

Strategy and Action Plan for ICT in Development Cooperation



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Foreword

With the start of the new millennium, the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) set the goal that Sweden should become an information society for all. Our common goal is to create a free and truly inclusive global information society for all. This is why Sweden has taken an active part in promoting ICT for developing countries.

With the formulation of the *ICT secretariat* for development in 2002, Sida started its efforts to mainstream ICT in all its activities. The rapid development of mobile telephony in developing countries and the global expansion of the Internet and its extensive use is clear evidence of the success that can come from providing an open political climate where innovation and growth can prosper to the benefit of everyone. The link between ICT and poverty reduction is clear. The potential of ICT in helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals is huge.

Important for progress is whether we can bridge the digital divide and whether we will be able to create digital opportunities for all. We clearly need to address the unequal distribution of ICT in order to prevent poor countries and their people from lagging even further behind in global development.

In our view, integration of ICT as a natural part of development cooperation is essential if our attempts to achieve economic development and broad poverty reduction are to succeed. ICT has the potential to contribute to economic development and democratisation – including freedom of speech, the free flow of information and the promotion of human rights. It is therefore vital that we make an effort in our international cooperation to spread ICT globally.

ICT has the potential to be an effective instrument in our work for democratisation and poverty reduction. It is an instrument that will enable people's empowerment, handled correctly can create equal opportunities for economic development and strengthen human rights.

This Action Plan for ICT for development show that Sida intentions to use ICT as an instrument in our work with poverty alleviation is real.

Anders Granlund

Stockholm, March 2005

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At the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Conference in December 2003 United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated:

“From trade to telemedicine, from education to environmental protection, we have in our hands, on our desktops and in the skies above, the ability to improve standards of living for millions upon millions of people. We have the tools that can propel us toward the Millennium Development Goals; instruments with which to advance the cause of freedom and democracy; vehicles with which to propagate knowledge and mutual understanding. We have all this potential.”

However, the current situation is summarised in the Sida publication Perspectives on Poverty:

“So far ... most developing countries have benefited little from the revolution in information technology.”

1. Background

1.1 ICT and Swedish Development Cooperation Goals

ICT, or “IT” as it’s often called, stands for Information and Communication Technology. ICT can be defined as the method and technology to communicate between individuals, and between organisations, with help from computer systems. Indeed, it can be said that computers and telephony have converged, with telecommunications now just one part of the greater ICT sector.

Today, information technology is the engine for economic and social development in the wealthy countries of the world. The combination of the power of computers and digital communications has had a great impact on the way people and organisations work together.

An overarching technology such as ICT presents both opportunities and threats.

While countries and groups with the ability to make use of ICT have access to a powerful tool, countries and groups that can not utilise the power of ICT fall behind in socio-economic development. Mobile communications have been spreading rapidly in virtually all developing countries for several years. However, developing countries are still far

behind regarding the application of other ICT solutions and ICT is still out of reach for many of the poor.

Both the possibilities and the threats of ICT figure prominently in the international debate regarding ICT and development. ICT is generally seen as a useful tool to employ better and cheaper communications and to facilitate the generation of knowledge. Donor agencies can play an important role by speeding up developing countries' use of ICT.

It is important to make a distinction among various groups of developing countries with respect to utilisation of ICT. Some developing countries are far behind in almost all respects in implementing ICT solutions compared to the industrialised countries. Such countries probably include the whole of sub-Saharan Africa excluding South Africa, some countries in Asia such as Laos and Cambodia as well as Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua and Honduras in Latin/Central Americas. This group of countries need strong support to develop their ICT sector particularly infrastructure and policy issues thereby creating preconditions for overall alleviation of poverty. On the other hand, there is a group of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America where the above-mentioned is not applicable. India and Brazil are typical examples of that. Other such countries include Vietnam, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Chile and Argentina. In these countries ICT sectors are developing but serve only the upper and middle classes. In such countries special analyses must be carried out to determine the kind of ICT support that will benefit poorer groups of the population, because general support to the ICT sector carries the risk of making the digital divide in the country even wider.

The Swedish Parliament established a new goal for Swedish development cooperation in December 2003: *To contribute to an environment supportive of poor people's own efforts to improve their quality of life.* Both overall development policy

and Swedish development cooperation should originate from two perspectives: 1) the perspective of the poor; and 2) a rights perspective based on international human rights conventions.

For over four decades the main goal of Swedish development cooperation has been to alleviate poverty and this is now the main theme in *Perspectives on Poverty*. The immediate possibilities of ICT in the fight to reduce poverty relate to its potential to empower impoverished groups with access to information and communication. Despite continuing challenges such as limited service in rural areas, there have been positive developments on the communications side with the rapid expansion of mobile telecommunications networks. ICT makes it possible to gather, process and spread information at a low cost. Information and communication provide a means for impoverished groups to create sustainable economic and social development as well as play a role in the social and political discourse. ICT also makes it possible to provide more effective services to citizens and is an important factor in improving productivity in all developing countries.

In recent years far-reaching changes in the world, such as globalisation and technological advancements, have created a new environment and led to new insights. Some of the most significant technological advancements during the past decade relate to developments in the field of, and use of, information and communication technology. ICT is now an important component of the global economy both as a transmitter of information and communication and as an economic sector on its own. There is a risk that globalisation will lead to even greater gaps between the rich and poor but at the same time opportunities arise to increase standards of living through participation in the global economy.

Sida became involved relatively early in questions related to ICT in developing countries – earlier than most

other donor agencies and at a point in time when awareness of the “ICT revolution” was low among Sida partner countries.

Continual change has required new analyses and refinement of Sida’s previous strategies. One change relates to the realisation that stable and high economic growth is not enough to reduce poverty. It is also critical to strengthen democratic processes, national cohesion and cultural diversity, as noted in the Human rights perspective. In order to address unequal power relationships the poor must be able to influence the public debate. ICT, and especially access to the Internet, make it possible to strengthen democracy by providing the poor with access to information, better knowledge of their rights and the ability to publicise their views.

1.2 Sida’s commitment to ICT

After consultation with Sida’s board the Director General approved a strategy for ICT in development cooperation in December 1999. In the spring of 2001 a working group was established at the Department for Research Cooperation (SAREC) to work with ICT issues. Then, after a reorganisation during the autumn of 2002, the ICT Secretariat was established, attached to the Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation (INEC). The Secretariat is staffed by a Head of Division and four advisors. An additional, bilateral position was also established in 2002 at the Swedish Embassy in Dar es Salaam to work with ICT issues in close cooperation with the Secretariat in Stockholm.

The cornerstone of the strategy was to: improve connectivity in developing countries; increase ICT competence in developing countries; engage Sida in international efforts concerning ICT; allocate funds to stimulate innovative activities that accelerate the integration of ICT; estab-

lish a resource base in Sweden for development-related ICT issues; develop strategies for, and analyses of, the use of ICT in various fields; and support access to communications in rural areas.

Sida's mandate from the government vis-à-vis ICT is clearly articulated in the Swedish government's letter of appropriation for 2003 where it is stated that Sida should: a) contribute to partner countries' gaining access to, developing and making use of ICT; b) strengthen internal knowledge about ICT's role in development cooperation and advance methods to integrate ICT initiatives in all Sida's activities; c) engage in broader cooperation with other donor countries and international organisations; and d) make a contribution to the work of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

The ICT strategy and letter of appropriation have guided ICT work at Sida.

Sida has mainly worked with ICT in the following ways:

- a) ICT has been an implicit part of Sida-supported projects (e.g. to include computerisation as a part of a project on improving the efficiency of public administration).
- b) ICT has been an explicit project which Sida supports to develop information and communication technology as a major instrument (e.g. developing national ICT policies or introducing computers to a university and connecting it to the Internet).
- c) Sida has supported projects to promote innovative activities that may accelerate integration of ICT in developing countries (e.g. installation of Internet exchanges).
- d) Embassies have asked the ICT Secretariat to advise, evaluate or analyse specific ICT issues.

Examples of a number of major ICT activities that Sida has worked with over the past several years are presented in Appendix 1.

Sida's Department for democracy and social development (DESO) has developed a policy and action plan on how to integrate ICT in its activities. Within the field of Research Cooperation, ICT has been implemented as an important component in all SAREC-supported bilateral cooperation programmes.

2. Changes and Experiences in the Global Environment

2.1. The Global Environment

The preconditions to work with the integration of ICT in developing countries are now much better because of a number of factors, including the following:

1. ICT has become an increasingly important factor in production and economic activity globally and no modern operation can function today without the support of information and communication technology.
2. The Internet is now an established part of the social structure in every country.
3. Prices for hard- and software have decreased dramatically over the past decade and this made it possible for even the poorest of countries to consider investing in, and benefiting from, ICT.
4. Awareness of ICT as a useful instrument for economic and social development has increased significantly. The ICT hype around the millennium has been replaced by an increased awareness of the essential role ICT plays in social change.
5. Competence levels have increased. Universities in Sida partner countries are now better able to serve as com-

petence centres for ICT than earlier and the increased use of computers has also led to the emergence of considerable service industries, mainly composed of small businesses.

6. Many developing countries have ICT development high on their development agenda.

These changes mean that developing countries' ICT ambitions are notably higher today as is their interest in involving donors. Their ability to deal with ICT projects and issues has, in many cases, also increased because national or government policies and plans were produced and ICT agencies were established. The UNDP estimates that 90 developing countries have developed national ICT policies and strategies.

2.2. Sida's Experience of Working with ICT in Developing Countries

Changes in Sida partner country demands and needs are noticed first by the Swedish Embassies. It has been observed that ICT is a high priority, with many countries especially interested in cooperating with Sweden in this area. Consequently, several embassies have integrated ICT into their country programmes (e.g. Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Rwanda etc.). However, progress has been slower on integrating ICT into the activities of Sida's regional departments and into country strategies.

Overall, the capacity of the ICT sector in developing countries tends to be low and experience has shown that large investments in infrastructure need to be complemented by related investments in education and training to ensure their success. Sida-supported projects have largely served as a catalyst for ICT activities in developing countries and Swedish support has often resulted in a core which other donors have built on.

Many donor agencies prefer to only commit resources to support the application of ICT, not the technology or infrastructure behind it. However, experience has shown that it is difficult to develop ICT in other donor-financed programmes (e.g. democracy projects) without also strengthening the underlying infrastructure.

Sida's support to ICT at universities in developing countries has been successful and this support should be continued but with an increased focus on applications and training. Support to some innovative activities and pilot projects in developing countries financed by the ICT Secretariat have resulted in larger ICT programmes financed through country programmes.

3. Strategy

One of the core ideas in Sida's ICT strategy in 1999 was to support development of the basic preconditions for ICT growth in partner countries. The basic concepts in this strategy are still relevant today.

Sida's continued work with ICT has the following strategic goals:

- *Strengthen Sida partner countries' capacity to implement ICT policies*

Sida should contribute to partner countries' skills to develop and implement ICT policies at the national level and in various sectors.

- *Strengthen Sida partner countries' ICT infrastructure and technical competence*

Sida should contribute to conditions that foster the use of ICT through support for building of infrastructure and skills. In particular, there is a need for "soft" infrastructure in addition to physical infrastructure, which mainly lies in the domain of the private sector. Skills development must address various levels and include

both specialised ICT training as well as basic ICT knowledge and skills for larger groups of the population.

– *Integrate ICT into country and sector programmes*

The power of ICT should be tapped in all areas Sida supports in order to improve, and increase the effectiveness of, development cooperation. Increased use of ICT can range from small to large measures – from using home pages to better convey information and increase transparency to the introduction of ICT-supported business processes and production procedures.

– *Raise Sida's capability to use ICT in development cooperation*

The knowledge of the use ICT in development cooperation should be raised, both at headquarters and in the field.

– *Engage Sida in international cooperation concerning ICT*

Sida should work together with other organisations and participate in, and influence, the international discourse on the use of ICT in development. The field is new and dynamic and it is important to keep abreast of rapid developments in ICT. At the same time, Sida was an early actor in the field and has experience to share with others.

There is a need for a comprehensive effort to integrate ICT in Sida's development cooperation. The ICT Secretariat serves as a resource for sector- and regional departments and for the organisation in the field to integrate ICT in development cooperation. The ICT Secretariat is also needed as a resource centre with specialised skills to support Sida's work with ICT in development cooperation.



4. Action Plan

4.1 Strengthening Sida Partner Countries' Capability to Develop and Implement ICT Policies

It is important to build a favourable environment for ICT use nationally. This aspect of Sida's work regards ICT as a tangible activity of society. This activity can be, but need not be, aggregated as a stand alone sector, or sub-sector, under a ministry with responsibility for ICT development to focus activities. It is also important to build a favourable environment for ICT use at the sectoral level (and therefore support continuing projects at the sectoral level).

Examples of important activities in the future include:

- *Supporting ICT policies and planning (i.e. policy and strategic work as well as action plans).*
- *Supporting regulatory efforts addressing the telecommunications and ICT markets.*
- *Supporting strategic measures to build ICT capacity.*

4.2 Strengthening Sida Partner Countries' ICT Infrastructure and Competence

This aspect of Sida's work regards ICT as a tangible area of investment or as skills development at the sectoral level. It is geared to concentrated support over a limited number of years, mainly addressing physical and soft infrastructure as well as increasing capabilities to facilitate integration of ICT into sectors' ongoing work.

In order to exploit the power of ICT in developing countries, support to south-south networks and catalytic projects has been initiated. Specific examples of this type of development cooperation include support to a regulatory network with the British Department for International Development (DFID) and support to the African branch of the Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM).

The development of physical infrastructure in rural areas of all countries is a key issue to ensure poor groups enjoy tangible benefits from ICT. There has been robust development of wireless technologies and mobile telephone networks in many Sida partner countries, to the point that we are on the verge of a breakthrough. Similar to what happened in the energy sector; it is likely that small scale, decentralised businesses will emerge to provide meaningful communications solutions in rural areas. The ICT Secretariat seeks to fund studies on this issue with the aim to accelerate development of decentralised solutions, models for development support and to finance pilot projects in Sida partner countries.

An important part of ICT is realised through the use of various e-services. Development of e-services is therefore prioritised in development cooperation. In discussions with ICT agencies in developing countries the ICT Secretariat has noticed a great demand for the development of services such as e-government, e-learning, e-health and e-democracy. The Secretariat will work through other Sida

departments to support these e-services in cooperation with Swedish expertise in the area.

In order to improve access to the Internet in countries with limited broadband capacity (e.g. countries in East Africa that need to access the Internet via satellite because they are not connected to the “global pipelines”), Sida has financed the installation of Internet exchanges in six developing countries. Local Internet service providers (ISPs) do not need to transmit information via the USA and Europe in countries with Internet exchanges. This dramatically reduces costs for Internet access in these countries and speeds communication between local ISPs. As an added benefit, the load on these countries’ limited overseas telecommunications capacity is reduced.

Examples of important activities in this area in the future include:

- *Supporting the building of physical infrastructure such as ICT capacity at universities, computers for schools and Internet exchanges.*
- *Supporting public sector soft ICT infrastructure such as public registries, progressive ICT regulatory frameworks and standardisation.*
- *Supporting the development of ICT competence.*
- *Supporting development of ICT infrastructure in rural areas.*
- *Supporting development of various e-services.*

4.3 Integrating ICT in Country Programmes and Sector Strategies

It is of great importance to make the benefits of ICT in development cooperation visible through “integration” within Sida, especially during the process of developing country and sector strategies. This concerns introducing, or increasing the use of, ICT as an instrument in the ongoing work of Sida. The task here concerns awareness

building, investment, education and/or changing production processes or work methods. The goal is to produce a more or less immediate impact on Sida's work with various sectors. The Secretariat plans to actively participate in the development of future country strategies in order to promote integration of ICT support in Sida partner countries.

Examples of important activities in this area in the future include:

- *Cooperating with sector and regional departments, and embassies.*
- *Participating in the development of country strategies.*

4.4 Increasing Knowledge of the Role of ICT in Development Cooperation within Sida

In order to increase knowledge within Sida about ICT as an instrument for more effective development cooperation, a resource centre called SPIDER (Swedish Programme for ICT in Developing Regions) has been established at the IT University in Stockholm. One of its functions is to act as a Helpdesk for Sida that will provide external expert advice and assistance to Sida employees and Swedish Embassies on ICT-related issues. SPIDER will also assist in assessment, implementation and follow-up of Sida-supported ICT projects as well as offer courses, both to Sida and participants from developing countries.

The helpdesk can provide services on demand regarding the integration of ICT issues into the country strategy process as well as monitoring and development of ICT indicators. Another reason to develop a resource centre with the IT University is to strengthen the Swedish capacity to work with ICT issues in developing countries.

In order to strengthen the capacity vis-à-vis the role of ICT in development cooperation there are plans for competence development at the larger development-oriented embassies. The Secretariat is developing and testing a

model for seminars and courses at embassies. The goal is to introduce a more systematic competence development project in 2005 that will run for two to three years. The Secretariat is also planning more immediate interventions in the form of participation in preparatory courses for those posting abroad and specific ICT seminars for Sida.

Examples of important activities in this area in the future include:

- *Arranging courses and seminars about ICT.*
- *Spreading information about ICT.*
- *Designing the helpdesk to ensure it is useful.*

4.5 Engaging Sida in International Cooperation Regarding ICT

Sweden is seen as a leading ICT country. Both the United Nations and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs have requested that Sida and the ICT Secretariat participate in international efforts and cooperation around ICT. Sida participates in the *UN ICT Task Force* with a seconded staff person in New York and Sida and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are represented at the UN's World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) by an ICT ambassador at the Swedish delegation in Geneva. As part of the WSIS process, support is also provided to a global ICT education effort – *the Global e-School Initiative (GeSci)*.

In the area of Global Public Goods an electronic library (*ELDIS*) for advanced development information on the net is one of many projects supported. Another project is *Bellanet*, which works with ICT-based forms of cooperation for NGOs and development organisations. Also supported by this international effort is *InfoDev*, a World Bank-based consortium of donor agencies.

In Sweden, Sida and the ICT Secretariat follow the work of the Government's ICT policy strategy group.

4.5.1 Participation in WSIS and the UN ICT Task Force

To underscore the importance of information and communication technology, in December 2001 the UN general assembly approved a resolution (Resolution 56/183) organising the World Summit on the Information Society into two phases. The first WSIS meeting was held in Geneva in December 2003 while the second meeting will be held in Tunis in November 2005. Fifty heads of state and/or vice-presidents participated in the Geneva meeting as well as representatives from 176 countries and numerous international organisations, voluntary organisations and businesses. WSIS addressed a broad range of issues regarding the information society and approved a declaration and work plan, which translates the common visions into concrete activities in support of the UN's established Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The WSIS process has motivated politicians and decision makers in many countries to place the development of ICT high on their priority list. Indeed, many of Sida's partner countries (e.g. Tanzania, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Bolivia) have taken the opportunity that ICT provides to influence their development seriously. WSIS has also placed ICT issues in the limelight in international discussions regarding development issues and created a strong interest to exploit ICT's potential in the fight against poverty. WSIS has challenged the global society to ensure there are adequate financial resources for action plans to be carried out. This will be addressed at the Tunis Summit in 2005.

4.5.2 Global e-School Initiative – GeSci

Sweden works together with Ireland, Canada and Switzerland as founders of a global initiative (GeSCI – Global e-School Initiative) to help implement ICT into schools and communities to improve education in developing coun-

tries. GeSCI was launched during the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in December 2003 and the work is carried out in a partnership between countries, the private sector and individual organisations. A small Secretariat was formed in Dublin and an agreement has been signed with UNICEF to channel funds to the initiative. GeSCI is currently active in four countries: Namibia; Ghana; Bolivia; and India (the state of Andhra Pradesh). The initiative strengthens developing countries' planning capacity and aims at merging many scattered projects and programmes into one greater initiative.

4.5.3 The Swedish Government's ICT Policy Strategy Group

In 2003 the government established an ICT policy strategy group with a Secretariat at the Ministry of Industry. The group advises the government and serves as a driving force to reach the ICT policy goal of creating an information society for all. The group has a three year mandate.

The policy group aims to, among other things, ensure that Sweden's experience with ICT in society contributes to making ICT useful for developing countries. The group also wants to work for the integration and use of ICT in developing countries in such a way that connects to Sweden's position as a leading information society.

The policy group works with different stakeholders in various fields. In April 2004 four working groups were created: ICT in education; ICT in social services and healthcare; ICT infrastructure and broadband; and ICT and the telecom sector. It remains unclear whether a working group will be formed on "development assistance and the digital divide" but Sida's ICT Secretariat will keep abreast of the government ICT policy group's work.

Examples of important activities in this area in the future include:

- *Continuing to support the work of WSIS and the UN ICT Task Force.*
- *Supporting organisations that work for international ICT cooperation in developing countries.*
- *Following the work of the government's ICT policy group.*

5. The Role of the ICT Secretariat

In this action plan the ICT secretariat suggests further development of a comprehensive approach to integrate ICT into Sida development cooperation.

The secretariat for ICT in development was established to strengthen Sida's work with ICT in development cooperation and to support the efforts of the field and Sida departments to integrate ICT into various measures. The secretariat serves all of Sida but resides in the department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation (INEC). The secretariat is mainly needed to build a cohesive plan to integrate ICT into Sida's development cooperation.

The ICT secretariat is now preparing a list of measures for the integration of ICT into Sida's development cooperation. The continued decentralisation of responsibility to embassies makes it natural for the ICT secretariat to structure its list of activities by country, a large task that requires a systematic process to create a reasonably comprehensive list of ICT measures. The creation of a list of measures could also be seen as an overarching project to increase the momentum of integrating ICT in development cooperation. This would require the ICT secretariat to more systematically carry out activities to inspire embassy staff to

engage ICT issues and applications and develop their skills and capabilities in the area. Reviews of possible measures between the secretariat, sector/region branches and respective embassies would also prove useful. Components in the process to develop a continually updated ICT action plan in the coming years are presented in Appendix 2.

Sida and other donor agencies have mainstreaming as a central theme in their ICT strategies. The goal is to achieve a productive use of ICT in various development projects over a short period of time. ICT should be applied in the most effective manner and in every place where it serves to increase efficiency and productivity. However, there are also reasons for Sida to continue its support for building a base for ICT applications such as infrastructure, skills development and regulatory frameworks. This base could be developed in the respective sector departments (e.g. ICT-based teaching in DESO/UND, e-health in DESO/HÄLSO and support for ICT applications for energy issues in INEC/IF).

For now the ICT secretariat's work is focused on integrating Sida's ICT action plan, responsibility for ICT skills and promoting ICT issues, working to support specific/sectoral efforts as well as continuing to support national ICT policies.

Appendix 1

Examples of Sida's ICT Activities

Major Activities Financed through Country Programmes or by other Sida Departments

The ICT Secretariat has been instrumental in the following projects/programmes financed through country programmes or other Sida departments:

- Sida/DESO ICT4D strategy and guidelines, 2003.
- Mainstreaming of ICT in all Sida/SAREC bilateral research cooperation, 1998–2004. Approximately SEK 250 million for about ten countries.
- ICT has become an integrated part of the country programme for Sri Lanka (e.g. a national ICT policy and projects to support e-learning, open source software development and a public registry).
- The Swedish Embassy in Tanzania has a desk officer dedicated solely to ICT issues and the country programme includes a number of ICT initiatives (e.g. a national ICT policy, an ICT/telecom regulatory agency and training of ICT technicians).
- Establishment of an ICT agency in Rwanda funded through the country programme for Rwanda.

- Project on connecting schools to the Internet supported through the country programme for Namibia.

Activities funded by the ICT Secretariat

The following activities have been financed through the ICT Secretariat's budget for research development:

Mainstreaming/integration

- Seven ICT country studies (Tanzania, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Nicaragua, Zambia and Namibia), seven studies on various aspects of ICT in developing countries and two evaluations produced between 2001 and 2004.

Resource development for Sida headquarters and the field

- SPIDER – Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions. Established as a resource centre for ICT in developing countries at the IT University in Kista.
- Support to special initiatives in ICT within the SAREC-supported Swedish Development Research Program.
- Framework agreements with (pre-approved) consultants for ICT and a network of resource people.
- Contacts with approximately ten Swedish universities which cooperate with developing countries.
- Reference group for ICT in development work.

International cooperation

- Support to the UN ICT Task Force. One person is posted at the Swedish delegation in Geneva to monitor the Task Force and the work of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). One person is also seconded to the Task Force Secretariat in New York.

- InfoDev – The Information for Development Program (World Bank). A multilateral effort between various donors which finance a large number of ICT projects in developing countries.
- GKP – The Global Knowledge Partnership. A network and partnership, mainly between NGOs but also including other interests supporting ICT development in developing countries.
- Bellanet – Supporting Collaboration in the Development Community. Mainly promoting cooperation between NGOs in developing countries but also among other development agencies, especially through the use of ICT.

Global public goods

- Eldis – The Gateway to Development Information. An Internet-based portal for information on development issues.
- World Health Chart – An interactive computer program which illustrates the relationship between development and world health.
- Qweb – Women’s Empowerment Base. A network to promote contact between various actors within Sweden and internationally with a special emphasis on developing countries. The main goal is to promote women’s health, equality and equal rights.

Support to South networks and catalyst projects

- CATIA – The Catalysing Access to ICT in Africa programme. A development programme financed by DFID and other donors. Sida’s support is channelled towards competence development among regulatory agencies in Africa.

- Internet exchanges in six Sida-supported countries. Development of an Internet exchange in a country allows local Internet service providers to transfer information between each other without routing through the USA or Europe. This significantly reduces costs for Internet access, speeds up communication between local ISPs and reduces the load on the country's limited Internet capacity to the rest of the world.
- MIME – Malaria research network. The ICT Secretariat finances infrastructure and connecting research centres in Africa to the Internet.
- DIAMN – Training of ICT technicians in Sri Lanka from eleven Sida-supported countries.
- E-learning centre in Sri Lanka. Support for capacity and competence development in the e-learning field including an advanced form of computer-facilitated distance learning.
- Participation from developing countries in the ICT4D platform at the World Summit on the Information Society. Participants from Sida-supported ICT projects presented their work during the convention.
- World Summit on the Information Society Gender Caucus.
- Stockholm Challenge Award – an international award for innovative use of ICT. Sida support gives candidates from developing countries the possibility to participate in related conferences as well as networking events.
- Approximately ten awareness building workshops held.
- Participants from developing countries participation in MSc course on Internet Technologies and Computer Systems Design course at the IT University in Kista.
- The Internet Society (ISOC) training workshops.

Appendix 2

Action Plan for Integration of ICT in Sida's Development Cooperation

Sub-projects in the process to build a continually updated ICT action plan.

*Updating the current status of the application of
ICT in development cooperation – a pilot study*

Pilot project to develop methods and gather facts in three countries. The aim is to find a practical method to gather data on all countries and develop and maintain a database, including practical, useful data/measures [autumn 2005]

*Mapping of ICT applications in
development cooperation – a full scale study*

The mapping will be based on the results of the pilot study [2005]

Develop presentation material
[Autumn 2004, spring 2005]

Design of skills development project – embassy staff

A test project will be held at a larger embassy in order to pilot the contents of the conference agenda/skills development plan [autumn 2004]

Regional conference and training for those responsible for ICT at embassies in Africa
[Spring 2005]

Regional conference and training for those responsible for ICT at embassies in Asia
[Autumn 2005]

ICT training as part of all National Programme Officers (NPO) training at Sida headquarters in Stockholm
[Ongoing from spring 2005]

ICT component at annual donor executive conferences
[Ongoing from spring 2005]

Planning discussions with embassies and follow-up of regional conferences
[Two embassies per half year from spring 2005]

Development of a Sida-wide action plan/activity list
[2005]

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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