). Sida has also supported the development and implementation of a number of national ICT4D strategies and policies.

Sida's Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation (INEC) is engaged with the private sector for the use of telecommunications for poverty alleviation. Sida, UNDP and Ericsson jointly develop a new business and technical model for cheap rural mobile telephony in Tanzania.

Sida's Department for Research Co-operation (SAREC) has systematically supported Internet connectivity for Universities and Research Institutions. These projects usually include establishing an ICT policy/master plan, building a university backbone together with local area networks, human resource training as well as the development of ICT-based services.

Sida's Department for Democracy and Social Development (DESO) has developed a strategy to harness the potential of ICT for democratic governance and social development. This strategy identifies ways in which ICT can be used to reduce poverty and to promote democracy, human rights and social development in Sida's partner countries. Following a rights-based approach to development, this strategy covers the areas of democratic governance, human rights, culture and media, education, health and HIV/AIDS.

Sida also supports Schoolnet Namibia's efforts to install Internet enabled computers into all schools in Namibia.

For more information

www.sida.se

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Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



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