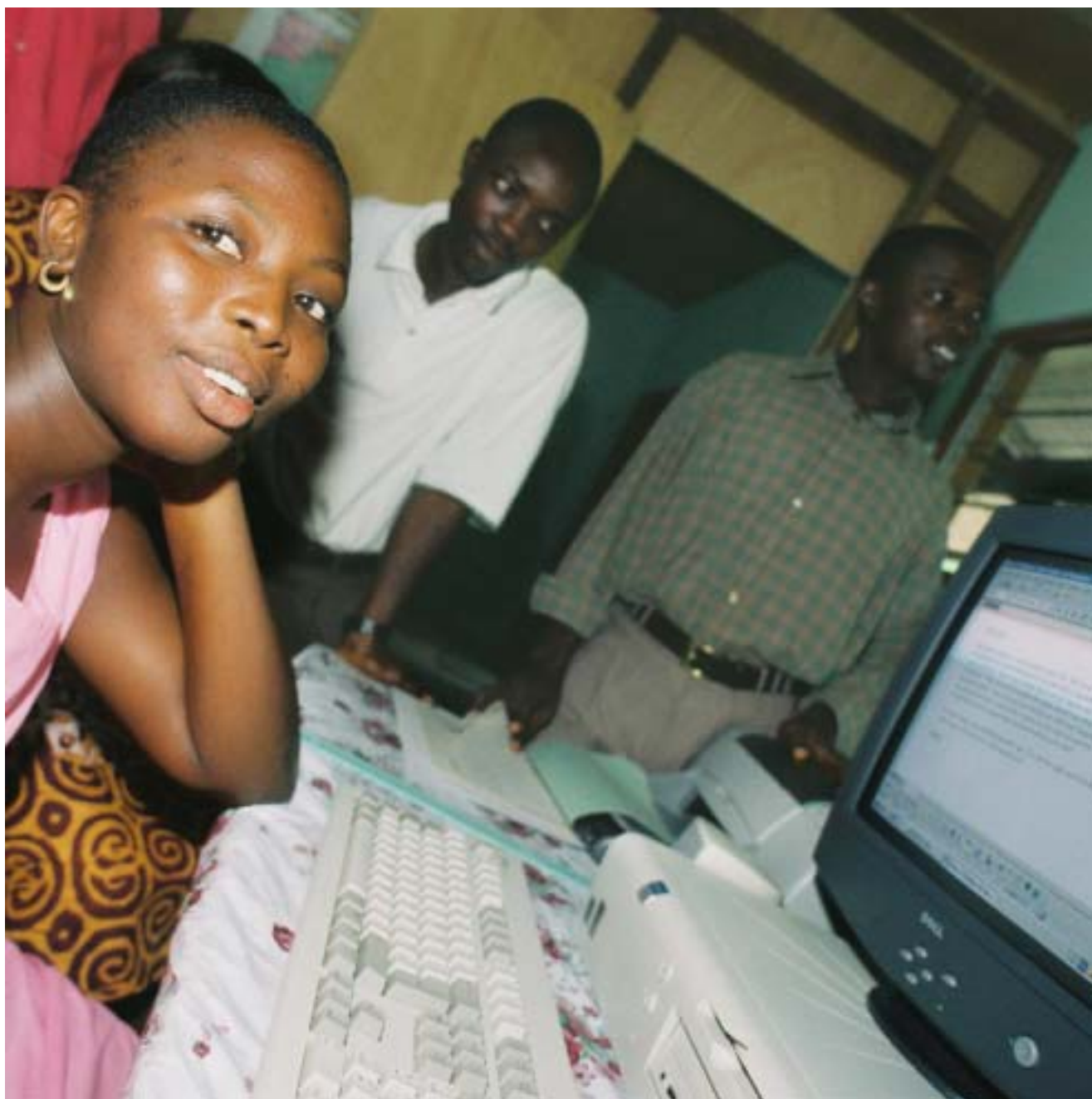


Digital Empowerment

– A Strategy for ICT for
Development (ICT4D) for DESO



Digital Empowerment

**Information and Communication Technology for
Democratic Governance and Social Development**

– A Strategy for ICT for Development (ICT4D)

For further information www.sida.se/deso

Published by Sida 2003

Department for Democracy and Social Development

Author: Paula Uimonen, I-Connect S.A., in close consultation with DESO staff

Photo: David Isaksson, Global Reporting

Printed by Edita Sverige AB, 2003

Art. no.: SIDA3302en

This publication can be downloaded/ordered from www.sida.se/publications

Preface

For poor people, information and communication is a right and a necessity. It is difficult to participate in the political life of a society unless you know your rights and responsibilities. And it is difficult for decision makers to address your needs unless your voice is heard. The effective delivery of basic social services, be it health care or education, needs to be built on well-informed ground, just like the recipients of such services need to understand their benefits. Poor people also have a right to participate in the cultural life of society, enriching the social fabric by communicating their values and experiences in interaction with others.

This focus on information and communication for poverty reduction informs about our work with ICT for Development (ICT4D) at the Department for Democracy and Social Development (DESO). At DESO we believe that information and communication are prerequisites for the realization of the political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights that all individuals are entitled to. In today's world, information and communication technology (ICT) provides a useful tool with which to improve the management and exchange of information and to facilitate communication and interaction. But ICT is only useful if applied in a strategic manner, based on a clear identification of needs and objectives.

The strategy outlines DESO's approach to ICT4D. It is an approach that places people in focus, with an emphasis on content and capacity rather than technology. Throughout the strategy, technology is viewed as a tool with which to achieve social development goals. Following DESO's comprehensive approach to development, the ultimate aim of this strategy is to identify ways in which ICT can be used to reduce poverty and to promote democracy, human rights and social development in our partner countries. A complementary objective is the use of ICT as a tool in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

The development of this strategy has been an ongoing learning process. Staff members have been consulted on a regular basis to ensure a broad ownership. These consultations have also provided an opportunity for staff members to learn more about ICT4D. Although all of us are familiar with certain ICT tools that we use in our daily work, few of us have had exposure to the role of ICT in a development context. A department wide workshop in February 2003, combined with division level meetings, has further improved our knowledge in this field.

As outlined in this strategy, we have chosen to integrate ICT in all relevant projects and programs. Given the ubiquitous applicability of ICT, we feel that ICT should be used in all instances where it can add social value. This comprehensive approach will hopefully go some way in meeting the growing demand from our partner countries. As developing countries are calling for the mainstreaming of ICT4D in development cooperation, not least through international forums such as the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), we are trying to respond in a strategic and flexible manner.

This strategy is targeted at DESO's staff and partners in development cooperation. By outlining DESO's approach to ICT4D, this report provides staff with a tool with which to integrate ICT in a strategic manner. This strategy is also available as a multimedia Flash presentation on the Sida Web site. A complementary report, *Conceptual and Practical Guidelines*, offers staff an opportunity to learn more about issues related to ICT4D, while providing concrete advice on the realization of the goals set forth in this report. The identification of priority areas, combined with the outline of DESO's methodology, make this strategy useful to DESO's development partners as well. We are hoping that our strategic framework will materialize in synergistic collaboration with partners around the world.

Britt Hagström

Head of Sida's Department for
Democracy and Social Development

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Methodology

The Department for Democracy and Social Development (DESO) plays a significant role in Sida's efforts to reduce poverty, focusing on democracy and human rights, public administration, culture and media, education, and health. DESO is also responsible for the integration of cross-cutting issues relating to children and youth, minority groups, people with disabilities, and HIV/AIDS (through the HIV/AIDS secretariat). These areas represent corner stones in Sida's efforts to create conditions that are conducive to sustainable development, poverty reduction, democracy, and gender equality. Following Sida's holistic, rights-based approach to poverty reduction, DESO's efforts are further guided by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of halving poverty by year 2015, including the specific targets set for education, health and gender equality.

Over the last few years, information and communication technologies (ICTs)¹ have been awarded greater priority in Sida's poverty reduction efforts. In 1999, Sida produced a strategy calling for the integration of ICT in development cooperation.² Most recently a governmental bill "Shared Responsibility: Sweden's Policy for Global Development" has suggested a higher priority to bridge the digital divide.³ In November 2002, an ICT for Development secretariat was formed at Sida to coordinate all ICT4D activities within the agency.

Sida's efforts reflect a growing global awareness of the need to promote and facilitate ICT for development. As ICT becomes a determinant factor for economic and social development, it has become increasingly clear that a greater effort needs to be made to bridge the digital divide, between and within countries. Unless the poorest countries of the world stand to benefit from ICTs, they risk falling even further behind in global developments. Similarly, more concerted efforts are required to create digital opportunities for the promotion of sustainable and equitable development. Although ICT is no panacea, ICT is universally applicable. Nonetheless, harnessing the potential of ICT for poverty reduction requires strategic interventions and synergistic collaboration.

¹ ICT refers to a cluster of digital technologies, from telephony to computing and networking, which facilitate communication as well as the management, distribution and exchange of information.

² Sida/Sarec. 1999. *Strategy for IT in Development Cooperation*.

³ Government Bill 2002/03:122 Shared Responsibility: Sweden's Policy for Global Development.

DESO's ICT4D strategy reflects Sida's commitment to support international efforts to reduce the digital divide. Such efforts are receiving more international attention, as illustrated by the upcoming World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005).⁴ This high level summit is development oriented, and ICT is viewed as a tool with which to achieve MDGs and other development goals. Other highlighted issues, such as local content, cultural diversity and identity, the needs of underprivileged and vulnerable groups, a rights-based approach to information, gender equality and the role of youth, suggest that DESO can make a valuable contribution to ongoing ICT4D efforts.

This strategy is the outcome of an interactive consultative process involving Sida staff and external partners. Repeated consultations with DESO staff, through meetings and interviews, have provided valuable input. Feedback has also been received through regular meetings with the ICT4D working group at DESO: Lena Johansson, convener (KULT), Lennart Nordström (DESA), Klas Rasmusson (HÄLSO), Lars Lindblad and Jenny Stenman (PLAN).⁵ Meetings and interviews with ICT4D knowledgeable staff at other Sida departments and the ICT for Development secretariat have added further input, as have meetings with external partners. A study tour to Tanzania in October 2002 provided useful information from Sida field staff and development partners.⁶ A complementary report, *Conceptual and Practical Guidelines*, provides DESO staff with additional information on the approach and areas of intervention outlined here.

⁴ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/>

⁵ Prior to their field assignments, Olof Sandkull (UND) and Martin Ejerfeldt (HÄLSO) were also members of the group.

⁶ See *DESO-ICT4D Strategy. Report on Study Tour to Tanzania 22-31 October 2002*, by Paula Uimonen, I-Connect S.A, 5 November 2002.

2 Vision and Objective of DESO's ICT4D Strategy

2.1 Guiding Vision: ICT as a Tool for Democracy, Human Rights and Social Development

The vision guiding DESO's ICT4D efforts is:

DESO supports the strategic use of ICT as a tool for democracy, human rights and social development.

Following a rights-based approach to development, ICT activities shall be aimed at poverty reduction in general, and the promotion of social equity, gender equality, a higher quality of life, and cultural diversity in particular.

2.2 Objective: Needs-based Integration of ICT

The objective of DESO's ICT4D efforts is:

- a) needs-based integration of ICT in all relevant projects and programs
- b) promotion of and support to relevant ICT4D efforts in partner countries
- c) development of synergistic linkages and networks of collaboration

3 Guiding Principles for DESO's ICT4D Activities

3.1 ICT as a Tool for Development

In DESO's ICT4D activities, ICT is viewed as a tool with which to achieve development goals. Whether the objective is to promote and strengthen good governance or to realize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the emphasis should be placed on what can be achieved through the use of ICT. In other words, ICT should be viewed as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. This view is particularly important in a development context where limited resources need to be put to optimal use.

Viewing ICT as a tool for development avoids one of the greatest risks of ICT. It is not uncommon that ICT enthusiasts focus on the technological possibilities of ICT, while underestimating its social impact. Consequentially, technological solutions are developed without due regard to their social applicability ("build it and they will come"). Not only can such efforts lead to a misuse of scarce resources, but they can also have a negative impact, as exemplified by the dot com crash.

3.2 Adding Social Value through Information and Communication

In determining the usefulness of ICTs, it is advantageous to focus on information and communication needs rather than technological requirements. If anything, all technological solutions should build upon a realistic assessment of the nature and scope of existing information and communication needs. In many instances, ICTs can add social value, since information and communication are widely applicable in a development context. Nonetheless, in order to determine the value added by ICTs it is important to focus on social requirements and possibilities.

By prioritizing information and communication over technology it becomes easier to determine the appropriateness of ICT. This approach facilitates the assessment of whether ICT is a useful tool and if so, which ICT solution is the most appropriate one. It also allows for a more creative and dynamic approach to ICT4D, one that is socially rather than technologically driven.

3.3 Needs-based Integration of ICT

The integration of ICT should be based on a clear identification of needs and objectives, combined with a realistic assessment of the advantages to be gained from using ICT to achieve the desired goals. Regardless of technical application, the guiding principle and end goal should be the social value added through ICT. In all instances, the integration of ICT should build on a holistic view of development, while addressing both short and long term social needs.

This needs-based approach facilitates the use of ICT as a tool for development. By viewing ICT as a tool that is integrated into various activities it is easier to assess its role in a development context. A needs-based integration of ICT will not only have a greater development impact than a non-integrated technical focus, but it can also create a positive development dynamic.

3.4 Technological Continuum for ICT4D Activities

In integrating ICT in development activities, it is useful to build upon a technological continuum, with efforts ranging from ICT-components to ICT-oriented activities. To date, DESO's ICT4D-related activities consist mainly of ICT-components (e.g. computerization of administrative routines; distribution of information over Web sites; use of e-mail to communicate and network). More recently, some ICT-oriented activities have been undertaken, often of a cutting edge nature.

A technological continuum allows for a dynamic, needs-based approach to ICT4D. In many instances, the introduction or expansion of ICT-components will already have sufficient impact, even when the technology used is rather simple. In other cases, it may be useful to pursue more advanced ICT-oriented activities, not least as pilot projects. Regardless of the level of technological sophistication, it is often useful to explore hybrid solutions that can be used to reach different target groups. Such hybrid solutions (e.g. Internet access combined with radio/television broadcasts) are particularly useful when access to ICT is limited but where the impact through indirect access can be significant.

3.5 Unintended Consequences of ICT

As is the case with all technological developments, ICT is replete with unintended consequences. In some cases, these unintended consequences can be positive. For instance, by allowing for a free flow of information, the Internet has strengthened democratic forces (e.g. freedom of expression, networking among political activists, and interactive political debate). Nonetheless, the Internet also allows for the dissemination of information that can raise ethical and political questions (e.g. socially harmful, politically destabilizing and culturally unacceptable content). The convergence of different technologies (e.g. telephony and broadcasting over the Internet) translates into a dynamic complexity, the effects of which are even more difficult to determine, let alone anticipate.

Although it is impossible to fully anticipate the unintended consequences of ICT, it is worth keeping some of the risks in mind. These risks range from the technical (e.g. security of systems/applications used) through the social (e.g. circulation of harmful content) to the individual

(e.g. protection of privacy). Although some of these risks can be addressed relatively easily, others require more careful measures and dialogue at a global level.

Meanwhile, it is also important to remain open to some of the positive side effects of ICT. In some cases, the ability to use mobile telephony can make enormous differences in peoples lives, the benefits reaching well beyond what was initially anticipated. Similarly, Internet access can affect a number of aspects of everyday life in a community. Seeing that most ICT are decentralized technologies and thus easily malleable by users, one needs to be open to the creative use of ICT. After all, people in different places have different information and communication needs and they will adapt new technologies to their particular contexts.

4 DESO's Human Approach to ICT4D

4.1 Content and Capacity: A Social Focus on ICT4D

The building blocks of ICT4D can be captured in 3 main categories: infrastructure, capacity and content. Infrastructure refers to equipment, connectivity, affordable access and other technology-oriented aspects. Capacity ranges from technical development skills to user proficiency. Content relates to all non-technical aspects of information and communication. These building blocks are in turn related to a broad range of policy and legal issues.

Infrastructure + Capacity + Content = ICT4D

To build upon and strengthen DESO's fields of activity, emphasis should be placed on content and capacity rather than infrastructure. Infrastructure requirements, such as connectivity and equipment, will of course play a role in ICT4D-initiatives. After all, if the infrastructure is not in place, there can be no ICT4D activities. DESO will thus have to pay attention to infrastructure requirements and ensure that these are sufficiently met in its ICT4D initiatives.

Nonetheless, in DESO's efforts to integrate ICT, the focus should always lie on usage. The ability to use ICT in an efficient, effective and meaningful way should be prioritized over the sheer availability of and access to ICT. This prioritization will ensure the use of ICT as a tool for development, thus avoiding technology-driven solutions where ICT is an end in itself.

DESO's emphasis should lie on:

- *Content development*

Culturally relevant content in appropriate languages and formats, reflecting local knowledge and addressing local needs

- *Information management*

Rationalized means of managing information; efficient and effective means of gathering, categorizing and storing information

- *Flow of information*
Timely and effective means of exchanging and distributing information; more open and interactive flows of information
- *Information brokering*
Mediation and interpretation of information; use of different media and information channels for the spread and exchange of information among different target groups
- *Communication and interaction*
Use of different media and communication channels among various actors, within and across different sectors and at different societal levels (from local to global)
- *Networking*
Improved networking among different groups and organizations and at different societal levels; use of networks for a variety of development activities, including collegial exchanges, training, advocacy and awareness raising activities
- *Capacity development*
Training in ICT usage; training in information management and content development; use of ICT for training purposes in various sectors
- *Awareness raising*
Better awareness of ICT among decision makers as well as target groups and general public. Use of ICT to raise awareness of various development issues

4.2 Synergistic Collaboration: A Holistic Approach to ICT4D

Synergistic, cross-sector collaboration should be sought in all ICT4D activities. The wide applicability and crosscutting nature of ICT lends itself quite readily to synergistic collaboration among a variety of partners, within a holistic framework. Collaborative efforts of integrating ICT will also have a greater total effect than the sum of individual efforts. Identifying common needs, pooling together resources, and focusing on methods that can have a cross-fertilizing effect can achieve synergistic impacts in any given area of intervention. Collaboration across sector boundaries will also allow for a more cost-effective and efficient integration of ICT.

ICT can readily be integrated in the Sector Programme Support (SPS) approach that guides part of the work of DESO, especially the divisions on Education and Health.⁷ ICT can facilitate the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of sector wide national plans

⁷ See Sida's Policy for Sector Programme Support, Sida, 2000.

and policies. A useful tool for institution building, ICT can contribute to the efficiency of state agencies and improve the delivery of social services. ICT can also be used as a tool for capacity development.

When it comes to ICT4D, it is useful to broaden the approach even further to cross-sector cooperation. Although SPS improves coordination and enhances effectiveness, the approach is still limited to specific sectors. The crosscutting nature of ICT, not to mention the human, financial and technical resources required for the integration of ICT, require, just like SPS, a more holistic approach, one that takes the needs of different sectors into account in a long-term perspective.

Cross-sectoral, horizontal linkages should be combined with vertical linkages, at various societal levels. If anything, ICT facilitates the linking of national, provincial and local initiatives, allowing for greater collaboration, interaction and communication between individuals and institutions located in different parts of a country. Such linkages are particularly important in developing countries where the gap between urban and rural areas tends to be pronounced.

Linkages should also be sought at global and regional levels. One of the distinguishing features of ICT is the ability to link individuals and institutions in a given locality with the outside world. As a result, ICT is a great facilitator for global and regional cooperation and networking. This ability to communicate and exchange knowledge and information on a regional or global scale is particularly beneficial to countries and communities with limited internal informational resources.

4.3 Proactive and Reactive Dialogue for ICT-integration in Country Strategies

At the country level, DESO will work in close partnership with national and external partners. The integration of ICT should be pursued in continuous dialogue with partners, within a shared framework of common goals and priorities. An effort should be made to achieve a high degree of integration through donor coordination and collaboration. The integration of ICT should be mainstreamed in the preparation and implementation of country strategies. In addition, efforts should be made to explore the potential of ICT4D through pilot projects.

In dialogue with its partners, DESO will use a two-pronged approach:

- *Reactive approach*
 - Assessment of the suitability and viability of proposed ICT4D-activities
 - Support to relevant ICT4D-initiatives, including advice, expertise and financial assistance
 - Evaluation and analysis of ongoing and concluded ICT4D-activities
- *Proactive approach*
 - Awareness raising and competence development
 - Identification, encouragement and support to suitable activities for ICT-integration
 - Initiation of experimental pilot projects

This two-pronged approach is aimed at both meeting and stimulating demand for ICT-integration. The reactive approach ensures that the integration of ICT follows DESO's strategic framework for ICT4D. As such, it provides a means with which to ensure that ICT is used as a tool for democracy and social development, thus avoiding instances where technology is an end in itself. Of equal importance is a proactive approach that encourages and supports the strategic integration of ICT. This approach is particularly important for a more even and equitable integration of ICT, especially in countries and/or sectors where ICT4D is underutilized.

4.4 From Policy Makers to Individual Champions: The ICT4D Approach

DESO should combine top-down and bottom-up approaches to ICT for Development (ICT4D). Although ICT is a decentralized technology, its successful take-off requires political support, from the highest echelons of power. While there is a growing political awareness of the usefulness of ICT, this recognition may or may not be accompanied by a political willingness to change. Information is power, and changes in the management and distribution of information will affect power relations. In some cases, political support can be won through successful action; in other cases action can compel political commitment. Policy level support should therefore be combined with assistance to concrete projects and programs, within and between sectors. Similarly, support to national initiatives should be linked with activities at regional/provincial and district levels to ensure an even, nationwide development of ICT.

The development of ICT is closely related to the efforts of individual champions whose visions represent a break from established ways of doing things. It is important that ICT4D-activities are initiated and implemented by such dynamic individuals who are interested in ICT and who are open to change. An effort should be made to promote young and female champions to stimulate forward-looking attitudes and approaches.

Networking is a common methodology in ICT4D-circles, allowing individual champions to cooperate with one another and with interested parties. Networking represents a loosely structured, decentralized and dynamic form of social organization that stretches across social and geographic boundaries, following the principle of flow rather than structure. Networks tend to be based on shared interest rather than physical proximity. Membership is often voluntary and decision-making is often collective, based on consensus rather than formalized procedures. Networks intersect in nodes that consist of individuals and/or institutions that play a brokering role by facilitating contacts between members of networks.

There are many international and regional ICT4D-networks that focus on a variety of issues, ranging from policy matters, through the economic and social impact of ICT, to technical developments. These networks are often tied to organizations working with ICT4D in different countries and regions, thus allowing members to draw on the experiences and expertise of a broad range of actors.

In working with ICT4D, it is also important to remain open to change. ICT4D is a new and highly dynamic field of development intervention. Although a number of actors have already worked with ICT4D over the last few years, and while it is useful to learn from their experiences, it is important to appreciate that working with ICT4D is an ongoing learning process.

Another characteristic of ICT4D efforts is the open sharing of knowledge. Given the novelty and rapidly changing nature of ICT, it is important that knowledge and experiences are openly and freely shared among different actors. This culture of knowledge sharing is well established among ICT4D actors. Not surprisingly, many ICT4D actors take full advantage of existing ICT tools to share and exchange information in an open and transparent manner. ICT is also used to broaden the participation in decision-making and to reach a consensus among different stakeholders.

5 Priority Areas for DESO's ICT4D Activities

5.1 Integrating ICT in DESO's Priority Areas

Building on DESO's identification of priority areas for intervention by the department at large,⁸ the following areas can fruitfully benefit from the integration of ICT (see also section 6 for more information on priority areas for each division):

- *Administrative reform and institution building*

ICT can be used to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of public administration, within and across different sectors. ICT can further be used to reduce corruption and to improve the transparency and accountability of the state.

- *Democratic participation in decision making*

ICT can be used to improve the availability of and access to public information. ICT can also be used to broaden social debate and to improve interaction between the state and different groups and sectors.

- *Legal security and the promotion and protection of human rights*

ICT can be used to improve legal structures and processes. ICT can also be used to improve knowledge of human rights, and to develop mechanisms for their implementation.

- *Cultural diversity and culture as a democratic force*

ICT can and should be used to promote cultural diversity and cultural exchange in the global information society. ICT can further be used to strengthen the role of culture in society in general and in democratic processes in particular.

- *Independent media and freedom of expression*

ICT can be used to develop and strengthen independent media and to

⁸ See "Framtid DESO": DESO's Program för Mänsklig Utveckling, Sida DESO, February 2002, pp. 8-9.

promote and protect freedom of expression. ICT can also be used to improve the capacity of and strengthen the role of media practitioners.

– *Access to and availability of information*

ICT can be used to promote and facilitate a more open flow of information. In addition to making more information available, ICT can also be used to facilitate access to information through different media and distribution channels.

– *Competence building and knowledge development*

ICT can be used to improve the knowledge and competence of a variety of actors in a more cost-effective and up-to-date manner. ICT can further be used to develop appropriate learning tools for different target groups at various societal levels.

– *National health- and education systems*

ICT can be used to improve the planning, delivery and monitoring of social services at all societal levels. In addition to strengthening the institutional capacity of the health and education sectors, ICT can also be used to develop new methods for intervention.

– *Sexual and reproductive health*

ICT can be used to raise awareness of and improve knowledge of issues relating to sexual and reproductive health. ICT can also be used to develop new methods for preventive action as well as support.

– *HIV/AIDS*

ICT can be used for awareness raising, capacity development and exchange of information. ICT can also be used for prevention, care and support, and mitigation.

5.2 A New Area of Intervention: National ICT4D Strategies and Policies

A new area of intervention that is of high priority is:

The development and implementation of national ICT4D strategies and policies

The development and implementation of national ICT4D strategies and policies has been identified as a priority area for ICT4D efforts in developing countries. For instance, the development of national e-strategies is highlighted in the draft action plan of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).⁹ Similarly, National and Regional e-strategies is the focus of one of the working groups established by the UN ICT Task Force.¹⁰ Such interventions have also been identified to be relevant for DESO, with other Sida departments and through the Swedish resource base.¹¹

⁹ WSIS/PC-2/DT/3-E, 27 February 2003, p.7.

¹⁰ <http://www.unicttaskforce.org/groups/principal.asp>.

¹¹ Informationsteknologi i Biståndet (ITB)-Förslag till Strategi för DESO, Lennart Nordström, DESA, May 2001.

National ICT4D strategies and policies provide a holistic framework for coordinated action across all sectors and all levels of society. To achieve optimal results, these strategies and policies need to be well aligned with development and poverty reduction strategies. Moreover, their development and implementation should be based on broad participation, involving all relevant stakeholders.

Although an increasing number of countries have produced, or are in the process of producing, national strategies and policies, a great number of countries, especially least developed countries, require assistance with doing so. Similarly, countries that already have formulated strategies and policies need assistance with their implementation.

While the ICT for Development secretariat will continue to coordinate Sida's interventions in this area, DESO will play a more active role in future efforts. With its experience in public administration, the division of DESA is particularly suited to contribute to such efforts. Similarly, KULT, UND and HÄLSO can support the integration of ICT in their respective fields—culture and media, education and health—thus contributing to holistic national frameworks with a clear development orientation.

In supporting the development and implementation of national ICT4D-strategies and policies, DESO can add value to ongoing efforts by applying its strategic methodology in the following ways:

- *Promote the integration of a rights-based human development perspective*

National ICT4D strategies and policies should be aligned with national development plans and visions, e.g. poverty reduction and MDGs strategies. In addition to supporting the complimentary objectives of ICT4D and development strategies, DESO should promote the integration of a democracy and social development perspective.

- *Support institution building and capacity development*

The implementation of national ICT4D strategies and policies is often undertaken by national ICT commissions. Assistance to the institution building and capacity development of these commissions should be combined with support to other sectors to ensure that capacity is built nationwide.

- *Integrate ICT in Programme Support*

The integration of ICT should be pursued in dialogue and collaboration with partners in all social sectors. In addition to integrating ICT in programme support, an effort should be made to integrate social sectors in national ICT4D strategies and policies.

- *Strengthen local participation and ownership*

National ICT4D strategies and policies need to be country-specific, tailored to the specific circumstances and requirements of a given

country. The development of local competence and knowledge should form an integral part of all ICT4D-related activities, combined with mechanisms for sustainability, to ensure their success and viability in the long term.

- *Promote a holistic and cross-sector approach*

National ICT4D strategies and policies should follow a needs-based, holistic approach to development. Short-term interventions should be well aligned with long-term goals. An effort should be made to achieve greater coordination among donors and external partners.

In addition, DESO should assist partner countries to:

- Mainstream gender equality in ICT4D-activities
- Ensure the equitable inclusion of vulnerable groups such as women, children, orphans, youth, people with disabilities, people infected / affected by HIV/AIDS, and minority groups in ICT4D-activities
- Mainstream HIV/AIDS perspective in ICT4D-activities
- Strengthen and promote cultural diversity and identity
- Identify strategic venues for regional and global collaboration
- Participate in ICT4D-related regional and global forums and networks
- Explore digital opportunities for social development
- Use ICT for decentralization and local development
- Understand the relation between ICT and globalization
- Explore possibilities for North-South and South-South cooperation

6 Synergies and Priorities for DESO's Divisions

The table below outlines more specific areas of intervention for each division, following the general guidelines for DESO outlined above. The table identifies existing priority areas that are suited to ICT integration.¹² It also outlines new areas of intervention that are suited to ICT4D activities. More detailed information on each division is available in *Conceptual and Practical Guidelines*.

It should be noted that all divisions will strive to establish linkages with other divisions and/or Sida departments in their ICT4D activities. ICT4D facilitates more synergistic collaboration between DESO's divisions that should be explored fully. In addition, closer collaboration should be sought with other Sida departments, especially in conjunction with country and regional strategies, but also to share information (e.g. evaluations, lessons learned, best practices). DESO's divisions will also benefit from closer collaboration with existing internal networks that deal with other crosscutting issues (e.g. networks on human rights and gender equality).

DESO's divisions will also collaborate with the HIV/AIDS secretariat. The secretariat will use ICT as a tool for awareness raising, capacity development and knowledge sharing on HIV/AIDS related issues, at Sida and with external partners.

DESO's divisions will work in close collaboration with Sida's ICT for Development secretariat, which is specialized in all matters relating to ICT4D and has overall responsibility for such issues within Sida.

Close collaboration with field offices at Swedish embassies will be crucial for the successful undertaking of DESO's ICT4D efforts. While it is important that DESO staff at Sida-S improve their knowledge of ICT4D it is also important that this expertise is shared with field staff.

DESO's divisions should also explore closer collaboration with external partners, including donors, international organizations, and NGOs. In addition, the divisions should actively participate in ICT4D events as well as ICT4D networks, at national, regional and international levels.

¹² Based on "Framtid DESO", pp. 11-13, and policy documents for each division, combined with staff meetings.

6.1 ICT4D and DESO's Divisions

	Democratic Governance	Culture and Media	Education	Health
Primary areas	National ICT4D strategies & policies – ICT in public administration – ICT in legal sector – ICT for devolution and decentralization (decentralization)	Integration of culture & media in national ICT4D strategies & policies – ICT for cultural diversity & expression – Pluralism and diversity in media sector, including broadcasting media and independent media – Culture and media for social inclusion	Integration of education in national ICT4D strategies & policies – ICT for status and skills of teachers – ICT and distance education	Integration of health in national ICT4D strategies & policies – Health data for research, management and awareness – Improved management information systems for health and medical care – ICT for awareness raising, education and information
Secondary areas	– The organization, management and functioning of the state – Legal security and judicial systems – Financial management and administration – Popular participation in democratic processes – A functioning civil society and its interaction with the state – Local democracy and decentralized administration – Human rights, especially the rights of women, children, people with disabilities and minority groups – Democratic processes for conflict prevention and resolution	– Freedom of expression and right to information – The independent exercise of culture – Bridge building between different ethnic and political groups, and urban and rural populations – Networks and institutional cooperation – Decentralization and even access to cultural practices and experiences – Documentation and preservation of cultural heritage – Strengthening the identity and self-esteem of individuals, groups and cultures – ICT for improved communication and interaction between centers and peripheries	Through sector programme support: – Educational reforms aimed at providing equitable access to basic education – Institution building and capacity development within the public education sector – Training of teachers and improved working conditions for teachers – Development and distribution of educational materials – Improved quality of education, especially at primary levels – Increased literacy and the development of a strong literate environment – Development of adequate and appropriate curricula – e-learning	– Healthcare reform aimed at promoting equal access to cost effective care of a good quality – Cross-sector efforts to promote public health – Sexual and reproductive health and rights, including HIV/AIDS – The health and rights of children and youth – Institution building for improved health – Integration of ICT4D tools in PRSP
Areas worth exploring	– e-governance – e-democracy – ICT for human rights	– ICT and culture tourism – ICT for intercultural dialogue, including conflict management – ICT for partnership, communication and networking		– ICT for rural health services – ICT for status and skills of health professionals – ICT as a tool for analysis and diagnosis for health personnel

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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